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PLEAS CHALLENGING
WAQF ACT MENTIONED IN
SC FOR URGENT LISTING



12
STARMER, EUROPEAN LEADERS
CALL US TARIFFS 'NEW ERA FOR
GLOBAL ECONOMY'



16
RCB BEAT MUMBAI
INDIANS BY 12 RUNS

TRADE WAR **WREAKS HAVOC** ON GLOBAL STOCKS

Investors rush to safe havens as fears of slowdown and supply chain disruption shake sentiments.

Sensex, Nifty plunge in sync with mayhem in world market

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

There was a bloodbath on Dalal Street on Monday in tune with global selloff that triggered by Trump tariffs. According to market pundits, after China imposed reciprocal duties, investors fled to safe havens.

The 30-sahre bellwether index Sensex dropped 5 per cent at one point in early trade, but as the day progressed it managed to pare some the losses. It finally ended the day 3 per cent lower. The Sensex closed at 73,137.90 points, down 2,226 points. Broader index Nifty slipped 3 per cent to close at 22,161.60 points.

This was the biggest single-day decline in 10 months. The Sensex and the Nifty had previously tumbled over 13 per cent on March 23, 2020 when lockdown was imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

BLOODBATH



FTSE 100	4.48%	BSE Sensex	2.95%
DAX	4.26%	NSE Nifty	3.24%
Euro Stoxx 50	4.31%		
Nikkei 225	8.49		
Straits Times	8.06		
Hang Seng	15.24		
KOSPI	5.89		

■ Sensex and Nifty had tumbled over 13% on March 23, 2020 when lockdown was imposed due to Covid-19 pandemic

down was imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "Equity markets witnessed a sharp fall, track-

ing global sell-off sparked by the US reciprocal tariffs and China's announcement of retaliatory tariffs of 34

per cent on US goods. At the market opening, Nifty 50 tanked 5 per cent -- its worst opening since March 2020 (Covid-19 pandemic). This marked the sharpest single-day fall since June'24, when the indices had plunged more than 8 per cent. Market showed some recovery towards the end of the session," Siddhartha Khemka, Head -- Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Selling pressure was rampant across the board as all BSE sectoral indices ended with deep cuts. Metal tumbled 6.22 per cent, realty dropped 5.69 per cent, commodities (4.68 per cent), industrials (4.57 per cent), consumer discretionary (3.79 per cent), auto (3.77 per cent), bankex (3.37 per cent), IT (2.92 per cent), teck (2.85 per cent), and BSE-Focused

Recession fears spook IT stocks

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

IT stocks, which earn a major part of their revenue from the US, fell sharply on Monday amid fears of a likely recession after tariff hikes by the Trump administration rattled global markets.

Among blue-chip stocks, shares of Infosys dropped 3.75 per cent, HCL Technologies declined 3.27 per cent, Tech Mahindra (2.47 per cent), LTIMindtree (1.72 per cent), Wipro (1.38 per cent), and Tata Consultancy Services (0.69 per cent).

The BSE IT index tanked 2.92 per cent while teck lost 2.85 per cent.

"IT index ended with over 2 per cent loss. In just three sessions, the index tumbled over 8 per cent as investors have turned risk-averse amid concerns of a likely recession in the US, India's largest export market for tech services," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Wild swings in US indices

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

In keeping with the turmoil in global markets following President Donald Trump's tariff decisions, the US markets also witnessed a bloodbath as they opened on Monday morning.

US benchmark indices - Nasdaq, S&P, and Dow Jones, slumped in a range of 4-5 per cent soon after the opening bell.

"The United States has a chance to do something that should have been done DECADES AGO. Don't be Weak! Don't be Stupid! Don't be a PANICAN (A new party based on Weak and Stupid people!). Be Strong, Courageous, and Patient, and GREATNESS will be the result!" US President Donald Trump wrote on his social media platform Truth, addressing the American citizens.

Investors are worried that global trade could slow down significantly, affecting corporate earnings and economic growth worldwide. The market reaction reflects growing concerns among investors about the future of international trade and the

PRECEDENCE

1987's Black Monday saw a 22.6% Dow crash—triggered by market mechanics, but stabilized quickly by Fed action.

IT'S POLITICS NOW

Current events echo 1987, with global contagion, policy shock, and halted trading—but now driven by politics, not programmes

Undaunted, Trump says result 'will be greatness'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

With stock markets globally taking a plunge due to his tariff decisions and the US stocks also feeling the impact, US President Donald Trump on Monday urged people not to be "weak, stupid" and said they should be "courageous and patient" and the result "will be greatness". Trump made the remarks on his social media platform Truth Social, minutes before US stock markets opened.



"The United States has a chance to do something that should have been done DECADES AGO. Don't be Weak! Don't be Stupid! Don't be a PANICAN (A new party based on Weak and Stupid people!). Be Strong, Courageous, and Patient, and

health of global economy. The S & P 500 went from a 4.7 per cent drop shortly after the start of trading all the way to a surge of 3.4 per cent, a gain that would have counted as its best day in years. It then quickly gave up all

LPG cylinders to cost Rs 50 more, starting today

HIKE IN PRICES

Rs 550
(For Ujjwala beneficiaries)
Rs 853
(For general users)
CNG: **Rs 75.09** per kg



Excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre each to raise about Rs 32,000 crore additional tax revenue. But no change in retail prices as increase will be adjusted against the price cut that was warranted because of falling international oil prices.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

LPG cylinders, both Ujjwala and non-Ujjwala, will be Rs 50 dearer, starting Tuesday, Minister Hardeep Puri announced on Monday at a press conference.

"The price per cylinder of LPG will increase by Rs 50. From Rs 500, it will go up to Rs 550 (for Pradhan

Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries), and for others, it will go up from Rs 803 to Rs 853," the minister said.

CNG prices have also been increased by Re 1 per kg in the national capital and adjoining cities after the government last week raised input natural gas prices by almost 4 per cent.

CNG in the national capital will cost Rs 75.09 per kg,

Indraprastha Gas Ltd said in a post on X.

"This is a step which we will review as we go along. We review these every 2-3 weeks," he added.

The minister said the imposition of additional excise duties on petrol and diesel is intended to compensate the oil marketing companies for losses they have incurred

Former SSP, SP get 5-year term in Moga sex scandal case

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

In the 2007 Moga sex scandal case, a CBI court on Monday sentenced former Moga Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Devinder Singh Garcha and then SP (Headquarters) Paramdip Singh Sandhu to five years of rigorous imprisonment.

Both officers were also fined 2 lakh each under provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

The court also awarded Inspector Amarjit Singh six-and-a-half years of rigorous imprisonment along with a fine of 2.5 lakh, while Sub-Inspector Raman Kumar was sentenced to eight years of rigorous imprisonment and fined 3 lakh. While Garcha and Sandhu later rose to the rank of Assistant Inspector General (AIG) before retiring, Inspector Amarjit

Singh and SI Raman Kumar had already been dismissed from service.

Besides corruption charges, SI Raman Kumar was also convicted of extortion, and Inspector Amarjit Singh for attempting extortion. The case, which attracted national attention

The case revolved around charges that police officers were involved in blackmailing wealthy youth by falsely implicating them in a sex racket

in 2007, revolved around allegations that senior police officers and influential figures were involved in blackmailing wealthy youths by falsely implicat-

Terrorism curbed but not eliminated in J&K: Shah

AGENCIES
JAMMU

Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir has been curbed but "our mission is still not accomplished" as the scourge has not been completely eliminated, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday after meeting the families of 10 police personnel and an engineer who lost their lives in various terror attacks over the past one year.

Shah said significant progress has been achieved under the Modi government in tackling terrorism and ending separatist ideology in the Union Territory.

The minister, who is on a three-day visit to J-K, met the families at Raj Bhavan, paying tributes to the terror victims and expressing gratitude to their families.



Home Minister Amit Shah and Jammu and Kashmir LG Manoj Sinha meet family members of police personnel, who lost their lives in a terrorist attack, at Raj Bhawan in Jammu on Monday. ANI

He also handed over appointment letters to nine nominees on compassionate grounds.

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat were among those present on the occasion.

Among the families who met the Union minister

were the next of kin of four policemen who recently sacrificed their lives in a fierce gunfight with Pakistani terrorists in Kathua district, officials said.

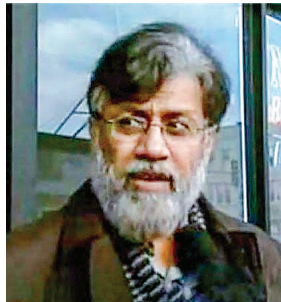
A massive search operation has been underway in the forest area of the district since March 23, when

US court clears way for Tahawwur Rana's extradition

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

The US Supreme Court has rejected the appeal of Tahawwur Rana, a key accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, seeking to block his extradition to India. The decision brings Rana, a 64-year-old Canadian national of Pakistani origin, closer to facing justice in India for his alleged role in the deadly 2008 attacks.

Rana, who is currently held at a metropolitan detention center in Los Angeles, was closely associated with David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators behind the Mumbai attacks. Headley conducted reconnaissance in Mumbai before the attacks, posing as an employee of Rana's immigration consultancy. Rana was convicted in the US for conspiring to provide material support to a terrorist plot



in Denmark and for aiding the Pakistan-based terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Taiba, responsible for the Mumbai attacks.

On February 27, 2025, Rana filed an emergency application with the Supreme Court, requesting a stay on his extradition. The application, initially directed to Associate Justice Elena Kagan, was later renewed and referred to Chief Justice John Roberts. However, the Court denied his plea, citing that his extradition does not violate US law or the UN Convention Against Torture, as he claimed.

Rana argued that extradition to India posed a risk of torture, emphasizing his Pakistani origin and Muslim faith as factors that could lead to severe mistreatment. His legal team also raised concerns about his health, stating that his severe medical conditions would make detention in Indian facilities a "de facto death sentence."

Despite these claims, the Supreme Court's denial of



President Droupadi Murmu with Portugal President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa jointly release stamps commemorating 50 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries, in Lisbon on Monday. . ANI

PLEAS CHALLENGING WAQF ACT MENTIONED IN SC FOR URGENT LISTING

The bench asked why oral mentioning is being made when there is a system in place to seek urgent listing.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The petitions filed in the Supreme Court challenging the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 were mentioned before the Supreme Court on Monday. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna denied oral mentioning. The bench asked senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who was mentioning the matter, why the oral mentioning is being made when there is a system in place to seek urgent listing by sending of email and asked him to move a mentioning letter. When Sibal said that the letter had already been email, CJI said that he would do the needful after examining it this afternoon. “Why are you mentioning when we have a system in place? Send a letter of urgency and that will be placed before me. I will do the needful. All these re-

quests are placed before me every afternoon,” said the CJI. Several petitions were filed in the apex court challenging the Act contending that it was discriminatory towards the Muslim community and violates their fundamental rights. President Droupadi Murmu on April 5, gave her assent to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which was earlier passed by Parliament after heated debates in both Houses. Congress MP Mohammad Jawed, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) Member of Parliament Asaduddin Owaisi, AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, Maulana Arshad Madani, the President of the Islamic cleric’s body Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind, Kerala Sunni scholars’ body Samastha Kerala Jamiatul Ulema, Social Democratic Party of India, and NGO Association for Protection of Civil Rights have already

THE AMENDMENT


■ SC Challenge: Petitions filed in the Supreme Court challenging the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

■ Oral Mentioning Denied: CJI refused oral mentioning; asked Kapil Sibal to submit a mentioning letter.

■ Petitions: Filed by MPs, religious bodies, and NGOs claiming the Act is discriminatory.

■ Key Claims: Act undermines Muslim religious autonomy, dilutes protections, and interferes with Waqf management.

■ Concerns Raised: Issues with



mandatory timelines for uploading Waqf details, risking historical Waqf properties.

■ Opposition Argument: Act distorts Waqf’s religious character, damaging minority rights and governance.

approached the top court against the Act. In his plea, Javed said that the Act discriminates against the Muslim community by imposing restrictions that are not present in the governance of other religious endowments. Javed was also a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Owaisi in his plea stated that the amended Act “irreversibly dilute” the statutory protections afforded to Waqfs and their regulatory framework while conferring undue advantage upon other stakeholders and interest groups, undermining years of progress and setting back Waqf management by several decades. Khan’s plea stated that the

Act curtails the religious and cultural autonomy of Muslims, enables arbitrary executive interference, and undermines minority rights to manage their religious and charitable institutions. Samastha Kerala Jamiatul Ulema contended that these amendments would distort the religious character of Waqfs while also irreversibly damaging the

Mamata’s assurances to sacked teachers fall flat

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today met a cross-section of the 25,753 school teachers and non-teaching staff who lost their jobs after the Supreme Court flagged “institutional corruption and wide-spread fraud in the selection process by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) and vowed to protect the jobs of “deserving” teachers. However, her assurances did not cut much ice among the assembled teachers. Mamata Banerjee slammed the Supreme Court for a “biased verdict” and cited the example of the all-India medical entrance exam NEET and said the

top court did not cancel the whole examination in that case. “Only Bengal is being targetted. You cannot deny that you all fear Bengal’s talent,” Banerjee said. “Do not snatch the bread and butter of a family in the process of targetting my Government. In Tripura, 10,000 jobs were cancelled. The BJP said that when they would come to power, they would get it back...they did not, but in fact physically attacked those who tried to protest,” she said. “The Supreme Court must clarify who is deserving and who is not. Give us the list. No one has the right to break the education system,” she told the gathering at Netaji Indoor Stadium. “If the Supreme Court provides us clarity, we will be grate-

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee

ful. If not, we will find a way and stand by you. Suffer for two months, you don’t have to suffer for 20 years. And I will compensate for those two months too. You won’t have to beg,” she said. What if the Supreme Court says those who are in jobs can’t continue, then what... let

good sense prevail. Those who are eligible and genuine, their job security is the Government’s responsibility. I will follow the SC verdict. If someone shuts a door, there are always options and gaps. Plans A, B, C, D, and E are ready,” she asserted. She reassured the teachers that their jobs were currently secure. “No one has terminated your job till date.” The Chief Minister announced a legal team, including prominent Supreme Court lawyers Kapil Sibal, Kalyan Banerjee, Prashant Bhusan, and Abhishek Manu Singhvi, to fight the teachers’ case. “Who was our lawyer? Abhishek Manu Singhvi. Who are we taking this time? Kapil Sibal,

Kalyan Banerjee, Prashant Bhusan, Singhvi,” she said. The Supreme Court last week cancelled the appointments of more than 25,000 teachers and school staff recruited by the West Bengal School Service Commission in 2016 after large-scale irregularities were found in the recruitment process. Amid a charged atmosphere at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Banerjee assured teachers facing potential job losses that their livelihoods were “secure”, urging them to continue providing “voluntary service” while the Government sought legal recourse. “For as long as I am alive, I will not let anyone snatch the jobs of eligible candidates,” she pledged. “I know how to fight challenges. This

is not the court’s fault but of those who did politics with the teachers,” said Banerjee. The teachers who lost their jobs said the State Government must be held accountable, accusing the Chief Minister and TMC chief of offering nothing more than a “lollipop”. Suman Biswas, one of the affected teachers, alleged that the Chief Minister, her Cabinet, and the Staff Selection Commission were all complicit in the corruption. “Bribes have been taken in exchange for jobs, and hence, she gave a ‘lollipop’ today, saying that the Government will provide ‘voluntary’ jobs to 25,000 people and will look into the matter. I appeal to the people of the country to look into what is going on in West

Congress set to tackle organizational challenges

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The upcoming All India Congress Committee (AICC) meeting, scheduled for Tuesday on the Sabarmati coast in Gujarat, holds significant importance for the party. This marks the first meeting of the AICC members in 11 years. The primary agenda of the two-day meeting is to strengthen the organization, but the meeting’s key message will be centered on Rahul Gandhi’s leadership. Rahul Gandhi is set to be reaffirmed as the most accepted and powerful leader of the Congress party. The meeting will also seek to clarify that Rahul is not responsible for the party’s continuous electoral defeats. Additionally, his sister, Priyanka Gandhi, will likely be positioned as the second supreme leader in the party, with the possibility of her being given a significant role. Reports suggest she may be tasked with leading a newly formed Election Management Committee within the organization. Another major focus of the meeting will be strengthening Rahul Gandhi’s appeal among the

backward classes, which includes discussions on the caste census. The Congress will also target the NDA government over the recent changes to the Waqf Board law, aiming to highlight its implications. In terms of organizational changes, there are indications that the AICC meeting will discuss empowering district presidents and fixing their responsibilities. Many district presidents have complained about the lack of access to senior leadership in Delhi, with some citing difficulties in meeting Rahul Gandhi or other officials. The upcoming Congress convention will focus on strengthening the party’s organizational structure, from the grassroots level to the higher echelons. After suffering continuous defeats in

several key states, the party is grappling with internal conflicts and a weakening of its leadership. States like Haryana, Maharashtra, and Delhi have seen crushing defeats for Congress, and the party’s influence has drastically diminished. One of the most pressing issues for the Congress high command is the declining discipline within the party ranks. In Haryana, internal divisions have prevented the high command from choosing the legislative party leader and the state president as it would like. Similarly, in Karnataka, the high command had to give in to Deputy Chief Minister D. Shivakumar’s demands, retaining him as the state president despite the principle of ‘one person, one post’ not being applied to him. The crisis in Karnataka is not expected to

be resolved soon. With Chief Minister Siddaramaiah set to complete two and a half years at the end of the year, Shivakumar is likely to stake his claim for the Chief Minister’s post. This situation could spark further internal turmoil. Rajasthan, which was once considered a winnable state for Congress, was also lost due to the high command’s indecisiveness. The party failed to take timely action regarding the leadership of the state. The high command had declared Ashok Gehlot as the candidate for the position of national president, only to suddenly enforce the ‘one person, one post’ principle, asking him to resign from his position as Chief Minister. This decision led to a rebellion within the party, with the MLAs refusing to comply with the high command’s order, forcing Gehlot to remain as the Chief Minister. This chaos had broader implications: Gehlot, one of the most trusted leaders in the Gandhi family, could not contest for the national president’s post, and his opponents raised numerous questions regarding his loyalty and effectiveness.

Crown Prince of Dubai’s visit to India

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Defence of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), will undertake an official visit to India from April 8 to 9, 2025, a press release by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated. This marks his first official visit to India in his capacity as Crown Prince of Dubai. He will be accompanied by several key Ministers, senior-level government officials, and a prominent delegation of business leaders, reflecting the growing depth of India-UAE partnership and their expanding strategic scope. On April 8, Prime Minister Modi will host a working lunch in honour of His Highness, providing a platform for high-level discussions on strengthening bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors, stated the press release. In addition to his engagement with the Prime Minister, the Crown Prince will hold separate meetings with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Following engagements in the capital, Sheikh Hamdan will visit Mumbai from April 8 to 9. During his time there, he will participate in a business roundtable involving top Indian and Emirati business leaders. The roundtable will explore opportunities for increased trade and investment in both traditional sectors such as infrastructure and energy, as well as emerging fields like fintech, innovation, and sustainability. The interaction is aimed at further accelerating economic cooperation and shaping a forward-looking commercial partnership between the two nations. Dubai has long served as a vital hub in India’s commercial and cultural exchanges with the UAE. The strong people-to-people ties are underpinned by the large Indian diaspora in the Emirates - estimated at 4.3 million - with a significant majority residing in Dubai. The visit is expected to add new momentum to the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and further enhance India’s institutional and grassroots-level ties with Dubai.

US President led to tumble in stock market: Rahul Gandhi

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Monday attacked US President Donald Trump over the stock market situation and said that the US president has caused the stock market to tumble. “The US president has led to a tumble in the stock market. Less than 1 per cent of the people here have their money invested in the stock market, which means the stock market is not a field for you. Unlimited money is made in it, but you don’t get the benefit of it,” the Lok Sabha LoP said, addressing the Samvidhan Suraksha Sammelan in Patna. Asian stock markets witnessed a major sell-off on Monday after US President Donald Trump announced a new round of tariffs. The markets opened with heavy selling pressure, reflecting growing fears over the impact of the tariffs on global trade and economic growth. The Lok Sabha LoP said that the people from weaker sections of society were being treated as second-class citizens. “People say that the Constitution was drafted in 1947. However, I believe that this Constitution is thousands of years old, and it includes thoughts of Ambedkar ji, Pule ji, Gandhi ji, Nehru ji, Guru Nanak ji and Kabir. The Constitution contains the thoughts of those whom India respects,” he added. He further remembered former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi and said that they both loved truth.

In a post in Hindi on X, Rahul Gandhi said “Finally, Modi ji gave a befitting reply to ‘tariffs’! Tax on petrol-diesel and gas cylinder prices were increased further.”

“I was asked a question about what your great-grandfather Nehru ji was like and what you learned from him? In the room where I was sitting, there was a picture of not only Nehru ji but also Mahatma Gandhi ji. Looking at that picture, only one thought came to my mind: that both these people loved the truth,” the LoP said. Rahul Gandhi further said that the Congress will demolish the “fake barrier” of 50 per cent cap on reservations. The Bihar Legislative Assembly election for all 243 constituencies is scheduled to be held in October or November this year. The last assembly elections were held in October-November 2020.

Rahul’s Bihar visit intensifies politics

With elections scheduled for November this year, Congress is placing its trust in its youthful leaders, Kanhaiya Kumar and state in-charge Krishna Alavaru.

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The visit of Congress supreme leader Rahul Gandhi has created stir in Bihar politics. While Congress continues to assert that it will contest elections with its allies in Bihar, the situation appears to be shifting. There are signs that the party may discuss potential alliances in the upcoming Congress meeting in Ahmedabad, with some Bihar leaders even suggesting an ‘Ekla Chalo’ (go it alone) strategy. With elections scheduled for November this year, Congress is placing its trust in its youthful leaders, Kanhaiya Kumar and state in-charge Krishna Alavaru. Both have been leading the ‘Palayan Roko, Naukri Do’ (Stop Migration, Give Jobs), largely sidelining their allies. Rahul Gandhi also joined the Yatra in Begusarai on Monday, and the event was marked by an enthusiastic crowd, signaling potential success. Congress workers are energized by this show of strength, leading to a growing sense that the party may go solo in the state. This shift towards independent politics has caused concern among allies, particularly the RJD, which fears that Congress may again push for more seats, as it did in the last election. Congress state leaders are demanding more than 70 seats, mirroring the demands of the previous election, while the VIP party, another key ally in the Mahagathbandhan, has asked for 60 seats. These escalating seat demands are straining relations within the alliance. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav has remained silent on the matter, but party spokespersons have made it clear that they are unwilling to concede additional seats to Congress. The RJD’s difficulties are compounded by the fact that they lost power in the previous election due to Congress’s demands. As the political landscape in Bihar intensifies, Congress’s youth faction is preparing to go it alone. All eyes will be on the AICC meeting in Ahmedabad to see how the party addresses these issues regarding Bihar’s electoral strategy.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON HOOLIGANISM OF MNS LEADERS

78% believe Raj Thackeray and his workers have grown desperate as MNS loses political ground.

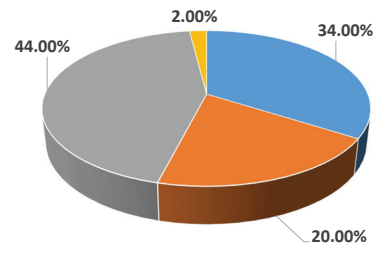
MNS workers assaulted a security guard in Powai for not speaking Marathi, accusing him of insulting

the language. The incident follows rising tensions over Marathi usage, including past assaults and pro-

tests. MNS now plans to protest at Canara Bank over Marathi not being included on payment slips.

Q1.▶

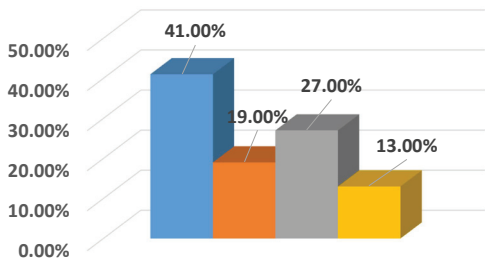
In Maharashtra, Raj Thackeray's workers have been engaging in hooliganism in recent times. What is the reason?



- A - Failure of law and order
- B - No fear of Hindi belt
- C - Benefitting from Marathi identity
- D - No particular reason

◀Q2.

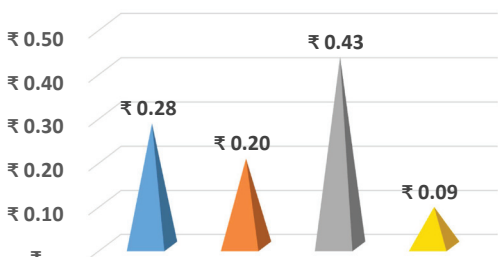
In Maharashtra, Raj Thackeray's workers have been engaging in hooliganism in recent times. What is the reason?



- A - Marathi vote bank
- B - Alliance with Raj Thackeray
- C - Failure of Fadnavis government
- D - Cannot say

Q3.▶

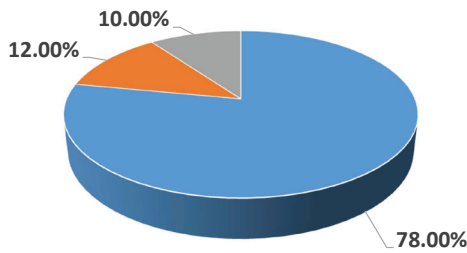
If someone is in Maharashtra and does not speak Marathi, what can happen to them?



- A - Will be insulted
- B - Will be beaten
- C - Will be killed
- D - Cannot say

◀Q4.

Since MNS is continuously losing political ground, have Raj Thackeray and his workers become desperate?



- A - Yes
- B - No
- C - Cannot say

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON PAKISTAN TALIBAN CONFLICT

66% say the Pakistani Army's morale will rise after the Khyber operation.

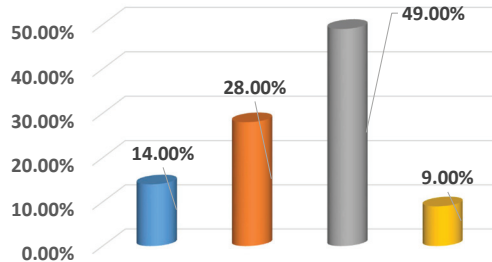
The majority (46%) of respondents are worried about the future of children, while 23% are attempting to flee

conflict zones. The fear of war affects 22% of the population, showcasing the human

cost of the ongoing conflict in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Q1.▶

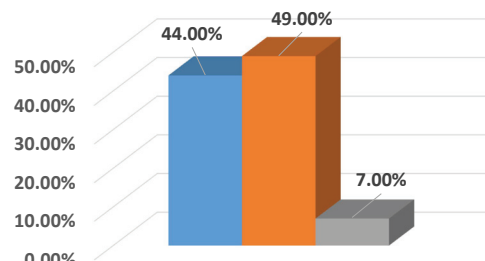
After a long time, the Pakistani Army killed 8 TTP fighters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. What is your opinion?



- A - Pakistani Army's strategic action
- B - A reaction
- C - A fight to the finish
- D - Can't say

◀Q2.

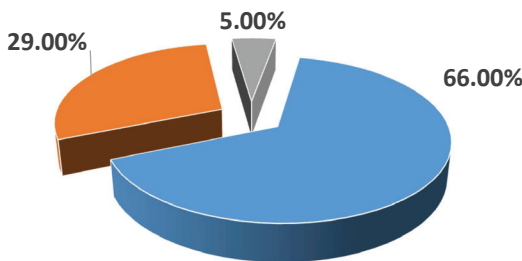
After the death of 8 fighters, will TTP retaliate against the Pakistani Army?



- A - Immediate retaliation
- B - Change in TTP's strategy
- C - Can't say

Q3.▶

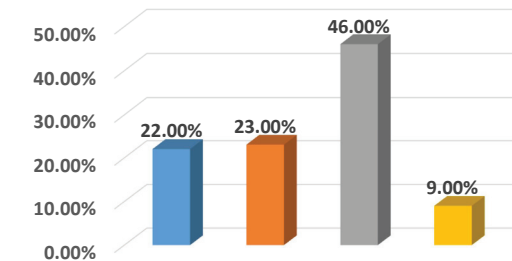
Will the Pakistani Army's morale increase after the major operation in Khyber?



- A - Yes
- B - No
- C - Can't say

◀Q4.

What is the general public's situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to the conflict between TTP and the Pakistani Army?



- A - Living in fear of war
- B - Trying to flee conflict zones
- C - Worried about the future of children
- D - Can't say

Wild swings in US indices

CONTINUED FROM P1

of it to revert to a drop of 1.3 per cent, as of 10:30 a.m. Eastern time.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 736 points, or 1.9 per cent, and the Nasdaq composite was 1.3 per cent lower. Both also whipped through intense reversals, with the Dow going from a loss of 1,700 points to a gain of nearly 900 points.

The intense swings come

as financial markets strain to see hopes that Trump may let up on his stiff tariffs, which economists see raising the risks of a global recession.

Some investors are holding onto hope that Trump may lower his tariffs after negotiating with other countries, and Trump said Sunday that he's heard from leaders "dying to make a deal".

A drop in tariffs relatively soon could help avoid a re-

cession, but whether that can happen is still uncertain.

"The recent tariffs will likely increase inflation and are causing many to consider a greater probability of a recession," JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon wrote in his annual letter to shareholders Monday. He's one of the most influential executives on Wall Street. "Whether or not the menu of tariffs causes a recession remains in question, but it will slow down growth."

CONTINUED FROM P1

IT (2.63 per cent).

"After US markets plunged on Friday, it was writing on the wall for other global equity indices which fell like a pack of cards amid fears that Trump's policies on reciprocal tariffs may lead to recession and higher inflation in the US going ahead. Already, commodity prices of crude oil and several metals are seeing a downward slide, which is an indication of a slackening demand if the current trend persists," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Meh-ta Equities Ltd, said.

The market tumbled as the carnage over high US tariffs and the retaliation by other countries may kickstart a

trade war," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited.

"Sectors like IT and metals have underperformed relative to the broader market due to the risk of high inflation with slower growth that may result in a potential recession in the US," Nair added.

Trump's reciprocal tariff announcement last week has been sending tremors across asset classes globally. Equity markets worldwide slumped, particularly after Trump's sweeping trade tariffs, which stoked fears of an all-out trade war and a global economic recession.

Since assuming office for his second term, President Trump has reiterated his stance on tariff reciprocity,

emphasising that the United States will match tariffs imposed by other countries, including India, to ensure fair trade.

Going ahead, the market focus will gradually shift towards the RBI monetary policy and the upcoming corporate earnings season.

All Sensex firms, except for Hindustan Unilever, ended lower. Tata Steel fell the most by 7.73 per cent followed by Larsen & Toubro which cracked 5.78 per cent. Tata Motors, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, HCL Technologies and HDFC Bank were the other big laggards.

Hindustan Unilever ended marginally higher.

"Global markets reeled as US President Donald Trump unleashed a fresh wave of tariffs, calling it 'Liberation Day'. The move sparked immediate retaliation from China, which imposed a 34 per cent tariff on US goods.

"Wall Street responded with its sharpest drop in months, wiping out over USD5 trillion in value, and Asian markets mirrored the sell-off on Monday," Vikram Kasat, Head - Advisory, PL Capital - Prabhudas Lilladher, said.

The impact on Indian equities was severe, he noted.

"For now, markets may remain on edge as global uncertainties continue to weigh on risk appetite," Kasat added.

Markets across the globe bore the brunt of US President Donald Trump's tariff hikes and retaliation from China.

In Asian markets, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index tanked more than 13 per cent, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 plunged nearly 8 per cent, Shanghai SSE Composite index dropped over 7 per cent and South Korea's Kospi sank over 5 per cent.

European markets, too, came under heavy selling pressure and were trading with over 4 per cent decline.

US markets ended significantly lower on Friday. The S&P 500 tanked 5.97 per cent, Nasdaq composite slumped 5.82 per cent, and the Dow tumbled 5.50 per cent on Friday.

Trump says result 'will be greatness'

CONTINUED FROM P1

GREATNESS will be the result!" he said.

"Countries from all over the World are talking to us. Tough but fair parameters are being set. Spoke to the Japanese Prime Minister this morning. He is sending a top team to negotiate! They have treated the U.S. very poorly on Trade. They don't take our cars, but we take MILLIONS of theirs. Likewise Agriculture, and many other "things." It all has to change, but especially with CHINA!!!!" he said in another post.

In keeping with the turmoil in global markets following President Donald Trump's tariff decisions, the US markets also witnessed a bloodbath as it opened on Monday morning.

Trump's reciprocal tariffs have led to a broad-based fall in financial markets globally with indices plunging in Asia as well as Europe. The reciprocal tariffs have set off a sell-off in equities globally, and the US itself is no exception. Investors fear that the moves concerning global trade may raise inflation, risking economic growth.

US benchmark indices - Nasdaq, S&P, and Dow Jones, slumped in a range of 4-5 per cent soon after the opening bell. In an earlier post, Trump said the United States is bringing in billions of dollars a week from "the abusing countries on tariffs that are already in place"

"Oil prices are down, interest rates are down (the slow moving Fed should cut rates!), food prices are down, there is NO INFLATION, and the long time abused USA is bringing in Billions of Dollars a week from the abusing countries on Tariffs that are already in place," he said.

"This is despite the fact that the biggest abuser of them all, China, whose markets are crashing, just raised its Tariffs by 34%, on top of its long term ridiculously high Tariffs (Plus!), not acknowledging my warning for abusing countries not to retaliate. They've made enough, for decades, taking advantage of the Good OL' USA! Our past "leaders" are to blame for allowing this, and so much else, to happen to our Country. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" he added.

LPG cylinders to cost Rs 50 more

CONTINUED FROM P1

earlier. "The two rupee excise duty has been imposed by the finance ministry. It will not be passed on to the consumer. It will come into the general kitty, and it will be utilized for reimbursing the LPG losses of the same (oil marketing) company," the minister added.

According to a notification from the Department of Revenue, the central

government has raised the excise duties on diesel and petrol by Rs 2 per litre, effective Tuesday.

Currently, the government charges excise duty of Rs 19.90 per litre on petrol. From Tuesday, it is going to be increased to Rs 21.90 a litre. Similarly, the current excise duty on diesel is Rs 15.80 per litre, and it will increase to Rs 17.80 per litre effective Tuesday.

Oil marketing companies

have informed the Petroleum Ministry that retail prices of petrol and diesel will remain the same.

Crude prices have softened over the past from over USD 70 per barrel to USD 63 per barrel on Monday, raising margins for the oil marketing companies (OMCs). This substantial decline in oil prices may have prompted the government to hike the excise duties on petrol and diesel.

US court clears way

CONTINUED FROM P1

his petition clears the way for his extradition. The US Department of State had authorized Rana's surrender to India on February 11, 2025, following a decision by Secretary of State Marco Rubio. This was shortly before Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington, where President Donald Trump announced the approval of Rana's extradition, calling

him a "very evil" individual wanted by Indian law enforcement.

During the 26/11 attacks, 166 people, including six Americans, lost their lives as ten Pakistani terrorists carried out a brutal, 60-hour siege across Mumbai. Rana's extradition is expected to bring him to India to face charges related to his involvement in the attacks and his support to terrorist activities.

Moga sex scandal case

CONTINUED FROM P1

ing them in a sex racket. The officers were found guilty of accepting bribes in exchange for omitting names of the accused from the testimonies of two women involved in the case. One of the women, a minor at the time, was initially pardoned and made an approver but later turned hostile. Another key witness, Manjit Kaur, passed away during the trial.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court had handed over the case to the CBI in December 2007 due to the involvement of senior police officials and political figures, which had hindered an impartial investigation. In 2012, the CBI court in Patiala framed charges under multiple IPC sections, including criminal conspiracy, giving false information, fabricating evidence, and extortion, along with charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Terrorism curbed but not eliminated in J&K: Shah

CONTINUED FROM P1

police and other security forces intercepted a group of five terrorists who had infiltrated from across the International Border in the Hiranagar sector.

Four policemen -- head constable Jagbir Singh and selection grade constables Jaswant Singh, Balvinder Singh and Tariq Hussain -- and two terrorists were killed in a fierce gunfight in the district on March 27.

The wives of the slain policemen hailing from Kathua, Jammu and Reasi districts, along with relatives of six other police personnel were present at the event, the officials said.

Ruchi Abrol, wife of engineer Shashi Bhushan Abrol of the Talab Tillo area of Jammu, also met Shah. Abrol was among the seven workers of a construction company killed in a terror attack at Gagangir in Ganderbal district in October

last year.

Addressing the families, Shah said for more than three and a half decades, Jammu and Kashmir has suffered the devastating effects of terrorism.

"We are proud of the sacrifice of our brave policemen who laid down their lives to protect our country, our homes and our future. Today under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, significant progress has been achieved in tackling terrorism and ending separatist ideology.

"Our mission is still not accomplished because terrorism has been curbed, but it has not been completely eliminated," he said.

The Home Minister urged the J-K Government to take positive steps for the "compassionate appointment" of 12-year-old Yuvraj Singh, son of martyr Jaswant Singh, upon attaining adulthood (18 years of age).

Shah also paid his respects and gratitude to the family of Abrol, Deputy Manager-cum-/Designer, APCO Construction Company, Gagangir.

The minister said no amount of words can take away the pain being felt by the bereaved, but the government's gesture symbolises "our deep gratitude and the government's unwavering commitment to stand with the families of the brave martyrs, just as the loved ones of the martyrs have stood by the nation".

He urged everyone to "follow the ideals of the martyrs and have an eternal love for duty, honour and 'Maa Bharti'".

"The sacrifice, courage and commitment of the martyrs will always remain etched in our hearts and will continue to inspire us to build the India of their dreams," he said.

WOMAN DIES DURING HOME DELIVERY IN KERALA'S MALAPPURAM

Asma's husband attempted to bury her body, leading to police involvement.

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A 35-year-old woman, Asma, tragically lost her life during a home delivery at her rented residence in East Kodur in Kerala's Malappuram district on Sunday.

The baby boy she delivered is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital in Perumbavoor. Originally from Perumbavoor in the Ernakulam district, Asma was reportedly giving birth to her fifth child. The incident only came to light when her husband, Sirajuddin, attempted to bury her body in Perumbavoor early Sunday morning.

Locals, suspicious of the circumstances surrounding her death, informed the police. Responding swiftly, the Perumbavoor police intervened and transferred Asma's body to the Perumbavoor Taluk Hospital.

Authorities have since confirmed that an autopsy will be conducted to determine the exact cause of death.

According to police source-

SUSPICIOUS DEATH

- Authorities are investigating her death and allegations against her husband for not seeking timely medical help.
- Home deliveries remain common in Malappuram despite Kerala's strong healthcare system.
- Asma's family accuses her husband of neglecting to take her to the hospital during complications.
- This incident adds to a pattern of fatal home births in the region, raising concerns about safety.



es, the couple had been living in a rented house in East Kodur. Sirajuddin, a traditional religious healer by profession, often travelled for work and was usually accompanied by a driver. The Malappuram police stated that they were alerted to the incident by their counterparts in Perumbavoor and are currently verifying all details.

Meanwhile, Asma's family has made serious allegations against her husband, claiming that he failed to take her to the hospital in time, de-

spite heavy bleeding during the delivery. A formal complaint has been registered, and the police investigation is ongoing.

In a related development, police have confirmed that Sirajuddin, whose connection to the case is yet to be clarified, has been admitted to the hospital following a sudden illness.

This tragic incident has once again brought attention to the prevalence of home births in the Malappuram district. Despite Kerala's

high literacy rate and robust healthcare system, home deliveries continue to be a common -- though largely hidden -- practice in the region.

While many expectant mothers undergo routine medical check-ups and follow prenatal advice, when the time for delivery arrives, families often opt for home births, sometimes in secret. These births typically occur at night, with families later claiming the delivery happened too quickly to reach a hospital.

Kerala minister calls home birth 'act of murder'

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Health Minister Veena George on Monday expressed concern over the death of a woman due to excessive bleeding during childbirth at her rented home in Malappuram district, describing it as equivalent to a "deliberate act of murder".

Speaking at the state-level inauguration of World Health Day celebrations, the minister said Kerala is the state with the lowest maternal and infant mortality rates.

"However, in recent times, certain negative trends are emerging in our society, which is deeply concerning," she said, a day after a 35-year-old woman died during childbirth in the Malappuram district.

Stalin accuses Modi of ignoring Tamil fishermen's release

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of neglecting the State government's demands regarding the release of fishermen from Sri Lankan prisons.

The Chief Minister pointed out that before PM Modi's recent visit to Sri Lanka, he wrote to him urging him to press for the release of Tamil Nadu fishermen during his talks with the neighbouring country's leadership. But the fishermen have not reached their homeland, and it was disappointing, the Chief Minister said.

"On 02.04.2025, we passed a resolution in the assembly to stop Tamil Nadu fishermen from being continuously arrested by the Sri Lankan navy. That resolution was passed to find a permanent solution. In the resolution, we requested to retrieve Katchatheevu Island, release fishermen from Sri Lankan prisons, and return the boats captured by the Sri



Lankan navy," Stalin said in the State Assembly.

"We mentioned in the resolution that PM Modi should take action by speaking with the Sri Lankan government when he visits Sri Lanka. We also sent that resolution immediately to the Prime Minister... We had expected 97 fishermen and their boats to reach their homeland, but it has not happened yet... The Union Government and the Prime Minister are neglecting our demands. However, we will not fail to protect our fishermen's livelihood. DMK government will stand with the fishermen," he added.

The Chief Minister said it was worrying that Tamil Nadu coastal area fishermen had been frequently arrested in the last few months.

"Fishermen from Ram-anathapuram, Thoothukudi, Pudukottai, Tiruvarur, Nagercoil, and Thanjavur are continuously affected because of arrests made by the Sri Lankan navy. Though the Union government is being pressured by us to take action for the fishermen's welfare, our fishermen are being arrested, and boats are being captured by the Sri Lankan navy. So, the Tamil Nadu government have taken a few initiatives as part of the solution to this problem," he said.

"The Tamil Nadu Government has issued an order to establish a fishing port at Thangachimadam in the Mannar Gulf region at a cost of Rs150 crore. This port will facilitate fishermen to go deep-sea fishing in the southern part of the Indian Ocean. The construction work will begin soon," he added.

The Chief Minister announced that fishing port projects would be undertaken in Pamban (estimated cost Rs60 crore) and Kundukkal (estimated cost Rs150 crore).

K'taka Home Minister defends govt amid Bengaluru assault comment

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister G Parmeswara on Monday made a shocking comment while reacting to a sexual assault case in Bengaluru and said that though unfortunate, incidents like these occur in large cities like the state capital.

"Incidents like these tend to happen here and there in a big city like this. Whatever legal action needs to be taken will be done in accordance with the law," G. Parmeswara told ANI.

Parmeswara emphasised the need for increased vigilance, adding, "I have also instructed our commissioner to increase beat patrolling."

This comes after a woman was sexually assaulted on a street near



Sadduguntepalya, Bengaluru. The incident was captured by CCTV cameras on April 3

Police said that following the incident, a probe was launched, and an FIR was registered under sections 74, 75, and 78 of the BNS Act.

Sarah Fathima, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) for South East

Bengaluru, confirmed that investigations are underway to identify and apprehend the culprit.

The Karnataka Home Minister also responded sharply to the BJP's ongoing criticism, claiming that the opposition has nothing substantial to discuss about the state government's achievements.

"BJP has an opposition; they have nothing else to talk about our government. We have given good governance so far, and we will continue to do that," Parmeswara said.

The minister highlighted the public's positive reception of the government's guarantees, emphasising that they have garnered appreciation, especially at the grassroots level.

"Our guarantees have attracted a lot of appreciation from the people at the grassroots level," he added.

AICC Gujarat meeting to focus on empowering party, promises

ANAND SINGH
AHMEDABAD

Even as Congress is all set to hold its two-day meeting beginning on Tuesday, the party sources indicated that the leadership will discuss major issues confronting the nation under the BJP-led government at the Centre and chalk out the grand old party's strategy to strengthen the organisation at the grassroots level by giving more powers to the district committee chiefs who will have their say in deciding the candidates for assembly or general elections.

According to party sources, the meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC),



party's highest decision making body will first hold the meeting on Tuesday morning and will be chaired by its Chief Mallikarjun Kharge and also attended by several CWC members.

The source indicated that the party will discuss to empower the district Commit-

tees across the country, with discussion all set to take on four points -- to check the voter list at the district level during assembly or general elections, do crowd funding at district level to hold ideological as well as political battle on the ground, giving them representation in the Central

Election Committee, where they can join the meeting along with the state in charge and state unit chiefs and will have their say in deciding the party's candidates.

The source further said that there is likely to be discussion on dissolving all the district Committees, barring the election bound states and some states where the district Committees have been formed few days or weeks ago.

The source further claimed that the party also plans to provide financial empowerment to district Committees and also some discussion are said to take place on Gujarat where the election is all set to take place in 2027.

Medha Patkar challenges defamation conviction in Delhi High Court

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Social activist Medha Patkar has approached the Delhi High Court, challenging her conviction in a defamation case filed by Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena. The case dates back to 2001, when Saxena accused Patkar of publishing defamatory statements about him.

The trial court upheld her conviction and directed her to appear in person for sentencing on April 8, 2025.

Patkar's counsel argued that the sessions judge had no authority to issue such an order after delivering the judgment. They sought additional time to address this issue and requested permission for Patkar to appear via



video conference instead of in person. The bench of Justice Shalinder Kaur granted her counsel the liberty to file an application for this request and scheduled the matter for further hearing on May 19, 2025.

The case stems from a press note published by Patkar in 2000, which Sax-

ena claimed contained false and defamatory statements about him. At the time, Saxena was the President of the National Council of Civil Liberties (NCCL), an organization supporting the Sardar Sarovar Project in Gujarat.

Patkar, as the leader of the Narmada Bachao Andolan, opposed the project and allegedly accused Saxena of supporting her movement and making financial contributions -- claims he denied.

In July 2024, the Magistrate Court of Saket Court of Delhi convicted Patkar of defamation under Section 500 of the Indian Penal Code, sentencing her to five months of simple imprisonment and imposing a fine of Rs10 lakh.

BJP criticises Uddhav for abandoning Balasaheb's ideology, adopting Rahul's

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BJP leader Shehzad Poonawalla criticized Uddhav Thackeray on Monday, accusing him of abandoning the beliefs of Balasaheb Thackeray and following the views of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi instead.

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray's on Sunday said, "After Waqf, BJP is after the land of Christians, Jains, Sikhs and temple land."

Speaking to ANI, BJP leader Shehzad Poonawalla said, "Uddhav Thackeray should explain that what is his compulsion that Balasaheb Thackeray who once

demanding the complete abolition of Waqf Board and now the one who claims to be his descendant, Uddhav Thackeray is opposing the Amendment (of Waqf Act). Today, after his 'siyaasi dharmaantaran', Uddhav Thackeray has given up on Balasaheb's ideology and has adopted Rahul Gandhi's ideology..."

Poonawalla pointed out that while Balasaheb had once called for the complete abolition of the Waqf Board, Uddhav Thackeray now opposed the amendment to the Waqf Act.

On the Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's visit to Bihar, Shehzad Poonawalla said.



dered no permission for felling of trees would be granted in the capital.

The court clarified that its permission was subject to certain conditions, includ-

ED questions 'L2: Empuraan' producer Gopalan in chit fund case

TDG NETWORK
KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Monday questioned Gokulam Gopalan, one of the producers of the Malayalam movie 'L2: Empuraan', at its Kochi office in connection with a foreign exchange law "violation" by his chit fund company, sources said.

The federal probe agency recorded the Kerala-based businessman's statement under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, they said.

The Enforcement Directorate is said to have questioned him earlier during searches conducted in the case last week in Kozhikode and Chennai.

The agency has said it



seized Rs 1.5 crore in cash after searching the premises of Sree Gokulam Chits and Finance Co Pvt Ltd, the chit fund company owned by Gopalan.

The producer could not be contacted for a response on the allegations made against him and his company by the probe agency.

The ED searches came in the backdrop of the recent

controversy surrounding 'L2: Empuraan', the second movie in the 'Lucifer' trilogy.

Touted as one of the costliest Malayalam cinema productions, 'L2: Empuraan' was released on March 27 and soon became a topic of hot debate over its critique of right-wing politics and covert mention of the 2002 Gujarat riots.

Delhi HC allows transplantation of 26 trees for expansion of SC

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has allowed the Central Public Works Department to transplant 26 trees for the expansion of the Supreme Court building.

Justice Jasmeet Singh said of the 26 trees to be transplanted within the top court's premises, 16 would be transplanted along the pe-

riphery of its garden whereas the rest would go near the administrative buildings complex.

The CPWD also made a compensatory plantation of 260 trees in Sundar Nursery, the judge said.

"Given that the proposed project pertains to the expansion of the Supreme Court building to accommodate additional courtrooms, including a dedicated constitution-

al court, as well as chambers for judges and essential facilities for lawyers and litigants, the present application needs to be allowed," the court said on March 26.

The order came on a plea filed by the CPWD seeking permission to transplant the trees.

While dealing with cases pertaining to preservation and protection of trees in the capital, the court in 2023 or-

ing the filing of an affidavit within two weeks by a responsible CPWD officer on the aspect of the status of the 26 transplanted trees and the 260 trees planted in Sundar Nursery.

The court sought a site-specific transplantation report and a yearly affidavit indicating the survival rate and the health of the transplanted trees aside from the compensatory plantation.

The CPWD would furnish photographs of the transplanted trees to enable the amicus curiae appointed in the matter to see their upkeep and maintenance, it added.

The bench said every year, pruning of the 26 trees would be ensured in a scientific manner to ensure their rejuvenation, as the past transplantation of trees showed that there was heavy pruning of trees which re-

sulted in the trees becoming "mere logs of wood incapable of rejuvenation".

The court asked the department to obtain necessary permissions from the municipal authorities concerned to see if more trees could be planted on the road leading to the Supreme Court, which was "enveloped with fully grown trees" until the expansion of Sundar Nagar Road.

CITY SINGES ON DAY 1 OF HEATWAVE, YELLOW ALERT FOR TWO DAYS

Ridge and Ayanagar stations record temperature above 40°C

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded its first heatwave of the season on Monday with the maximum temperature touching 40.2 degrees Celsius, prompting the India Meteorological Department (IMD) to extend a yellow alert in place in the capital for the next two days. The monitoring stations in the city, including Ridge and Ayanagar, also recorded maximum temperatures above the 40-degree mark at 41 degrees Celsius.

The Palam and Lodhi Road stations recorded a high of around 39 degrees Celsius, the IMD said.

The capital is currently under a yellow alert, which will remain in place for the next two days, a weather department official said.

In IMD's colour code, a yellow alert stands for "Be Aware" and advises people to avoid heat exposure, wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose cotton clothes, and cover their heads with a cloth, hat or umbrella.

SCORCHING SURGE



41°C.

- Delhi will experience a heatwave on April 7-8.
- Heatwaves are expected in Punjab (next 3 days) and Haryana (next 4 days).
- A western disturbance will bring a temperature drop to the Himalayas, impacting Punjab and Haryana.
- Gujarat and West Rajasthan are under red alerts for heatwaves for the next two days.

"Three stations -- Safdarjung, Ridge and Ayanagar -- met the heatwave criteria today, marking the first day of heatwave conditions this season.

"These conditions are likely to continue until April 9. From April 10 onwards, a drop in temperature is expected over Northwest India, including Delhi," the IMD said in a statement.

According to IMD data, the maximum temperature in Delhi usually touches 40 degrees Celsius during the

second half of April.

However, this year, the 40-degree mark has been crossed in the first half of the month -- similar to what was observed in 2022.

IMD data showed that in 2022, the city recorded its first heatwave on April 8 when the maximum temperature touched 41.6 degrees Celsius.

In contrast, no heatwave was recorded in the month of April in 2023 and 2024, though the maximum temperature did touch the

40-degree mark on April 15 in 2023 and on April 26 in 2024, according to the IMD.

The IMD declares heatwave when the maximum temperature reaches at least 40 degrees Celsius in the plains or 30 degrees Celsius in the hilly regions, or when the departure from normal is between 4.5 degrees Celsius and 6.4 degrees Celsius.

The humidity level in the capital on Monday fluctuated between 45 per cent and 25 per cent during the day, the IMD said.

Mayor opposes user charge on property tax

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Mayor Mahesh Kumar and Leader of the House Mukesh Goel Monday voiced their opposition to the municipal commissioner's move to add user charges for solid waste management to house tax bills and demanded immediate withdrawal of the "unjustified" and "anti-people" levy. Both the leaders have written to the commissioner over the matter and indicated that legal options were being explored.

At a press conference here, the mayor claimed that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has failed to provide the promised door-to-door garbage collection services although the residents were already burdened with high taxes.

"The commissioner has added a user charge with property tax, which is completely wrong. We strongly oppose this decision. Such a proposal should have been placed before the House for discussion and approval first," Kumar said.

"These charges, starting from April 1, are not suitable for Delhi and are against public interest. When our



BJP LOOKS FOR CANDIDATE FOR MCD MAYORAL POLLS

NEW DELHI: Eyeing the post of Delhi mayor after its win in the Assembly polls, the BJP has started looking for a suitable candidate from among its councillors for the mayoral polls likely to be held in the third week of this month, party leaders said. The names of several BJP councillors including Leader of Opposition in the MCD House Raja Iqbal Singh, Keshavpuram zonal committee chairman Yogesh Verma and Shahdara South zonal committee Sandeep Kapoor are doing the rounds as potential candidates for the mayoral post, party leaders said. The Aam Aadmi Party wrested control of the MCD in the 2022 polls, winning 134 wards out of 250, while the BJP bagged 104 wards. The BJP became the single largest party in the MCD on February 15, after three AAP councillors switched sides. The anti-defection law does not apply to defectors in civic bodies.

party (AAP) was in opposition, we were against this proposal from the beginning," he said.

The mayor also said, "People are paying private garbage collectors while the MCD is now charging user fees without delivering services. This is unacceptable."

Echoing similar sentiments, Leader of the House Goel said the move has triggered panic among residents, with many complaining about the sudden addition of charges in the online property tax payment system.

"The Department of Envi-

ronment Management Services (DEMS) and House Tax Department have acted without informing the MCD House or the public. This is unethical and possibly illegal," he said.

Goel also questioned the timing of the decision, saying it was being implemented at the fag end of the mayor's term, "bypassing" the budget discussions held before February 15. "No such proposal was passed during the budget session. So how was it introduced?" he posed.

Both leaders claimed the MCD was unable to implement the Central government's 2016 solid waste management policy, citing the poor state of garbage collection in the city.

"Eighty to 85 per cent of households still don't get door-to-door (garbage) collection service. Concessionaires have dumped garbage in colonies, and the public continues to suffer," Goel said.

They also warned that the move by the municipal commissioner could backfire and negatively impact the civic body's tax collection. "People are already frustrated with inflation and rising costs.

IMD Scientist Dr Naresh Kumar on Monday provided an update on the ongoing heatwave conditions and stated that Gujarat is currently experiencing a heatwave, with a red alert issued for the state, and the same alert has been issued for West Rajasthan for the next two days.

IMD Scientist said, "Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions currently prevail in Gujarat, for which we have issued a red alert. Red alert has also been issued for West Rajasthan for the coming two days... Heatwave conditions are likely in Punjab in the next three days. In the next four days, we can see heatwave conditions in Haryana." He further added, "Delhi can see heatwave conditions in the next three days.

A western disturbance will influence the Himalayan region from tomorrow night, and its effects will be seen in the Himalayas... Temperatures in the Himalayas will start to fall after tomorrow night and after three days in Punjab and Haryana.

CM orders weekly public hearings for grievances

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta held a meeting with district magistrates on Monday and directed them to conduct weekly public hearings to address people's grievances and submit reports on development works every 15 days.

She also said paperless property registration would be launched in Delhi soon, ending the need to make rounds to government offices. Gupta added that the government would release a list of non-saleable properties to prevent property transaction fraud.

In the meeting, the chief minister instructed district magistrates that the drive to remove illegal banners and posters from public property would continue.

She reiterated her government's zero-tolerance policy towards corruption and warned of strict action against irregularities in issuing economically weaker section certificates.

In a post on X, Gupta said the progress of various schemes, the status of development works and public service matters were reviewed in detail during the meeting.

Man jumps off Mayur Vihar metro station building

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

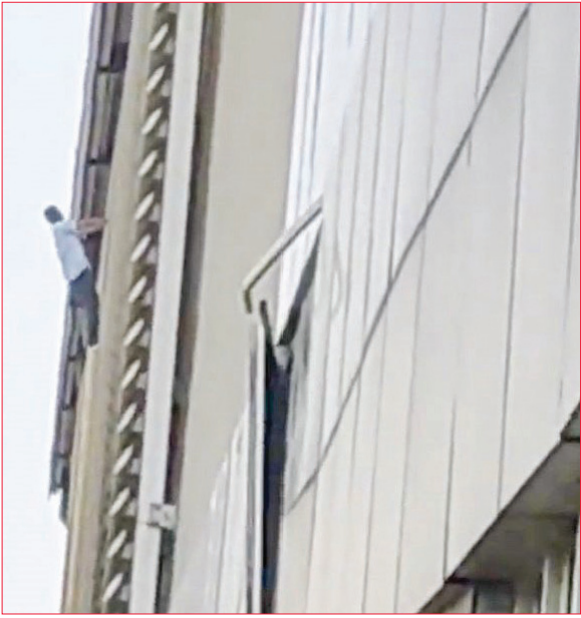
A boy was found hanging from the railing of the Mayur Vihar metro station on Monday noon, a young man attempted to commit suicide and jumped down from the metro station, prompting rescue efforts from the police and fire services.

Upon receiving information about the incident through Police Control Room, the Fire Service and Delhi Police arrived at the scene and began their rescue efforts.

"There is no information on how he went hanging from the railing of the metro station. We are trying to ascertain whether it was a suicide attempt or accidental. At present, efforts are being made to rescue him," said the police.

However, according to NC-Mindia Council For Men Affairs, an NGO which claims that it fights for men's rights has claimed that the man tried to commit suicide because of his matrimonial disputes.

Before jumping, the man hung on to the railing of the station for about 1 hour. A video of the man hanging on



A massive crowd also gathered at the spot recording videos of the man hanging on the railing.

the railing is making rounds on the internet. Police and ambulance can also be seen waiting down in the video.

A massive crowd also gathered at the spot recording videos of the man hanging on the railing. The police team had

reached the spot reportedly before he jumped and tried to explain him to get down for around an hour, but he did not listen to them and jumped down from the building.

After this, he was rushed to the hospital in an injured condition. At present, the police is probing the matter and trying to find out the identity of the man.

No arrests has been made in connection with the matter so far. However, the police is probing the case and will take action after the inquiry is completed.

Delhi court acquits husband of dowry death, cruelty charges



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has acquitted a man accused of subjecting his wife to cruelty and harassing her for dowry which allegedly drove her to kill herself in June, 2014.

Additional sessions judge Sachin Sangwan said the prosecution was unable to prove the case against the husband beyond a reasonable doubt.

The allegations of dowry, the court said, levelled by the woman's father "deviated from normal human conduct".

The order referred to the father's deposition, where he reportedly said no demand of dowry was raised before or at the time of his daughter's engagement, and she returned to her parents' house six months after the marriage, where she stayed for about five months, when she did not allege facing any harassment for dowry.

"By normal human conduct, it appears surprising as to how suddenly a huge dowry demand (of Rs 4 lakh) was raised when no demand was raised prior to the marriage or soon after the marriage,"

the court said on April 4.

Finding "improvements and variations" in the father's statements, the court underlined the lack of corroboration on the principal facts constituting the allegations.

"In normal circumstances, if complainant (father) was facing dowry demands and was unable to meet the same and even his daughter was being harassed on account of such demand, in all likelihood, he would have shared his predicament with his other family members, i.e. his real brother and nephew (both prosecution witnesses)," it noted.

However, the non-mentioning of such demands by these witnesses discredited the testimony of the complain-

ant regarding the alleged demand, the court added.

The chargesheet indicated to the court the couple's disputes were due to the man being unemployed as it was improbable the in-laws harassed the woman during her brief stay at the matrimonial home.

The versions of some relatives of the deceased were based on hearsay and not credible, the court held.

"Therefore, even though the marriage of the accused and deceased is not disputed and the unnatural death within seven years of marriage has also been proved, the dowry demands and consequent harassment has not been proved by the prosecution beyond unreasonable doubts," the order said.

Woman, 19, knifed in full public view in Cantt

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old woman was knifed several times by a man in full public view in the Kirbi Place bus stop area of southwest Delhi, a police officer said on Monday.

The man, 20, later injured himself with the same knife, he said.

The matter was reported to police around 9.30 pm Sunday by a passerby.

"The girl sustained serious injuries to her neck and the left side of the abdomen. A knife was recovered from the scene. Both were hospitalised and are under treatment," the officer said.

On inquiry, it was revealed that the accused, Amit, and the victim girl had been friends since last year and had had a fallout over some issue.



"Both were admitted to DDU Hospital and are under treatment. A case under section 109(1) of the BNS has been registered against accused Amit at Delhi Cantt Police Station and investigation is under progress," said the officer.

Meanwhile, a video, purportedly of the incident, made rounds on social media.

The 45-second clip shows the man and the woman sitting on the road divider in a bloodied state and a crowd of passersby gathered around them

Tihar Jail plans to keep inmates cool amid heatwave

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Two lemons a day and "heat-resistant sheets" are part of the plan of Tihar Jail authorities to help inmates cool off as the summer approaches. Delhi is currently in the grip of a heatwave, with the maximum temperature already expected to cross 40 degrees on Monday.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow warning for a heatwave.

A prison official said the anti-heat measures are a part of their seasonal plan.

"Be it summer or winter, we follow a proper plan for the inmates according to the Tihar Jail manual. We will provide two lemons every day to each inmate

The jail authorities have also planned to install heat-resistant sheets inside the cells to help maintain the temperature a few degrees lower.

for three months -- April, May, and June -- to help keep their bodies hydrated," the official said.

A sufficient quantity of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) has been procured to keep prisoners hydrated, he added.

The jail authorities have also planned to install heat-resistant sheets inside the cells to help maintain the temperature a few degrees lower.

"These sheets are very helpful during the summer as they keep the cell temperature normal and

allow air circulation," the person said.

Established in 1958, Tihar Jail is one of India's largest prison complexes, comprising nine prisons spread over more than 400 acres -- along with one prison in Rohini and six in Mandoli.

Located in West Delhi, Tihar is close to the Tilak Nagar and Hari Nagar areas of the city. Originally designed to house approximately 10,025 inmates, it currently accommodates over 19,000, leading to severe overcrowding.

AUD students protest disciplinary action against prof

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) students on Monday gathered on the Karampura campus to express solidarity with associate professor Kaustav Banerjee, facing disciplinary action for allegedly "inciting disorder" during a student-led protest last month. According to a show-cause notice issued to him, Banerjee's participation in a public meeting on March 24, where he allegedly delivered a "provocative speech", led to indiscipline and disruption.

The notice claims that Banerjee's speech "encouraged students to create indiscipline and nuisance, resulting in disorder, which compelled the university administration to seek the intervention of police".

EDUCATION MINISTER PLEDGES TO CRACK WHIP ON PRIVATE SCHOOLS OVER FEE HIKE

Inspections planned for schools that increased fees without government consent.

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will take strict action against private schools that arbitrarily hiked their fees, Education Minister Ashish Sood said on Monday and accused the previous AAP dispensation of turning a blind eye to such a practice. A list of such schools has been compiled and each will be inspected. Based on the findings, necessary action will follow, he said.

“Out of 1,677 private schools in Delhi, 335 operate on government land and are bound by the Delhi School Education Act of 1973, requiring government approval for fee hikes but only 114 schools are exempt from this condition,” Sood said at a press conference.

Citing a 2004 Delhi High Court judgment in the “Modern School case”, he reiterated that private schools could not hike fees without Directorate of Education (DoE) approval.

According to a statement, Sood cited data from a private school in Dwarka that



had hiked its fees consecutively from 2020 to 2025 by 7 per cent to 20 per cent.

He also named a few private schools that had hiked fees without DoE approval by 30 per cent to 38 per cent.

Sood underscored the current government's dedication, under Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, to prioritizing education and countering the commercialization of the education sector. “We will exert every possible effort to protect the interests of Delhi's children,” he affirmed. Referring to schools as “temples of learning,” Sood alleged that the previous government had enabled corruption through

its association with private institutions.

Sood further challenged the former Education Minister from the AAP Government, Manish Sisodia, to present any concrete evidence of alleged wrongdoing rather than issuing what he termed as “baseless accusations” on television. “If he genuinely believes that corruption took place, he should register a complaint with the police instead of pointing fingers at our government,” Sood asserted.

He questioned the inaction of the previous administration against schools that had been repeatedly flagged by

Manish Sisodia himself for fee-related violations. Citing specific examples, Shri Sood pointed out that DPS Dwarka had raised its fees consecutively over five years—from 2020 to 2025—by 20%, 13%, 9%, 8%, and 7%, respectively.

Similarly, Srijan School increased its fees by 35% during the tenure of the previous government and went on to impose another 36% hike for the academic year 2024–25. He further alleged that Ahlcon International School misused Rs 15 crore without receiving proper permission and was still granted a 15% fee increase in 2022–23, followed by another 13% rise in 2024–25. Angel Public School, which was served a notice for financial discrepancies totaling Rs 42 lakh, also increased its fees by 14% in the 2022–23 session. Likewise, Rukmini Devi Public School raised its fees by 11%, while Lancer's Convent School raised fees by 34% in 2024–25. Commenting on Salwan Public School, Sood claimed it was involved in a financial scam

of Rs 1.68 crore, yet implemented a 23.84% fee hike in 2023–24 and an additional 14.68% increase in 2024–25.

AAP has recently launched an attack on the BJP government over “fee hikes” in schools.

Leader of Opposition Atishi on Monday alleged that, emboldened by the BJP, many schools had significantly raised their tuition fees without proper oversight.

Last week, former education minister Manish Sisodia alleged that the BJP government had handed over Delhi's education system to the “education mafia” and claimed several private schools hiked fees by 20 per cent to 82 per cent.

Responding to the allegation, Sood challenged the senior AAP leader to show proof. “If any evidence is submitted, appropriate action will be taken.”

He also raised concern over a few specific schools that were facing allegations of financial mismanagement hiking fees significantly during the previous dispensation.

Atishi writes to CM Rekha Gupta over rising fees in private schools

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

AAP Leader and LoP Atishi on Monday wrote to Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta over the issue of rising school fees in private schools and urges to issue orders with immediate effect that no school collects the enhanced fee from any parent/guardian, until accounts of the schools are audited.

AAP Leader and LoP Atishi urged the government to ensure that “all accounts of schools seeking a fee hike be audited by CAG empaneled auditors in a time-bound manner. Any approval for a fee hike of even 1-2% should only be granted to schools whose legitimate expenses cannot be met without such an increase.”

The Letter reads, “Education is not a commercial activity, and profiteering cannot be allowed in private schools. Over the last 10 years, the previous government led by Arvind Kejriwal ji and thereafter me followed this principle not just in letter but also in spirit. Unfortunately, within the first two months of your government, it appears that private schools are being given a license to fleece parents as they wish.”



Atishi said that parents of children attending private schools are protesting outside these institutions, as they are not being allowed to send their children to school due to the increased fees.

AAP Leader and LoP Atishi said, “Parents of children studying in private schools in Delhi are protesting outside the schools. They are not allowed to go to school. After the BJP government came to power in Delhi, private schools have started looting fees.”

Atishi said that parents of children attending private schools are protesting outside these institutions, as they are not being allowed to send their children to school due to the increased fees.

She claimed that since the BJP government took charge in Delhi, private schools have started imposing unreasonable fee hikes.

“There was a check on school fees during the AAP government. If the audit revealed wrong fees, the schools would refund the fees even to the students who passed out.

During the ten years of our government, schools had to get audited before increasing the fees. But after the BJP government came to power, every day there is news of a fee hike in some school or the other... Every day, people are tagging us on social media, writing to us and saying that they should somehow stop this fee hike, even though we are in the opposition. They do not trust the government,” she further added.

Atishi pointed out that strict measures were in place to control school fees during the AAP government's tenure.

Students protest fee hike, poor facilities at DSEU

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Several students from the GB Pant Engineering College affiliated to Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU) on Monday staged a protest alleging a sharp fee hike, lack of basic amenities, and alleged administrative high-handedness. The university administration has not issued an official statement on the matter yet.

The protest led by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the students' wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS),



was staged against a sudden hike in annual fees from Rs 1,34,000 to Rs 1,76,000, which the students termed “arbitrary” and “unaffordable”, a statement issued by the ABVP said.

The protesters also raised concerns claiming inadequate infrastructure, poor living conditions, and what they described as “authoritarian attitude” of the college administration.

The protest intensified amid warnings of expulsion (by the authorities) and alleged disregard for the students' demands, leading to a lockdown of the college premises for several hours, the statement said.

The students submitted a memorandum to the director of the institute demanding immediate rollback of the fee hike and redressal of their grievances.

“The agitation will continue until the administration rolls back the hiked fees and stops its anti-student policies,” the ABVP said in the statement, claiming

that the students have collectively decided not to pay the increased fees.

The secretary of ABVP's Delhi chapter, Sarthak Sharma, said, “The unexpected fee hike at DSEU is deeply concerning for the students, who are not only struggling financially but are also deprived of basic facilities. After today's protest, the director has assured action but our fight will continue.”

Sharma also said that ABVP plans to escalate the protest and raise the issue with the university's vice-chancellor in the coming days.



CM Rekha Gupta in a group picture with President DAV College Managing Committee, Punam Suri and DAV school students and others during the 'New Session, New Energy' programme, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. ANI

AAP's Sanjeev Jha alleges BJP 'giving protection to Rohingyas'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and MLA Sanjeev Jha accused the BJP government in Delhi of misleading voters by publicly opposing the settlement of Rohingyas during elections while secretly enabling their accommodation behind the scenes.

Sanjeev Jha claimed that 19 Rohingya children were admitted in two government schools in BJP Minister Kapil Mishra's Karawal Nagar constituency.

Addressing a press conference, senior AAP leader and MLA Sanjeev Jha criticised BJP on the issue of Rohing-



yas, stating, “BJP makes Rohingyas an election issue every single time—whether it's elections in Delhi or anywhere else in the country. Today, I will expose how the BJP itself is the one giving protection to Rohingyas.”

Referring to BJP's prom-

ises during previous elections, he highlighted, “In the run-up to the 2025 elections, several top BJP leaders in Delhi publicly declared that if they were voted to power, their first step would be to identify and expel Rohingyas from the city. Even the Union Home Minister himself, while campaigning, said from the stage that if the BJP forms the government in Delhi, then within a year, they would identify and remove all Rohingyas from the city.”

“But after the elections were over and the government was formed, they are actively providing protec-

tion to them. Rohingya children are being admitted into government schools in Delhi,” the AAP MLA said. “The BJP claims they are trying to identify them—but they are not just aware of their presence but are also giving them protection. Nine Rohingya children have been admitted to SKV, a Delhi government school in Khajuri Khas. Ten more children have been admitted to Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya, also in Khajuri Khas,” the AAP MLA said.

Sanjeev Jha added, “While they pretend to go around with torches searching for these people, in reality, they are looking for where

to quietly settle them. And now they've been caught red-handed.”

He stressed that both of these schools fall in the Karawal Nagar constituency of Delhi, which is represented by BJP leader Kapil Mishra. “This is the same Kapil Mishra who, as per a recent court observation, was prima facie found to be involved in the Delhi riots. So you can now clearly see their double standards. It's like the saying goes—-an elephant has two sets of tusks: one to show and one to eat with. These people say one thing and do something entirely different,” he asserted.

'Govt to revamp web portal to make it public friendly,' says IT minister

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will soon revamp its web portal to make it more public friendly, Information and Technology Minister Pankaj Singh said on Monday.

Security, speed and ease of use are central to the portal development process. The portal is being developed using open-source technology and will be hosted on scalable cloud infrastructure, ensuring high availability and resilience, he said.

During a meeting with department officials, Singh directed them to prominently display public services of the Delhi government on the portal's landing page.

“To ensure ease of naviga-



tion for citizens, public services should be prominently accessible from a separate tab on the home page of the Delhi government portal. Essential services such as government e-services, water, sewerage, health, PWD (public works department) and other public welfare

related services are to be displayed upfront, making them more user-friendly and accessible,” the minister added.

Officials said the portal would cater to more than 100 departments, featuring dynamic content, language support and compatibility

The minister highlighted the need for timely updates on all department portals and emphasised that each carry out regular updates through their respective heads of departments, according to a statement.

with all major browsers.

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Reviewing the proposed update, Singh laid stress on the importance of making

the portal citizen-friendly, informative and seamless.

He underlined the need for a clean and accessible design, quick load times and a powerful search function to improve usability. Information should not only be easily accessible but also well organised and searchable for citizens from all backgrounds.

Delhi begins mist spray systems to tackle pollution: Sirsa

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Monday said the government has started using mist spray systems on electric poles across parts of the capital in a bid to control air pollution and reduce dust levels, especially in high-risk zones.

Speaking about the initiative, Sirsa said the pilot project is currently underway in Dwarka and has shown promising results.

“Earlier, we used water sprinklers on roads to settle dust. Now, we are installing mist spray systems on electric poles and it is proving to be very effective,” he said.



The minister said these systems are being installed at various locations across New Delhi and will soon be expanded. He said it will help in two ways -- in reducing pollution and providing relief from the heat.

“We are working swiftly

to cover all areas with high pollution levels. Soon, these systems will be installed near all major hotspots in the city,” he added.

Sirsa also said the mist spray installations are being carried out in phases, starting with areas identified as pollution hotspots.

Man killed, 3 injured as canter hits car on Delhi-Gurugram Expressway

TDG NETWORK
GURUGRAM

A 40-year-old man was killed and three others, including a woman, were injured after a canter rammed into their car on the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway near IFFCO Chowk in the early hours of Monday, police said.

The canter driver, Akhilesh from Kasganj in Uttar Pradesh was arrested and an FIR has been registered at Sector 18 police station, they said.

The canter driver, Akhilesh from Kasganj in Uttar Pradesh was arrested and an FIR has been registered at Sector 18 police station, they said.

According to police, the four people were en route to Bihar when their car developed a snag near the IFFCO Chowk flyover.

They had parked the car on the roadside with the indicator switched on and were attempting to fix it when the canter hit the

vehicle from behind, they added.

All four occupants of the car were injured and were taken to a hospital by passersby. Riyaz Ansari, was declared dead by doctors, police said, adding that the others are undergoing treatment.

RBI'S POLICY MEET: RATE CUT LOOMS AMID GLOBAL, DOMESTIC PRESSURES

Deposit growth faces double blow.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is gearing up for its crucial Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, scheduled from Monday, April 7, to Wednesday, April 9, in Mumbai. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra will announce the outcome, including any changes in the key policy rates, on April 9 at 10 AM.

The meeting comes on the heels of a 25 basis point (bps) repo rate cut in February — the first in the current easing cycle — which brought the rate down from 6.5% to 6.25%. A fresh rate cut is now widely anticipated, with economists and financial institutions closely watching the central bank's next move.

According to a report by the State Bank of India (SBI), another 25 bps rate cut is expected in the April 2025 policy. The report outlines a roadmap for the RBI to follow up February's reduction with another cut this month, followed by a pause in June, before potentially resuming cuts from August. "We expect a 25-basis point rate cut in April '25 policy. The cumulative rate cut over the cycle could be at least 100 basis points," the

TO SUM UP

- RBI's MPC meet begins April 7, policy rate decision to be announced by Governor Sanjay Malhotra on April 9 at 10 AM.
- February's 25 bps cut may be followed by another, with SBI projecting a 100 bps easing cycle and a pause in June.
- Deposit growth may weaken, SBI warns, due to low saver returns and a shift to Just-In-Time models.
- Experts split on rate cut size: Piramal's Chaudhuri calls for a 50 bps cut; Bank of Baroda's Badhan expects a gradual 25 bps move.



report stated.

However, the SBI report also issued a word of caution. It flagged challenges in deposit mobilization during the rate-easing cycle, pointing to low tax-adjusted returns for savers and a growing shift toward the Just-In-Time (JIT) mechanism. This could deal a double blow to efforts aimed at garnering low-cost, stable deposits.

While there is consensus that a rate cut is needed to support economic growth, experts differ on how aggressive the RBI should be. Some advocate for a bold 50 bps cut, while others see a more measured 25 bps as more likely.

Debopam Chaudhuri, Chief Economist at Piramal Group, is among those calling for a more decisive move. "A 50 bps rate cut seems to be the need of the hour. Whether RBI will consider it is difficult to predict. At a time when all three major data trends, viz., softer inflation, manageable bank liquidity deficit and improving INR support a rate cut environment, the MPC may move fast," he said.

Chaudhuri emphasized the advantages of front-loading rate cuts, especially in light of stabilizing inflation and the strengthening of the rupee. "RBI should consider front-loading rate

cuts and a 50-basis-point cut in April can be a good pre-emptive move. Domestic inflation is low, globally, yields are coming down, and USINR has regained some of its lost ground. These trends present a good opportunity for aggressive rate cuts," he added.

On the other hand, Sonal Badhan, Economics Specialist at Bank of Baroda, expects a more cautious stance from the central bank. "We expect RBI to lower repo rate by 25bps in its Apr '25 meeting. Cumulatively we have priced in 75bps rate cut in this cycle. RBI is expected to take a more gradual approach in lowering rates, hence a 25bps cut is more

Debopam Chaudhuri, Chief Economist at Piramal Group, is among those calling for a more decisive move. "A 50 bps rate cut seems to be the need of the hour. Whether RBI will consider it is difficult to predict."

likely," she said.

Badhan noted that while interest rates are a key factor, capital flows also depend on broader issues like economic growth, global trade dynamics, and geopolitical risks. "We are going with a 25 basis points rate cut, as RBI will remain cautious until the situation of monsoon is more clear. However, the stance will be changed to accommodative, implying that after this, there is scope for more than one 25 basis points rate cut, depending upon the prevailing macro-economic situation," she added.

Globally, central banks are under pressure as uncertainties continue to mount.

Adani Group's Colombo Terminal operations start

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) has announced the commencement of operations at the Colombo West International Terminal (CWIT), located at the Port of Colombo.

Developed under a landmark public-private partnership, the CWIT is operated by a consortium comprising India's largest port operator, Adani Ports and SEZ, leading Sri Lankan conglomerate John Keells Holdings PLC, and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, under a 35-year Build, Operate, and Transfer (BOT) agreement.

As per a statement from Adani Ports and SEZ, the CWIT project represents a significant investment of USD 800 million and features a 1,400-metre quay length and 20-metre depth, enabling the terminal to handle approximately 3.2 million twenty-foot equivalent Units (TEUs) annually.

According to APSEZ, it is the first deep-water terminal in Colombo to be fully automated, designed to enhance cargo handling capabilities, improve vessel turnaround times and elevate the port's status as a key trans-shipment hub in South Asia.



Construction began in early 2022 and has since achieved rapid progress. With the installation of cutting-edge infrastructure now nearing completion, CWIT is poised to set new benchmarks in operational efficiency and reliability in regional maritime logistics, the release said.

"The commencement of operations at CWIT marks a momentous milestone in regional cooperation between India and Sri Lanka," said Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group.

"Not only does this terminal represent the future of trade in the Indian Ocean but its opening is also a proud moment for Sri Lanka, placing it firmly on the global maritime map. The CWIT project will create thousands of direct and indirect jobs locally and unlock immense economic value for the island nation. It also stands as a shining

example of the deep-rooted friendship and growing strategic ties between the two neighbours, and of what can be achieved through visionary public-private partnerships. Delivering this world-class facility in record time also reflects the Adani Group's proven ability to efficiently execute large-scale critical infrastructure projects anywhere in the world," he added.

"We are proud to see the progress in the development of the West Container Terminal, a project that strengthens Sri Lanka's position as a regional maritime hub," said Krishan Balendra, Chairperson, of John Keells Group.

"This project is one of the John Keells Group's largest investments and is among the most significant private-sector investments in Sri Lanka. Together with the Sri Lanka Ports Authority and the Adani Group, we will elevate Colombo's status as a leading transshipment hub. We are confident that the project will enhance global trade and connectivity in the region," Balendra added.

APSEZ has evolved from a port company to an Integrated Transport Utility providing end-to-end solutions from its port gate to customer gate.

Govt increases excise duty on petrol, diesel by Rs 2 per ltr

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The central government has raised the excise duties on diesel and petrol each by Rs 2 per litre, effective from Tuesday, according to a notification from the Department of Revenue.

Currently, the government charges an excise duty of Rs 19.90 per litre on petrol. From Tuesday, it is going to be increased to Rs 21.90 a litre.

Similarly, the current excise duty on diesel is Rs 15.80 per litre, and it will increase to Rs 17.80 per litre effective Tuesday. Although it has not been announced yet, the excise duty hike is expected to be absorbed by the oil companies rather than being passed on to consumers.



sumers. The retail selling price of petrol in Delhi is Rs 94.77 per litre, and diesel is being sold for Rs 87.67 per litre.

Crude prices have softened over the past from over USD 70 per barrel to USD 63 per barrel on Monday, raising margins for the oil marketing companies (OMCs).

The retail selling price of petrol in Delhi is Rs 94.77 per litre, and diesel is being sold for Rs 87.67 per litre.

Subdued auto sales likely this year: FADA survey

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Most auto dealers across India brace for an uncertain April dampened by both domestic and global factors.

According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA), IMD's warning of intense heatwaves looms over consumer footfall and infrastructure activity, while renewed tariff tensions on the international stage add market volatility and rattle automobile buyer sentiment.

FADA said on Monday that nearly 60 percent of dealers across all segments report weak booking pipelines, signalling a fragile foundation for the new financial year 2025-26.



"The picture is far from rosy: nearly 60 per cent of dealers across all segments report weak booking pipelines, signalling a fragile foundation on which any optimism must rest," said a FADA statement.

Two-wheeler dealers, however, anticipate a lift from festive buy-ins and marriage season demand. Passenger vehicle showrooms look to pipeline

bookings and localized celebrations, such as Akshay Tritiya, Bengali New Year, Baisakhi, and Vishu, among others.

FADA says dealers across India are cautiously optimistic for 2025-26, projecting mid to high single-digit growth in the two-wheeler segment and low single-digit growth for both passenger vehicle and commercial vehicle segments.

"Significant headwinds dampen overall optimism. Financing remains a persistent challenge--dealers note that credit norms have tightened in recent months, and the need for further rate cuts by the RBI to bring down borrowing costs," FADA said in its outlook.

FADA asserted that a possible shrink in disposable incomes in tandem with market volatility may well cause discretionary spending like auto purchases to suffer going forward.

FADA today also released retail sales data for the just-concluded financial year 2024-25.

According to FADA data, passenger vehicles grew by 4.87 per cent, closely

matching the Association's initial forecast of 5 per cent.

Two-wheelers segment ended the year at (+) 7.71 per cent, falling short of the hoped-for double-digit increase. Commercial vehicles came in nearly flat at (-) 0.17 per cent.

"A key highlight this year was the strong performance in rural areas. Two-wheelers in rural markets grew by 8.39 per cent, comfortably outpacing the urban growth of 6.77 per cent, while Three-wheelers saw an even bigger contrast at 8.70 per cent in rural regions versus just 0.28 per cent in urban. Even Passenger Vehicles posted 7.93 per cent in rural sales, compared to 3.07 per cent in cities," said FADA President CS Vigneshwar.

Sitharaman sets for week-long official visit to UK, Austria

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will embark on an official visit to the UK and Austria on Monday (today). Her visit will conclude on April 13.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Finance, the finance minister is scheduled to attend Ministerial-Level Bilateral meetings in both countries.

During the visit, the Finance Minister will participate in the 13th Ministerial round of the India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue and engage with think tanks, investors, and business leaders in the UK and Austria.

The 13th round of the India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue is scheduled to be held in London, United Kingdom, on Wednesday. The 13th EFD dialogue will be co-chaired by the finance minister and the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The 13th EFD is a significant bilateral platform between



the two countries that offers opportunities for candid engagement at Minister, officer, working group, and regulatory body levels in various aspects of financial collaboration, including investment matters, financial services, financial regulations, UPI interlinkages, taxation matters, and illicit financial flows.

The key priorities of the 13th EFD dialogue for the Indian side include cooperation in

IFSC GIFT City, investment, insurance and pension sectors, FinTech and Digital economy, and mobilising affordable and sustainable climate finance.



The ministry said in the statement that the Union Finance Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer are also set to announce and launch various reports and new initiatives to further collaborations.

On the sidelines, Sitharaman will engage in bilateral meetings with key dignitaries, participate in investor roundtables and other meetings with heads of key financial institutions and companies.

During the UK leg of the official visit, Sitharaman will deliver the keynote address at the India-UK Investor Roundtable in the presence of Chief Executive Officers of international organisations, including key management personnel from across the UK financial ecosystem, including pension funds, insurance companies, banks, and financial services institutions.

ECONOMY WRAP

- Healthcare sector growth subdued in Q4FY25: Nuvama expects 17.2% YoY EBITDA growth led by hospitals (18.1%) and diagnostics (9.4%), but weak footfalls and seasonal disruptions have dampened overall performance. Revenue growth remains muted, raising concerns of FY25 earnings cuts.
- Gold fundamentals strong despite price drop: WGC's Sachin Jain says recent \$200 price fall is not panic selling but a correction. Strong demand, central bank buying, and geopolitical tensions continue to support gold's long-term strength.
- India's exports to US may drop 6.41%: GTRI warns Trump's new tariffs could reduce Indian exports by \$5.76 billion in 2025. Key sectors like seafood, metals, gems, and auto parts may suffer, though gains are likely in textiles, pharma, and chemicals.



Inflation may stay below 4% in first half of FY26: SBI report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The inflation in India may remain below 4 per cent in the first half of the financial year 2025-26 (FY26), according to a report by the State Bank of India (SBI).

This could be the first time inflation stayed below 4 per cent for two quarters in a row in recent years.

The report said The "US has imposed reciprocal tariffs to many economies that is more than India's...This will increase the fear of dumping into India by these countries, resulting in lower inflation."

It noted that the consumer price index (CPI) inflation is expected to fall to 3.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of FY25. For the full year FY25, average inflation may be around 4.6 per cent. Based on this trend, SBI expects inflation to come down to 3.9-4.0 per cent in FY26. Core inflation, which excludes food and fuel prices, is likely to stay in the range of 4.2-4.3 per cent.

The report also said that

The report said The "US has imposed reciprocal tariffs to many economies that is more than India's...This will increase the fear of dumping into India by these countries, resulting in lower inflation."

headline inflation will continue to move downward till September or October 2025. After that, there is a possibility it may rise again. It also pointed out a global factor that could impact India's inflation. The United States has imposed reciprocal tariffs on several countries. These tariffs are higher than the ones India has placed. As a result, there is a fear that other countries may start dumping their goods in

India at cheaper prices. This could lead to a further drop in inflation levels in the country.

The report also gave an update on India's current account balance. Based on the latest trade and services data, it expects India's current account to be in surplus in the fourth quarter of FY25.

India's current account deficit (CAD) stood at USD 11.5 billion in the third quarter of FY25. This was 1.1 per cent of the country's GDP. It was slightly higher than the CAD of USD 10.4 billion (also 1.1 per cent of GDP) in the same quarter last year, but lower than the deficit of USD 16.7 billion (1.8 per cent of GDP) seen in the second quarter of FY25.

The merchandise trade deficit increased to USD 79.2 billion in the third quarter of FY25 from USD 71.6 billion in the same period of the previous year. However, net services receipts rose to USD 51.2 billion from USD 45.0 billion a year ago, helping to improve the overall current account situation.

NAM FOUNDERS FORGING TECH FUTURE



IVONA LESKUR, MONOJIT DAS & SUDHANSHU KUMAR

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND EVOLUTION OF RELATIONS

India and Serbia, with shared histories and mutual respect, enjoy longstanding ties, tracing back to the era of Yugoslavia. Taking history into account, as co-founders of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), India and the former Yugoslavia upheld a vision for independent and non-aligned foreign policy amidst the Cold War's divisive politics. Serbia, following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, continued to build on this NAM legacy, fostering relations with India based on mutual sovereignty, territorial integrity, and cooperation on multiple fronts. India's principled stance on Serbia's sovereignty and its non-recognition of Kosovo's independence solidify this commitment. Celebrating the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties in 2023, both nations highlighted this relationship's enduring strength through symbolic gestures, such as a commemorative postal stamp issued by the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which featured iconic national monuments from both countries. This milestone is a testament to the diplomatic maturity and sustained goodwill between the two nations, reflecting their commitment to continued collaboration and support on various international platforms.

DEEPENING ENGAGEMENTS

Recent years have witnessed high-level visits and an expansion of economic, scien-

tific, cultural, and defence co-operation between India and Serbia. In June 2023, President Droupadi Murmu's state visit to Serbia marked a significant moment, being her first visit to Europe and the first such visit by an Indian head of state to Serbia. This visit underscored potential collaborations in diverse sectors, including defence technology, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and cultural cooperation. Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic joined discussions, accompanied by eight Serbian ministers, highlighting Serbia's enthusiasm to deepen engagements with India across multiple fields. Serbia's participation in the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit, hosted virtually by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2023, exemplifies the two nations' shared vision of South-South cooperation. Moreover, Serbia's growing economic engagements with India, particularly in technology, pharmaceuticals, tourism, and agriculture, have set a progressive trajectory for bilateral trade, which has seen a steady increase, totalling around USD 383.6 million in 2023. This growth reflects the increasing alignment in economic interests and the commitment to fostering a mutually beneficial trade relationship.

In addition to this, there have been certain visa policy changes that have also been made which are positively impacting this bilateral relationship. Effective from January 1, 2023, Serbia's withdrawal of visa-free entry for Indian nationals aligns its

policy with the European Union's regulations. While this policy change may pose a logistical adjustment, it is unlikely to strain diplomatic ties significantly. Given the historical depth of the India-Serbia relationship, such procedural shifts are manageable within the broader diplomatic framework. India and Serbia have both expressed commitment to fostering people-to-people ties, and visa facilitation can always be revisited for smoother interactions. Nonetheless, this new visa requirement could prompt discussions on easing mobility, especially for professionals, students, and tourists from India, which would help maintain the momentum of the ongoing exchanges.

EXPLORING SPACE AND AI TOGETHER

In recent developments, Serbia and India have identified promising avenues of collaboration in cutting-edge technological domains such as space exploration and artificial intelligence. One notable initiative is ShaktiSAT, a project launched by the Indian aerospace startup Space Kids India, aimed at encouraging young women worldwide to pursue careers in space science and technology. A key aspect of the project involves designing, manufacturing, and operating a lunar-orbit satellite entirely by a female team. Serbia's participation in this initiative marks a significant milestone, with 101 registered Serbian participants in 2023 expressing a strong interest in acquiring knowledge and building cross-border scientific and professional connections. Serbian Minister of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation, Dr. Jelena Begovic, emphasised the importance of this initiative as a global step toward empowering women through STEM

education. She also noted that Serbia has a strong representation of women in science, with over 50% of students and PhD holders being female. To further make this collaboration a successful endeavour in the long term, there is a need for developing broader frameworks and streamlined strategies for sustained collaboration between Serbia and India across technological domains.

Further deepening bilateral scientific engagement, Serbia hosted the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit at the Palace of Serbia in December 2024, gathering over 130 delegates and 1,000 experts from around the world. As the largest international event in the country since the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade, the GPAI Summit focused on policy approaches for unlocking the transformative potential of artificial intelligence, promoting ethical and inclusive innovation, and enhancing global cooperation. Notably, Serbia assumed the GPAI presidency from India, reflecting the trust and mutual respect between the two nations. During the summit, Minister Begovic met with India's Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Jitin Prasad, to discuss opportunities for collaboration in AI and digital technologies. She highlighted Serbia's commitment to international cooperation in accelerating technological advancement and emphasized the importance of building robust intergovernmental partnerships. Minister Begovic underscored Serbia's strategic goal to develop effective AI governance mechanisms—ensuring technology remains both safe and innovative. Additionally, it is essential to understand

that a deeper AI collaboration is only possible when private sector contributions and academic collaborations, which are essential for driving innovation, become the cornerstone of India-Serbia relations. In AI specifically, partnerships with Indian tech startups, universities, and research institutions could enhance Serbia's capacity to implement cutting-edge solutions and digitized products.

MULTIPOLARITY AND MUTUAL PROSPERITY

In the context of an evolving multipolar world, India and Serbia's relationship serves as a model for diplomatic resilience and shared development. Both countries have maintained their autonomy in foreign policy decisions, often supporting non-aligned or neutral stances on complex global issues. Serbia's engagement with India in forums such as NAM and the Voice of Global South Summit demonstrates its recognition of India's role in providing a balanced perspective on global affairs. In the future, India and Serbia can strengthen their partnership by leading multilateral dialogues on issues such as climate change, regional security, and trade facilitation within international forums. Serbia's geographical position as a bridge between the East and West, coupled with India's strategic position in Asia, provides a unique advantage in advocating for balanced policies that support emerging economies.

Interestingly, today a multipolar world is only possible with different nation-states engaging in strategic defence and security cooperation. In this regard, defence and security cooperation have also evolved as one of the key pillars in India-Serbia relations. Following the 2019 Agreement on Defence Cooperation, regular defence interactions have taken place, and

Serbian defence delegations have participated in events like India's Aero India show in 2023. The mutual interest in defence manufacturing, military technology, and UN peacekeeping training underlines the commitment of both countries to develop a robust security partnership. India's role as a defence exporter, with capabilities in missile systems, aircraft, and cybersecurity solutions, aligns well with Serbia's defence modernization goals. By exploring joint research initiatives in defence technology and advanced training programmes, India and Serbia can establish a mutually beneficial defence relationship that aligns with their shared strategic interests.

Thus, to conclude, it is important to acknowledge that India and Serbia have successfully maintained a warm and productive relationship rooted in shared values and respect for sovereignty. From political solidarity in the Non-Aligned Movement era to burgeoning economic and defence cooperation, this relationship has adapted to changing global dynamics while retaining its core principles. As both countries continue to navigate a multipolar world, there is ample potential to expand collaborations in education, industrial innovation, and security. Enhanced exchanges through programmes like ICCR and ITEC, coupled with investments in critical sectors, can provide further momentum to this partnership, ensuring that India and Serbia's friendship continues to thrive in the years to come.

Ivona Leskur is a Junior Researcher at the Institute of European Studies in Serbia and a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Belgrade. Monojit Das is an independent researcher on cyber governance. Sudhanshu Kumar is a PhD candidate at the School of International Studies, JNU.

PREVENTION OVER TRADITION

Need to rethink tight-fitting attire



DR. PYALI CHATTERJEE & MS. MAITREYEE TEMBHEKAR

Petticoats and dhotis have long been an essential part of India's cultural heritage, symbolizing both elegance and tradition. However, hidden beneath their graceful drapes is a rarely discussed health concern—a unique condition referred to as “petticoat cancer” or “saree cancer.” Also known as Marjolin ulcer, this uncommon form of skin cancer typically develops around the waist due to prolonged irritation and friction. The term ‘Saree Cancer’ was first introduced by Dr. Patil et al. in the Bombay Hospital Journal from Bombay Hospital, India, and has recently garnered significant attention in Indian media. This condition arises from the continuous pressure exerted by tightly bound waist cords in traditional Indian attire, leading to chronic irritation. However, it would be incorrect to assume that only Indian garments contribute to this issue. Western clothing, such as tight-waisted jeans,

can also cause similar irritation, ultimately leading to the same risks. Over time, this persistent friction can result in chronic ulcers, which, if left untreated, have the potential to develop into aggressive carcinoma.

Although petticoat cancer is not a common condition, it remains a significant health concern for individuals who habitually wear tightly tied clothing over extended periods, often spanning several decades. Skin cancer accounts for only 1% of all cancer cases, highlighting that saree or dhoti cancer is rare compared to other forms of cancer. The primary culprit behind this condition is the tight cord of the petticoat, which causes continuous friction and moisture retention, leading to dermatoses such as dermatitis and depigmentation. In rare instances, prolonged irritation and pressure from the cord may contribute to the onset of squamous cell carcinoma. Studies have

documented these skin lesions, including their potential malignant transformations, under the term ‘saree cancers.’ The root cause lies in the persistent tightness of the waist cord, which induces chronic inflammation over time, ultimately increasing the risk of malignant changes.

It's not just the knot used in a petticoat that can cause irritation—wearing tightly belted pants can also lead to skin sensitivity, redness, restricted blood flow, and, over time, leave marks around the waist. Tight clothing such as corsets and blouses can further compromise blood circulation. Therefore, it is crucial to avoid wearing tight-fitting clothes for extended periods for the sake of overall health. Although data shows that the risk of developing petticoat cancer is minimal, there is a well-known saying: “Prevention is better than cure”. It is always better to take precautions now by avoiding the habit of wearing excessively tight clothing.

In India, cases of petticoat cancer have primarily been reported among elderly women who have worn tightly tied sarees for over 30 or 40 years. For example, a 70-year-old woman developed a persistent ulcer on her right flank, which was

later diagnosed as squamous cell carcinoma. Another woman in her late 60s presented with an ulcer that had spread to her lymph nodes, having worn a lugda—a tightly tied saree style—for more than 40 years.

While “petticoat cancer” predominantly affects women due to saree-wearing habits, analogous cases have been documented in men wearing tightly bound dhotis. Chronic friction and pressure from the dhoti's cords can induce skin irritation, pigmentation, and, infrequently, malignant transformations such as squamous cell carcinoma. A documented instance of waistline skin cancer, sometimes termed “dhoti cancer”, involved a 70-year-old South Indian male who, after decades of wearing a tightly bound dhoti, developed a 4x3 cm ulcer proliferative lesion on his waist. This was diagnosed as squamous cell carcinoma, treated via wide local excision with a 2 cm margin.

Preventing petticoat cancer begins with changing the way traditional garments are worn and maintained. Dr. Sudhir Kumar, a neurologist from Apollo Hospitals in Hyderabad, emphasizes the need for vigilance and care to mitigate the risk. Here are some

recommended practices:

Loosen the Fit: Avoid wearing petticoats or dhotis too tightly. Keep them slightly loose and comfortable to reduce pressure on the skin.

Avoid Tight Shapewear: Refrain from using saree shapewear that compresses the waist.

Rotate Knot Position Change the location of the knot regularly to prevent localized damage to the skin.

Choose Quality Fabrics: Opt for high-quality, soft materials like cotton instead of lower-quality alternatives.

Maintain Hygiene: Wash garments daily to remove sweat and prevent bacterial buildup.

Regular Skin Checks: Examine the skin around the waist regularly for signs of irritation, scarring, or suspicious lesions.

Seek Medical Attention: If any unusual skin changes are observed, consult a healthcare professional promptly.

We all want to wear body-fitting clothes to achieve a well-shaped appearance. However, while doing so, one must be cautious. If the clothes you wear are too tight, leaving red marks on your skin or making it difficult for you to breathe, it's time to consider their side effects.

Not only this, but extremely tight clothing can also put stress on the stomach and intestines, potentially leading to digestive issues. During summer, we usually prefer loose-fitting clothes to prevent skin infections. Tight clothing traps sweat and heat within the fabric, which can cause rashes and other skin problems. On the other hand, loose clothing allows air circulation, keeping the body cool and fresh. It is not only during summer but in general that we should avoid excessively tight clothing, as it may cause skin irritation and discomfort.

There is a famous saying in India that we should eat food according to our preference but wear clothes that are appealing in the eyes of others. However, we would like to correct this notion—rather than dressing to please others, we should prioritize wearing clothes that ensure our own comfort. After all, taking care of our body is the best form of self-care, contributing to better health and a long, healthy life.

Dr. Pyali Chatterjee, HOD, Faculty of Law, ICEAI University, Raipur; Chhattisgarh, & Ms. Maitreyee Tembhekar, Student, B.A L.L.B (Hons), 1st year, 2nd sem, The ICEAI University, Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

PERSPECTIVE NEEDED, COMMUNICATION

DISPEL THE CANARDS BEING SPREAD ABOUT Waqf REFORMS

After the passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill in Parliament, it is time for full on politics by Opposition parties that had prepared the ground for it by painting the bill as anti-Muslim and communal. Ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, to be held sometime later this year, a competition of sorts has broken out among parties to prove to their Muslim voters that they are their biggest saviours. Since this cannot be done without painting the ruling coalition as the villain of the piece, Muslims are being told that the Amendment Bill has been designed to snatch away their property and make them second class citizens of the country. When the truth is that the Bill is actually about the management and governance of Waqf property, by making the functioning of the Waqf boards more efficient and transparent, apart from making the boards more representative.

While Waqf is assets donated for charitable purposes, with the owner being God once the property is transferred as Waqf, the management of that property by the Waqf boards has come in for severe criticism even by Muslims for being riddled with corruption. Proceeds from such property are to be used for the welfare of the Muslim community and Waqf property cannot be sold. This has not stopped Waqf boards from allowing such land for different purposes in exchange for a hefty sum of money, which, more often than not, has not been used for the betterment of the Muslim community. As Home Minister Amit Shah pointed out in Parliament, “The leased Waqf Board properties were 20,000, but in 2025, as per records which might be wrong, these properties became zero. Where did these properties go? With whose permission were they sold?” As per government data, the country's 32 Waqf boards are the third highest owner of land after India's armed forces and the railways. The Waqf boards have enjoyed untrammelled powers to claim any property as Waqf, including government or private property. Waqf boards used Section 40 of the earlier Waqf Act to declare any land as Waqf property—decisions that were considered final. For example, two islands in Bet Dwarka, the place where Hindus believe Lord Krishna ruled, was claimed as Waqf property. The municipal building in Surat was declared as Waqf property because of its debatable connection with some Muslims in the past. Entire villages in the South have been declared as Waqf property, as well as the national heritage monument, the Taj Mahal and a 1,500-year-old Chola temple. During the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 at Prayagraj there was news that the mela ground had been claimed as Waqf property. As Home Minister Amit Shah pointed out in Parliament, between 1913 and 2013, 18 lakh acres of land were claimed as Waqf property, while in just the last 12 years, 21 lakh acres were added to that list. This was primarily because the Waqf boards were given a free hand by the then UPA government through an amendment to the Waqf Act. Essentially, a handful of individuals, by dint of belonging to the Waqf Boards were supposed to be in control of 39 lakh acres of land in the country—a case of a gigantic land grab

Hence, amending the Waqf Act to get rid of its draconian provisions and making it more representative and women friendly was the need of the hour and that is what was done. For this, support has come even from Muslims—for instance the All India Muslim Women Personal Law Board—because they too have suffered in several cases of maladministration by the Waqf boards. The problem now is in seeing discrimination towards Muslims where there is none. But then this directly feeds the narrative of “Muslims in danger” in India, and that is what the Opposition has latched on to, with ample help from bodies like the All India Muslim Personal Law Board. Their strategy is about allowing a handful of individuals from this particular community complete control over vast resources, but without any accountability in the hope that they being community leaders will transfer Muslim votes en bloc to the respective political parties. And now there is the worry that this anti Waqf bill movement will be stoked into much bigger protests, the way it was done with the Citizenship Amendment Act, as a result of which an Act that had nothing to do with Indian Muslims, was painted as an instrument to disenfranchise them. The Indian government's name was made mud internationally in the process. And thus a good reform was almost killed. This Waqf issue is likely to get bigger ahead of the Bihar elections, in the hope that whatever Muslim support Nitish Kumar's JDU enjoys, melts away. The eventual aim is to drive a wedge among the constituents of the ruling NDA coalition at the Centre and thus destabilise it. Hence, the need of the hour is to increase the channels of communication between the ruling BJP and the Muslim community, so that the latter do not fall for the canards that are being spread about this amendment Bill. Without communication, a good law will be forever tainted in the minds of India's largest minority community.

JOYEETA BASU

India and Sri Lanka share a multifaceted relationship that spans over two millennia, characterized by deep-rooted cultural, religious, and economic ties. This enduring connection has evolved through various phases, influenced by historical events, colonial legacies, and contemporary geopolitical dynamics.

The cultural and religious bonds between India and Sri Lanka date back to ancient times. In the 3rd century BCE, Emperor Ashoka of India sent his children, Arhat Mahinda and Theri Sangamitta, to Sri Lanka to propagate Buddhism. This mission led to the establishment of Buddhism as a major religion in Sri Lanka, fostering a shared spiritual heritage that continues to influence the island nation's culture and traditions.

Additionally, the ancient Indian epic, the Ramayana, narrates the story of Lord Rama constructing a bridge, known as Rama Setu or Adam's Bridge, from India to Sri Lanka to rescue his wife Sita from the demon king Ravana. This mythological connection underscores the deep historical ties and shared narratives between the two nations.

COLONIAL ERA

The colonial period saw both India and Sri Lanka under British rule, albeit with distinct administrative structures. India gained independence in 1947, followed by Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1948. Post-independence, both nations sought to establish their identities and navigate the complexities of nation-building. The shared experience of colonialism and the subsequent quest for sovereignty further cemented their bilateral relations.

POST-INDEPENDENCE

In the years following independence, India and Sri Lanka entered into several agreements to address mutual concerns and strengthen bilateral ties:

- **Nehru-Kotelawala Pact (1954):** This agreement addressed the status and future of people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, particularly those brought by the British to work in plantations. India accepted, in principle, the repatriation of Indian populations in Sri Lanka, emphasizing voluntary repatriation for those opting for Indian citizenship.
- **Sirima-Shastri Pact (1964):** Building upon pre-

The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was signed on 29th July 1987 in Colombo between the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the then Sri Lankan President J R Jayewardene to bring the Sri Lankan civil war to an end. This accord saw the induction of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka. Picture source: byjus.com



FROM ASHOKA TO ACCORD: 2000-YEAR ARC OF DIPLOMACY

Two nations, one epic bond—shaped by Buddha, battered by bullets, and now building a new era of cooperation.

vious discussions, this pact focused on the repatriation of Indian-origin Tamils in Sri Lanka. It was agreed that a significant number would be granted Indian citizenship and repatriated, while others would receive Sri Lankan citizenship, aiming to resolve the issue of statelessness in this community.

- **Indo-Sri Lanka Accord (1987):** Amidst the escalating civil conflict involving the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), this accord aimed to bring peace by introducing devolution of power to the provinces and recognizing Tamil as an official language. It also led to the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Economic ties between India and Sri Lanka have been robust and multifaceted:

- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** Signed in 1998 and operational since 2000, the Indo-Sri Lanka FTA

has significantly boosted bilateral trade. India has emerged as one of Sri Lanka's largest trading partners, with trade encompassing a diverse range of goods and services.

- **Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA):** Building upon the FTA, the proposed ETCA aims to enhance collaboration in trade, services, and investment. While it promises economic benefits, the agreement has faced domestic opposition in Sri Lanka over concerns about labour market impacts and economic sovereignty.

CULTURAL TIES

The cultural connections between India and Sri Lanka are profound:

- **Buddhism:** As a shared spiritual heritage, Buddhism continues to be a significant link. Pilgrimages, cultural exchanges, and collaborative efforts in preserving Buddhist sites underscore this connection.
- **Arts and Cinema:** The influence of Indian cinema,



India's second Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri talks with Sirimavo Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike, former Prime Minister of Ceylon and the world's first female Prime Minister, on her recent India visit, in New Delhi on June 6, 1965. Picture source: Facebook post History of Congress/History of Congress

particularly Tamil and Hindi films, is notable in Sri Lanka. Conversely, Sri Lankan artists have found audiences in India, fostering mutual appreciation.

- **Education and scholarships:** India offers numerous scholarships to Sri Lankan students, facilitating academic exchanges and strengthening educational ties.

DEFENCE COOPERATION

In recent years, defence collaboration has gained momentum:

- **Joint military exercises:** Initiatives like the SLINEX naval exercises and MITRA SHAKTI army exercises enhance interoperability and mutual trust between the armed forces.
- **Defence agreements:** In April 2025, India and Sri Lanka signed a five-year defence cooperation agreement focusing on training Sri Lankan military personnel in India and sharing information and technology. This move aims to bolster regional security and reflects the deepening strategic partnership.

gic partnership.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In April 2025, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Sri Lanka, marking the first visit by a foreign leader since President Anura Kumara Dissanayake assumed office. During this visit, both nations signed significant defence and energy agreements, reflecting a mutual commitment to enhancing strategic and economic collaboration. A notable outcome was the inauguration of a 120-megawatt solar power plant, a joint venture aimed at addressing Sri Lanka's energy needs and promoting sustainable development.

The defence cooperation agreement signed during this visit signifies a pivotal shift in bilateral relations, focusing on joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and maritime security. This move is perceived as a strategic effort to balance China's growing influence in the region, particularly given China's substantial investments in Sri Lankan infrastructure projects like the Hambantota port.



Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, and Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Prime Minister of India, sign the Sirimavo-Shastri pact on 30 October 1964. Picture source: Facebook post 16 August 2024/Sukumar Shan



However, these developments have not been without domestic contention. Protests erupted in Colombo, with critics accusing the government of

compromising national sovereignty in favour of Indian interests. Such incidents underscore the delicate balance Sri Lanka must maintain in its foreign relations, navigating ties with both India and China while addressing domestic sentiments.

compromising national sovereignty in favour of Indian interests. Such incidents underscore the delicate balance Sri Lanka must maintain in its foreign relations, navigating ties with both India and China while addressing domestic sentiments.

WHAT WE KNOW...

The relationship between India and Sri Lanka is deeply rooted in shared history, culture, and mutual interests. From ancient civilizational links to contemporary strategic partnerships, the two nations have traversed a complex path marked by collaboration and challenges. As they move forward, fostering mutual respect, understanding domestic sensitivities, and promoting equitable cooperation will be essential in strengthening this enduring partnership.

Compiled by Ruchira Talapatra

MOST CONTROVERSIAL PART
Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and civil war
In the late 1980s, the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) embarked on a mission in Sri Lanka that would become a defining chapter in the annals of South Asian history. This endeavour, initiated under the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, was fraught with complexities, unforeseen challenges, and profound consequences that continue to resonate.
Sri Lanka, an island nation off the southern coast of India, was engulfed in a brutal civil war between the Sinhalese-majority government and Tamil separatist groups, notably the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The conflict had escalated to alarming proportions, leading to significant loss of life and displacement. India, sharing deep cultural ties with the Tamil population and concerned about regional stability, sought to mediate. This culminated in the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987, wherein India agreed to deploy the IPKF to oversee the disarmament of militant groups and enforce peace.
The unraveling of intentions
Upon their arrival, the IPKF troops were met with a reality starkly different from their expectations. The LTTE, initially perceived as a cooperative entity, resisted disarmament, viewing the IPKF as an occupying force rather than peacekeepers. This resistance swiftly escalated into open hostilities, plunging the IPKF into a conflict they were neither fully prepared for nor adequately equipped to handle.
Operation Pawan
In an attempt to neutralize the LTTE's stronghold in Jaffna, the IPKF launched Operation Pawan in October 1987. The operation aimed to capture key LTTE positions, including their headquarters at Jaffna University. However, the mission was fraught with challenges. The LTTE's guerrilla tactics, combined with their intimate knowledge of the local terrain, resulted in significant casualties for the IPKF. Notably, the ill-fated Jaffna University helicopter highlighted intelligence failures and the formidable resistance posed by the LTTE.
Strained relations
The prolonged engagement of the IPKF led to strained relations on multiple fronts. The Sri Lankan government grew increasingly wary of India's involvement, perceiving it as an infringement on their sovereignty. Simultaneously, the Tamil population, whom the IPKF aimed to protect, became disillusioned due to instances of alleged human rights violations and collateral damage during military operations. The LTTE capitalised on these sentiments, further bolstering their ranks and resolve.
The withdrawal and its aftermath
By 1989, the geopolitical landscape had shifted. The assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, attributed to the LTTE, cast a long shadow over India's involvement in Sri Lanka. Domestically, the IPKF mission faced criticism over its human and financial toll. Consequently, the decision was made to withdraw, and by March 1990, the last of the IPKF troops departed Sri Lankan soil.
The IPKF's mission in Sri Lanka serves as a poignant case study in international peacekeeping. It underscores the perils of intervention without a clear mandate, the challenges of navigating local dynamics, and the unforeseen consequences that can arise from even well-intentioned actions. The episode left an indelible mark on India-Sri Lanka relations and offers enduring lessons on the complexities of regional diplomacy and military intervention.



The accord with Sri Lanka led to the establishment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) whose main role was to disarm the militant groups especially LTTE in Sri Lanka. Picture source: Wikipedia

NIRAMAY RAJASTHAN ABHIYAN: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN RAJASTHAN

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

On the occasion of World Health Day, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Bhajan Lal Sharma, launched a series of groundbreaking health initiatives aimed at transforming the state's healthcare system and improving the quality of life for its citizens. Among the most notable of these initiatives is the NIRAMAY RAJASTHAN ABHIYAN, which represents a comprehensive approach to tackling health challenges across the state. This campaign is designed to promote health, wellness, and the prevention of diseases, especially through innovative healthcare services, community outreach, and state-of-the-art technologies.

The Niramay Rajasthan Abhiyan, along with other concurrent campaigns such as Eat Right Rajasthan Abhiyan, Mission Madhuhari, and Mission Liver Smile Abhiyan, is part of the Chief Minister's vision to create a healthier, disease-free Rajasthan. These campaigns, combined with development initiatives and technological advancements in the healthcare sector, aim to provide accessible and quality healthcare services to every resident, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

The Vision Behind Niramay Rajasthan Abhiyan

The primary objective of Niramay Rajasthan Abhiyan is to improve the overall health and well-being of the people of Rajasthan. It emphasizes preventative healthcare, community-based health education, and promoting healthy lifestyles. The campaign aims to provide accessible, affordable, and efficient healthcare solutions to the residents of Rajasthan, with a focus on maternal and child health, infectious diseases, and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

The campaign also stresses the importance of the right to health as a fundamental right for every citizen, particularly in a state as large and diverse

as Rajasthan. By focusing on key areas such as nutrition, sanitation, mental health, and disease prevention, Niramay Rajasthan seeks to reduce the health disparities between urban and rural populations and ensure that no one is left behind when it comes to access to healthcare services.

KEY COMPONENTS OF NIRAMAY RAJASTHAN ABHIYAN HEALTH CAMPAIGNS AND INITIATIVES

As part of the Niramay Rajasthan Abhiyan, the government has launched several critical health campaigns aimed at improving health outcomes:

Eat Right Rajasthan Abhiyan: This campaign aims to tackle the growing problem of poor dietary habits and malnutrition across the state. By promoting the consumption of nutritious and locally sourced foods, the initiative strives to reduce the prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. The campaign also includes efforts to raise awareness about the importance of balanced nutrition, proper hydration, and healthy eating practices.

Mission Madhuhari: This initiative focuses on combating malnutrition, particularly among women and children. It involves providing nutritional supplements, improving maternal health, and educating families about healthy eating habits. The goal is to reduce the incidence of stunting, wasting, and anemia among children, which are major public health issues in the state.

Mission Liver Smile Abhiyan: With rising concerns over liver diseases, including hepatitis and cirrhosis, this mission focuses on raising awareness about liver health and prevention. It promotes early diagnosis, vaccination, and the provision of treatment for individuals affected by liver diseases. Public education campaigns are being carried out to encourage people to undergo regular checkups and screenings.



Chief Minister Ayushman Adarsh Gram Panchayat Yojana: This scheme aims to improve the healthcare infrastructure at the grassroots level, particularly in rural areas. The Yojana focuses on making every gram panchayat a model of health services by providing adequate healthcare facilities, ensuring the availability of essential medicines, and encouraging healthy behaviors.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS AND INNOVATIONS

To enhance the effectiveness of the Niramay Rajasthan Abhiyan, the government has embraced technology as a key enabler. Several technological initiatives were launched during the event, which are expected to significantly improve healthcare delivery across the state:

Mobile App for Ayushman Yojana (MAA): The Chief Minister also inaugurated a mobile application for the Ayushman Yojana, which allows users to access healthcare services, register for

the scheme, and track their health status. The app aims to streamline the process of healthcare access and improve service delivery in real-time.

AI-Based Integrated Monitoring System: This system will use artificial intelligence to monitor health parameters across the state. It will allow for better tracking of health outcomes, real-time surveillance of disease outbreaks, and the efficient allocation of healthcare resources to areas in need.

Learning Management System: The launch of this system will help in training healthcare professionals across the state. By providing a platform for continuous education, the system will enhance the skills of doctors, nurses, and other health workers, enabling them to deliver better care to the people of Rajasthan.

Breastfeeding Management Units and Hemodialysis Wards: As part of the campaign, 29 breastfeeding management units (LMU) and hemodialysis

wards will be set up in 50 medical institutions across the state. These facilities will provide critical services to mothers and children, as well as those in need of dialysis, improving healthcare access and outcomes for vulnerable populations.

INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN HEALTHCARE

The Chief Minister also inaugurated development works worth Rs 26 crore, aimed at improving healthcare infrastructure across the state. Some of the key initiatives include:

National Emergency Life Support Skill Centre at Jodhpur Medical College: This center will focus on training healthcare professionals in emergency care and life-saving techniques, ensuring that medical personnel are equipped to handle critical situations effectively.

Centre of Excellence for Medical Genetics at JK Lawn Hospital, Jaipur: This facility will specialize in genetic testing and counseling, helping

to diagnose and treat genetic disorders, which are becoming increasingly relevant in the state's population.

Girls Hostel at Mahila Chikitsalaya in Jaipur: This hostel will provide safe and affordable accommodation for female medical students and healthcare workers, ensuring that more women can pursue careers in healthcare and contribute to improving the state's health services.

Reproductive Medicine and Surgery Department: The launch of this department will focus on improving access to fertility treatments and reproductive health services, addressing issues such as infertility and providing specialized care for women's reproductive health.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

One of the most significant announcements during the event was the flagging off of 22 Ram Rathis (Mobile Medical Units) and 10 new ambulances (108). These mobile units will travel to

remote and underserved areas, providing essential medical services such as diagnostic tests, vaccinations, and treatment for common ailments. The ambulances will ensure that emergency medical services are more readily available to people in need, especially in rural and difficult-to-reach areas.

This initiative is expected to drastically reduce the disparity in healthcare access between urban and rural populations, ensuring that healthcare services are available to everyone, regardless of their location.

RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

In recognition of the tireless efforts of those who have worked to make Rajasthan a healthier state, the Chief Minister honored individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to health initiatives. For instance, the State Tuberculosis Unit was recognized for its excellent work in the TB Free Gram Pan-

chayat Campaign, which has been instrumental in reducing the incidence of tuberculosis in rural areas.

WORLD HEALTH DAY 2025 AND THE FOCUS ON MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH

The timing of the launch coincides with World Health Day 2025, which focuses on maternal and newborn health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has chosen the theme "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures" to highlight the importance of improving healthcare services for mothers and newborns. This theme aligns perfectly with the goals of Niramay Rajasthan Abhiyan, which prioritizes the health of mothers and children through better prenatal care, nutrition, and access to medical services.

THE ROAD AHEAD: A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR RAJASTHAN

Niramay Rajasthan Abhiyan, along with its complementary health initiatives, represents a bold and comprehensive strategy for transforming the healthcare landscape of the state. Through technological innovations, infrastructural improvements, community engagement, and increased access to healthcare services, Rajasthan is poised to become a leader in public health in India.

By focusing on preventive care, reducing health disparities, and ensuring that every citizen has access to the resources they need to live a healthy life, the government of Rajasthan is laying the foundation for a healthier and more prosperous future. The success of this campaign will depend not only on government initiatives but also on the active participation of the community, healthcare professionals, and the private sector. Together, they can create a future where the people of Rajasthan enjoy the benefits of good health and well-being for generations to come.

Obesity: A challenge we can overcome together



AVINASH RAI KHANNA

Along with the World Health Organization, many people and institutions associated with health services in India also conduct surveys of different diseases from time to time. Recently, health experts from all over the world have expressed concern over obesity. According to a census conducted in India, more than 40 percent of the population has been found to be equipped with symptoms of obesity. In this too, the number of women is more than that of men. Obesity is found more in cities than in villages.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has presented the

world with the best gift of good health through Yoga Day in the form of International Yoga Day. Recently, through the program 'Mann Ki Baat', he had expressed serious views on the health of Indians.

While thinking about the problem of obesity, many pictures of childhood started emerging in my mind. We used to go on foot to study in schools located at long distances, and when we grew up, we cycled a lot. The body was always ready to work hard through games like hide and seek, kho-kho, lame leg, gulli danda, kabaddi, etc. Our house was three stories high. We had to go to the third floor terrace several times every day to lift the bed. We did not even know about lifts, cars and buses. In schools, we used to get punishment for any mistake, and that too was a good exercise for the body, like becoming a rooster, sitting and walking on our knees, standing with one leg and hand raised, etc.

Irregularity in eating habits is the main reason behind obesity. Consumption of all



the food items made from refined flour like biscuits, bread, chow Mein, samosas, kachoris, bhatura, etc. works to stop the process of excretion of stool from the

body. Refined flour should be considered as the cement of the digestive tract. The second main reason for obesity is eating cooked food items with oil and chillies, etc. instead of consuming them in their natural state. Modern cooking techniques make natural things acidic. Acid is called acid in English. Gas is formed from acid, digestion process gets hindered, burden on liver increases and as a result of all this, obesity starts increasing. After this, things packed for a long period also cause burden on the liver and obesity. To preserve food items for a long period, many types of chemicals are added in the name of preservation.

On the global level, hunger was a big problem a few decades ago. All the governments of the world together almost ended the era of hunger, but now obesity is becoming a big problem. It would have been good if natural production was increased to end hunger, but the invention of things like flour and oil has started increasing obesity by reducing hunger. About 80 percent of obese people suffer from diseases and the remaining 20 percent people are in the process of becoming internally ill. This makes it clear that obesity is completely the cause of diseases.

People who study physics know that calories mean energy. On one hand, we need nutrients from food and on the other hand, we need energy. Nutrients are present in our body like a bank, which are used by the body when needed. Whereas energy should be spent immediately. The energy which we are unable to spend becomes the cause of obesity in the body. Before every plate served, every person should think about how much digestive elements and how much energy is there in the food kept in front of him. Modern methods of cooking in which oil and chilly etc. are used, kill the nutrients. As a result, we eat only energy-producing food. After this food, the next question is that how much energy do we spend in the modern era through our physical activities and exercise etc. My suggestion is that regular time should be fixed for yoga activities in all government and non-government schools and colleges. Even at home, children should be engaged in as many works as possible. Whereas it is seen that children ask their parents or ser-

vants to bring water for them while sitting at their place. If the habit of physical labour is not inculcated in childhood, then youth and old age will not be able to withstand any disease.

Therefore, the modern world, while paying attention to its health, should first attack obesity or the possibility of obesity. If you are obese, you should immediately start this attack. If you are not obese, then due to modern food, if not your entire body, obesity must be increasing on your liver, which you may not be aware of right now. Therefore, thin people should also immediately improve their food.

All families, educational institutions and all governments should keep in mind that if the citizens of the country are healthy, then a huge budget spent on diseases will be saved. Apart from this, only healthy citizens can cooperate well in the country's work and increase the national income. Only with healthy citizens can the country's economy move towards development, in which diseases and especially obesity are a big ob-

stacle.

The key takeaway from this discussion is the importance of consuming nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, salads, and steamed vegetables. We should avoid foods that promote acid formation, particularly by eliminating oils and chillies from our diet. Engaging in daily physical activities, like walking 5-6 kilometers, cycling, and practicing yoga or pranayama, is essential to burn the energy from food and help reduce existing obesity.

Living with stress is also a major contributor to obesity and various other health issues. Stress disrupts brain function, preventing the production of digestive juices necessary for food breakdown. As a result, undigested food accumulates in the body, leading to weight gain and even diabetes, sometimes even without noticeable obesity. Managing stress and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can greatly aid in preventing these conditions. The author is a former MP.

Avinash Rai Khanna is former MP.

HOW TRUMP TARIFFS CAUSING MAYHEM GLOBALLY

Despite the severe market downturn, President Trump remained steadfast in his position on tariffs across globe.

The world woke up to a financial nightmare on Monday as global markets, led by Asia, suffered a dramatic crash in response to a fresh wave of US tariffs announced by President Donald Trump. With fears mounting of a repeat of the infamous 1987 Black Monday, investors are scrambling to assess the fallout from what some are calling “Black Monday 2.0.”

ASIAN MARKETS PLUNGE



Asian markets bore the brunt of the initial shock. As trading began on Monday, panic gripped investors after Trump's April 2 tariff declaration took effect. The response was swift and brutal.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index plummeted over 8% early in the session, while the broader Topix index tumbled more than 7.5%. Major financial institutions—Mitsubishi UFJ, Mizuho, and Sumitomo Mitsui—each lost over 12% of their value. Auto giants Honda and Nissan weren't spared either, experiencing sharp losses.

In South Korea, the Kospi dropped 4.4%, triggering a circuit breaker that temporarily halted trading. Taiwan's Taixex fell close to 10%, with tech heavyweights like TSMC and Foxconn hitting their daily lower limits.

China's markets were also rattled. The Shanghai Composite dropped 6.7% after opening 4.5% lower, while the CSI300 fell 7.5%. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index opened over 9% lower, compounding fears of regional contagion.

In Australia, the ASX 200 plunged more than 6%, wiping out over \$160 billion in market value. New Zealand's NZX 50 index slid 3.5%. The sell-



The turmoil in the stock markets quickly drew comparisons to Black Monday, October 19, 1987, when the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged by 22.6% in a single day, triggering a global financial crisis.

In the wake of the crash, markets across Europe and Asia also suffered steep losses.

cutting across sectors and geographies.

India's NSE Nifty50 collapsed by over 1,000 points, and the BSE Sensex tumbled nearly 4,000 points in early trade, underlining the broad-based nature of the panic.

Adding to the anxiety, US stock futures also cratered. Futures for the S&P 500 were down 4.2%, the Dow Jones fell 3.5%, and the tech-heavy Nasdaq dropped 5.3%.

TRUMP DIGS IN

Despite the market carnage, President Trump remained unapologetic. On his Truth Social account, he referred to the situation as an “economic revolution,” urging Ameri-

cans to “hang tough.”

Labeling the tariffs “a beautiful thing,” Trump insisted the market pain was necessary “medicine” to correct longstanding trade imbalances. “Sometimes you have to take medicine to cure something,” he said.

The new tariff regime came into force on April 5, starting with a 10% levy on a wide range of imported goods. Even steeper tariffs, ranging from 11% to 50%, are scheduled to take effect on April 9.

Trump also took aim at his political rival, President Joe Biden, blaming him for previous trade deficits. He promised his aggressive trade actions would correct those imbalances swiftly.

However, business leaders and economists are sounding alarms. Many warn that sudden, unilateral policy shifts like these could disrupt global supply chains, trigger retaliatory measures, slow economic growth, and shatter investor confidence.

ECHOES OF 1987

The current turmoil is drawing comparisons to Black Monday, October 19, 1987—the worst single-day percentage loss in US stock market history. On that day, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 22.6%, setting off a chain reaction that rippled across the globe.

London's FTSE 100 dropped 25% that week. Japan's Nikkei fell over 13%. Markets from Frankfurt to Sydney were hit hard. The crash revealed just how interconnected the global financial system had become.

Economist-turned-trader Thomas Thrall, then at the Federal Reserve Bank of

Chicago, recalled the chaos. “It was very scary,” he said. “Folks began to realize the interconnectedness of the markets worldwide.”

The crisis was ultimately contained through decisive action by central banks, especially the US Federal Reserve, which moved swiftly to stabilize the financial system and reassure investors.

IS THIS A REPEAT?

So, is 2025 witnessing a sequel to Black Monday?

While the causes are different, the symptoms are familiar. A policy shock—Trump's tariffs—has triggered a wave of panic selling. Circuit breakers have been hit. Global contagion is in motion.

Experts around the world had recently warned of this possibility. It was said that the markets may crash in the 1987-style if Trump failed to engage diplomatically with trading partners.

That said, some key differences exist. The 1987 crash was largely driven by algorithmic trading and market mechanics like program selling and valuation bubbles. This time, the turmoil is politically induced, stemming from deliberate trade policy.

Another crucial distinction is the role of central banks. In 1987, the Fed acted swiftly and decisively. As of now, no major central bank has announced concrete steps to stabilize markets. Without similar interventions, volatility may persist.

If global retaliation intensifies and Trump's administration continues on its current path, the market shock could worsen. Even if this isn't an exact replica of 1987, the scale of potential damage may be just as severe.

INVESTOR SENTIMENT

Investor mood has shifted dramatically. Equities are being dumped as funds flow toward traditional safe havens—gold, the US dollar, and Treasury bonds.

Gold has seen a surge in demand. Yields on US Treasuries have dropped, a sign of a flight to safety. Meanwhile, the dollar has strengthened as investors pull back from risk assets globally.

TDG NETWORK

Analysts now expect downward revisions in corporate earnings forecasts, especially for sectors heavily reliant on global trade, such as technology and manufacturing.

Goldman Sachs issued a stark warning: companies with high debt levels may face liquidity problems as credit conditions tighten and revenue projections fall. This could create a domino effect in both equity and bond markets.

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

Much now depends on two uncertain variables: how global markets react over the coming days, and whether Trump chooses to recalibrate his tariff strategy.

egy. In the absence of policy shifts or central bank intervention, volatility is likely to persist. With billions in value already wiped off world markets, caution is the new mantra.

Fund managers are repositioning. Many are reducing risk exposure, while others are aggressively hedging portfolios in anticipation of more turbulence.

Some analysts believe the worst may still lie ahead. If the situation escalates into a full-blown trade war, long-term economic damage could be significant—impacting jobs, corporate profits, and global growth.

IN A NUTSHELL

Whether we are experiencing Black Monday 2.0 in full form remains to be seen. But the parallels are undeniable: a sharp policy-induced shock, mass sell-offs, halted trading, and investor panic on a global scale.

History may not repeat itself exactly, but as the saying goes, it often rhymes. The current market chaos—set in motion by Trump's aggressive tariff strategy—could be a defining moment for global finance in 2025.

With central banks still silent and no signs of a political reversal, investors and governments are navigating uncharted waters. One thing is clear: the road ahead will be volatile, and the shadow of 1987 looms large once again.

TDG NETWORK

How billionaire power surge reshaping US national security

In the evolving world of American national security, tech billionaires like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos are no longer just outside innovators—they're becoming central players. Under Donald Trump's administration, their roles have expanded beyond their traditional industries, placing them in a position of unprecedented influence over intelligence and defense operations.

ROCKET AMBITIONS

In January, just before Donald Trump's second inauguration, Jeff Bezos's space company, Blue Origin, launched its New Glenn rocket from Florida's Cape Canaveral. Though the booster failed to return safely, the rocket's successful orbit signified a major leap in Blue Origin's rivalry with SpaceX, Elon Musk's aerospace firm.

Both Blue Origin and SpaceX are competing to secure contracts to launch spy satellites—an area once dominated by a handful of traditional defense contractors. With Trump back in office, these companies are poised to become key players in US espionage infrastructure, effectively tying America's intelligence capabilities to two of its most powerful tech moguls.

This shift marks a departure from decades of precedent. Historically, US intelligence was managed by career officials and a select group of contractors like Lockheed Martin, Raytheon Technologies (RTX), and Northrop Grumman. Today, however, billionaires aligned with Trump are rapidly reshaping the cosystem, drawing concern about undue influ-



Elon Musk and Donald Trump shake hands at an NCAA wrestling championship in Philadelphia last month. File Photo

ence, favoritism, and the creation of a new oligarchy in the defense sector.

THE TRUMP CONNECTION

Both Musk and Bezos have cultivated close ties with Donald Trump. Their relationships with the former president have opened doors in Washington that were previously sealed to outsiders, especially in the closely guarded intelligence community. In turn, their companies have reaped significant government contracts.

Bezos, who once feuded with Trump over reporting in the Washington Post, has now repositioned himself as a supporter. Since the 2024 election, he has not only praised Trump but also donated generously to his campaigns. Simultaneously, he's pushed to reshape the Post's editorial stance toward a probusiness, libertarian ethos.

This strategic alignment has helped Amazon Web Services (AWS), a Bezos-led initiative, expand its

foothold in national security. AWS secured a \$600 million contract to manage the CIA's classified cloud in 2013, and under Trump, it landed a \$10 billion deal to run the NSA's cloud infrastructure under the “Wild and Stormy” program.

Musk, on the other hand, never shied away from his Trump affiliation. His firm SpaceX has become a primary rocket launch provider for US spy satellites, gradually overtaking legacy contractors like United Launch Alliance, a joint venture between Boeing and Lockheed. His satellite communication network, Starlink, is also being used to support US interests overseas—most notably in Ukraine, where it powers a critical communications network for the Ukrainian military.

Starlink's role in Ukraine places Musk at the intersection of defense policy and private enterprise. That intersection became even more significant when Musk received a private Pentagon briefing

in March, followed by a visit to CIA headquarters. These meetings only intensified questions about his dual role as both a defense contractor and a national security influencer.

A NEW OLIGARCHY

The rise of Musk, Bezos, and other Silicon Valley figures isn't just about tech innovation—it's about reshaping the defense-industrial complex. This group includes Peter Thiel, co-founder of Palantir, and Palmer Luckey, the 32-year-old founder of Anduril. These pro-Trump billionaires are banding together to create a new defense consortium aimed at disrupting traditional military contracting.

Palantir, which was supported early on by the CIA's investment arm In-Q-Tel, has long worked with intelligence agencies. Under Trump, the firm is

poised to expand further, leveraging its expertise in data analytics and artificial intelligence to become a major AI supplier to the Pentagon and the intelligence community.

Anduril, meanwhile, is pushing the boundaries of battlefield technology. Founded by Luckey, who previously developed Oculus VR and sold it to Facebook, Anduril now builds advanced surveillance systems and defense tools. The company has contracts to create virtual reality headsets for the US Army and counter-drone systems for the Marine Corps. With a clear ideological alignment to Trump, Luckey has described his mission bluntly: “The US doesn't need to be the world's



po-

lice—it needs to be the world's gun store.”

Together, these tech firms are arguing that they represent a smarter, more agile alternative to the old guard of defense contractors. They claim the traditional system has grown stagnant, and that their presence introduces competition, innovation, and cost-efficiency.

But critics argue this narrative is self-serving. They say the rise of these billion-

aires is less about reforming the system and more about consolidating wealth and influence in a new set of hands. Greg Trevorton, a former director of the National Intelligence Council, remarked that what began as a movement to challenge the status quo has now become a scramble for money and connections.

RISKY OVERSIGHT

The critics' main concern isn't just about who's getting contracts—it's about whether these tech billionaires understand the responsibilities that come with national security. Peter Singer, a defense analyst at the New America Foundation, warns of the “instant expert” phenomenon. “They act like watching a YouTube video is enough to become a defense strategist,” he says. The implication is that Silicon Valley's fast-paced, trial-and-error approach may be dangerous when applied to national security, where missteps can have catastrophic consequences.

There's also a growing concern about oversight. Trump's administration has repeatedly weakened institutional checks and balances—firing inspectors general, sidelining federal career officials, and appointing loyalists to key positions. Within this environment, denying contracts or regulating behavior becomes politically risky for civil servants.

This has created a climate where private contractors may feel emboldened to pursue profits without accountability, especially if they enjoy the president's favor. When the same people who hold lucrative government contracts also

influence defense policy directly, it erodes the firewall between public interest and private gain.

CLOUD WARS

The digital transformation of the intelligence community has added another layer of complexity



to this issue. Today, control over cloud computing and data analytics is nearly as important as control over hardware like satellites and drones.

This is where Amazon and Palantir hold massive sway. AWS already runs critical classified systems for both the CIA and NSA. Palantir, known for building advanced data analysis platforms, has embedded itself deeply in US intelligence infrastructure. These firms manage sensitive information that powers everything from surveillance to battlefield logistics.

Such reliance on a handful of private tech companies makes the intelligence apparatus vulnerable to external pressures. If political loyalties or personal interests influence how these companies operate, the integrity of national security decision-making could be compromised.

Meanwhile, Google—which once publicly vowed not to support AI development for military use—recently reversed that pledge. This shift indicates that even firms previously hesitant to engage with the defense sector are now eager to get a piece of the action, especially as

political tides turn in their favor.

PRIVATE POWER

Silicon Valley has always had deep ties to the military-industrial complex. During the Cold War, the region's growth was closely linked to Penta-

gon-funded research and defense manufacturing. What's new today is the scale of influence that individual tech billionaires can exert—and the speed at which they are consolidating power.

Under Trump, the relationship between government and Silicon Valley has tilted decisively toward the latter. By aligning with the president, billionaires like Musk, Bezos, Thiel, and Luckey have bypassed traditional gatekeepers and inserted themselves directly into national security operations.

For some, this is a welcome disruption. They believe the old model was inefficient and out of touch. For others, it's a dangerous centralization of power that undermines democratic accountability and places too much trust in individuals driven by profit, ego, and ideology.

The stakes couldn't be higher. As technology continues to shape warfare, surveillance, and diplomacy, the question is no longer whether Silicon Valley will influence national security—it's whether anyone will be able to stop them from owning it.

TDG NETWORK

STARMER, EUROPEAN LEADERS CALL US TARIFFS ‘NEW ERA FOR GLOBAL ECONOMY’

Starmer, European leaders expressed concern over US tariffs, calling it a “new era” for the global economy, stressing the need for economic resilience.

AGENCIES
LONDON

Following US President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariff move, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer engaged in discussions with key international leaders, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, with all the leaders saying that this marks a “new era for the global economy.”

In a statement released on Sunday, Downing Street stated, “The Prime Minister has today continued to speak with international leaders including the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and leader of the German Christian

TARIFFS AND THE WORLD

- Countries affected: China, EU, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, India, UK, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Israel.
- Starmer stresses UK's national interest and economic resilience.
- Ursula von der Leyen expresses concern about tariff impact.
- Trump's policy focuses on fairness and reciprocity.



UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer

Democratic Union party Friedrich Merz.”

“Discussing the announcement of additional tariffs by the United States, they all agreed that - as with defence and security - this is a new era for the global

economy. Europe must rise to meet the moment and ensure the impact on hard-working people is minimised, while working closely with other countries to help maintain wider economic stability,” the state-

ment added.

Starmer also expressed disappointment over the new tariffs but emphasised that the UK would continue to act in its “national interest,” working to strengthen its economy and global

EU will start collecting duties in one week

AGENCIES
LUXEMBOURG

The European Union said on Monday it would start collecting retaliatory duties on some imported U.S. goods next week, as EU trade ministers agreed they preferred negotiations to remove tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump over retaliation.

The 27-nation bloc faces 25% import tariffs on steel and aluminium and cars and “reciprocal” tariffs of 20% from Wednesday for almost all other goods under Trump's policy to hit countries he says impose high barriers to U.S. imports.

Ministers overseeing trade met in Luxembourg on

“We need to remain calm and respond in a way that de-escalates.

Monday to debate the EU's response, as well as discuss relations with China. Many said the priority was to launch negotiations and avert an outright trade war.

“We need to remain calm and respond in a way that de-escalates. The stock markets right now show what will happen if we escalate straightaway. But we will be prepared to take countermeasures if needed to get the Americans at the table,” Dutch Trade Minister

Reinette Klever told reporters. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told a press conference in Brussels that the EU stood ready to negotiate a “zero-for-zero” tariff pact for industrial goods.

“Sooner or later, we will sit at the negotiation table with the U.S. and find a mutually acceptable compromise,” EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic told a news conference. He also said the EU would start would start collecting a first tranche of targeted retaliatory duties on U.S. imports from April 15 and a second wave from May 15, in reaction to the U.S. tariffs on European steel and aluminium.

Japan: 3 die in helicopter crash

AGENCIES
TOKYO

Three people have been confirmed dead after a medical transport helicopter crash off southwestern Japan on Sunday, Kyodo News reported, citing the coast guard.

The coast guard said the death of an 86-year-old female patient, one of six people on board, was confirmed on the day of the incident. A 68-year-old male family member accompanying her and a 34-year-old male doctor were also pronounced dead on Monday.

Local authorities took measures to prevent the helicopter from sinking and monitored it while working to determine the exact cause of the accident.

trade relationships.

The Downing Street further said, “The UK PM reiterated that he was disappointed by the new tariffs and stressed he will continue to act in the UK's national interest -- remaining calm while preparing for all eventualities. He updated on his plans to go further and faster to strengthen the UK's economy and ensure it is as resilient as possible and can withstand these kinds of global shocks. He added that it would be important for the UK to strengthen its trading relationships with others across the globe at the same time.”

Meanwhile, in a post on X, Ursula von der Leyen wrote, “Just spoke with @Keir Starmer and shared my concern over the impact of the US tariffs on the global economy.

Yunus urges US to put off tariffs on B'desh

AGENCIES
DHAKA

Bangladesh Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has addressed a letter to US President Donald J Trump requesting him to postpone the application of US reciprocal tariff measures on Bangladesh for three months to allow the interim government to smoothly implement its initiative to substantially increase US exports to Bangladesh, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing said in a statement on Monday.

“We are the first country to take such a pro-active initiative,” he said in his letter, citing the visit of High Representative Dr Khalilur Rahman to Washington DC in February. Ever since, the

Over 50 nations seeking new trade deals: US

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Kevin Hassett, Director of the White House Economic Council, defended the impact of President Donald Trump's tariffs on Sunday (local time) and said that while many countries are upset and retaliating, the tariffs have led to over 50 countries reaching out to the US to begin new trade negotiations.

Hassett made the remarks during an appearance on ABC News' “This Week” with George Stephanopoulos.

“So, the fact is, the countries are angry and retaliating and, by the way, I got a report from the [US Trade Representative] last night that more than 50 countries have reached out to the president to begin a negotiation. But they are doing that because they understand that they bear a lot of the tariff. And so, I don't think that you are going to see a big effect on the consumer



Hassett made the remarks during an appearance on ABC News' “This Week” with George Stephanopoulos.

in the US because I do think that the reason why we have a persistent, long-run trade deficit is because these people have a very inelastic supply. They have been dumping goods into the country in order to create jobs, say, in China,” Hassett told ABC News. On April 2, Trump announced a widespread imposition of tariffs on countries worldwide. In February, soon after taking charge for the second time, Trump outlined a new trade

policy focused on fairness and reciprocity and said that the US would implement reciprocal tariffs, charging other countries the same tariffs they impose on American goods.

Trump emphasised that tariffs would address unfair trade practices, including non-monetary barriers, subsidies, and VAT systems, while encouraging foreign countries to either reduce or eliminate tariffs against the US.



Bangladesh Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus

two sides have been working closely to identify specific actions, the statement said.

Bangladesh is also the first country to enter into a multi-year agreement to import liquefied natural gas from the US, it added. The centrepiece of Bangladesh's actions is to significantly increase imports of US agricultural products such as cotton, wheat, corn and soybean

“We are the first country to take such a pro-active initiative,” he said in his letter, citing the visit of High Representative Dr Khalilur Rahman to Washington DC in February.

which will offer benefits to US farmers, the statement said.

Bangladesh has the lowest tariff on most US exports in the South Asian region. The Chief Adviser indicated further tariff cuts on US products are being fashioned, including top US export items such as gas turbines,

semiconductors and medical equipment.

Bangladesh will build dedicated duty-free bonded warehouses for cotton to improve speed to market.

“We are eliminating certain testing requirements, rationalising packaging, labelling and certification requirements and undertaking trade facilitation measures such as simplifying customs procedures and standards,” the Chief Adviser added.

“Bangladesh will take all necessary actions to fully support your trade agenda,” Professor Yunus assured President Trump. A separate letter detailing the actions by Bangladesh will be sent by the Commerce Adviser to the US Trade Representative soon, the statement said.

UN human rights experts urge Pakistan to halt Afghan deportations

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

The United Nations human rights specialists have called on Pakistan to refrain from expelling or deporting Afghans, pointing out that reports indicate the deadline for their voluntary departure may be extended to April 10, Dawn reported.

The government has yet to announce an extension for the deadline. In a statement issued from Geneva, eleven independent human rights specialists appointed by the UN Human Rights Council urged the Pakistani government to maintain its significant role as a neighboring nation that has historically hosted Afghans fleeing their homeland.

“Considering the worsening human rights conditions in Afghanistan, sustainable solutions are essential for Afghans outside their country, with substantial backing from the wider international community,” the experts



Representative Image

stated.

“Millions of Afghans in Pakistan face the risk of being forcibly returned to Afghanistan, without consideration for their legitimate protection needs, such as gender-based violence and the systematic erosion of the rights of women and girls, which violates international human rights and refugee law, and neglecting the non-return advisory from UNHCR,” the experts remarked, reported Dawn.

The experts called on Pakistan to “immediately cease mass internal relocations, deportations, arrests,

evictions, intimidation, and other pressures on Afghans to move back into Afghanistan, and to adhere to the absolute and non-negotiable principle of non-refoulement.”

They voiced particular concern about the gendered and intersectional ramifications. The UN experts have consistently criticized Pakistan's Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan from September 2023, which has already compelled hundreds of thousands of Afghans to leave their homes and return to Afghanistan, according to Dawn.

Israel fortifies Gaza foothold with new defences

AGENCIES
CAIRO

Israeli troops could be seen clearing ground and building watch towers on Monday in parts of Gaza they Israeli forces have been observed consolidating their control over Gaza by clearing ground and constructing defensive positions, including watch towers, in recently seized areas of the enclave. This latest development comes amid a renewed offensive that began on March 18, during which the Israeli military has issued repeated evacuation orders to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians across southern, central, and northern Gaza. According to United Nations humanitarian agency OCHA, these operations have either captured or depopulated approximately two-thirds of Gaza, reducing the already limited space available to its residents.

In the eastern suburb of Shejaia, local witness Zakia Sami, a 60-year-old



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house, in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip April 7, 2025. Agency

mother of six from Gaza City, described how tanks were seen occupying key high ground positions. “They have taken over the Al-Muntar hilltop where we used to go to play with our kids. Now they are stationed there, and they can hit any house they want inside Shejaia,” she told Reuters via a chat app as she fled her home. Her account highlights the growing sense of vulnerability among Palestinians, who are witnessing their familiar neighborhoods being overtaken by military as-

sets.

The impact on civilians has been severe, with repeated evacuation warnings forcing residents into increasingly confined spaces near the Mediterranean coast. In Rafah alone, the International Rescue Committee reported that 140,000 people have been displaced in just the past two weeks. With the total area under Israeli control or designated for evacuation now covering 65% of the Gaza Strip, everyday life for Palestinians has become one of constant displacement and

Pope makes first public appearance post leaving hospital

AGENCIES
VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis appeared for the first time in public since his return to the Vatican on Sunday. It is the first time that Pope Francis has been seen in public since being discharged from the hospital two weeks ago, CNN reported.

The 88-year-old pontiff greeted people at the Vatican and appeared to be in

good spirits. He was seated in a wheelchair and appeared to be wearing what appeared to be a nasal cannula to aid his breathing.

The pope was in the hospital for five weeks in February and March due to pneumonia. He came close to his death during the illness, according to his medical team.

He seemed in better health than he had been seen in public, which was



two weeks shortly before he was discharged from Gemelli Hospital in Rome. At that time, he struggled

The 88-year-old pontiff greeted people at the Vatican and appeared to be in good spirits.

to speak and raise his arms. However, he managed to wave to people and gave a thumbs up from a balcony. During his public ap-

pearance on Sunday, Pope Francis seemed to move his arms more easily. His voice appeared weak but stronger than what it was two weeks back, as per CNN report.

On February 14, the pontiff was admitted to Gemelli Hospital, initially suffering from a severe respiratory infection.

Subsequently, he was diagnosed with a polymicrobial infection, which

evolved to pneumonia in both lungs.

He was discharged from the hospital on March 23 and was expected to recover at his residence in the Vatican, Casa Santa Marta. At the time, Pope Francis' doctors, while addressing a news conference, said that he would need to recuperate for at least two months to allow his body time to fully heal, CNN reported.

Japan endeavours to counter China

AGENCIES
HIROSHIMA

Japan's Defence Minister Gen Nakatani on Sunday expressed commitment to enhancing the transport capabilities of the Self-Defense Forces for remote southern islands via a newly established unit focused on maritime logistics amid rising tensions over the Taiwan Strait, as reported by

Kyodo News.

“The unit will facilitate quicker and more secure troop deployments,” Nakatani stated during a ceremony in Kure, Hiroshima Prefecture, commemorating the establishment of the Maritime Transportation Group, which was formed on March 24 and is located in the city, Kyodo News reported.

MANNAT RENOVATION: SRK, FAMILY MOVE OUT

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, along with his household, has left their iconic sea-facing bungalow Mannat to undergo a much-awaited makeover. The family has moved to a luxury apartment in posh Pali Hill locality of Bandra, where they are likely to stay for almost two years.

Shah Rukh was spotted earlier with his wife Gauri Khan and daughter Suhana Khan stepping into their new temporary home. The trio was seen stepping out of their car and entering the luxury apartment building in a video posted by Filmmygan.

While Suhana opted for



a bright yellow ensemble, SRK went for the simple white shirt. Fans were excited to see the trio together and showered the comment section of the video with heart emojis.

The renovation process at Mannat, as per a report in Hindustan Times, was originally set to start in May and comprises structural alterations like an extension. As Mannat is a Grade III heritage building, Shah Rukh needed to secure legal

sanction first before making any such alteration.

In order to provide accommodation to the family during this time, Shah Rukh Khan's production company, Red Chillies Entertainment, signed a leave and licence for four floors of the Puja Casa building in Pali Hill. The building is owned by film producer Vashu Bhagnani and co-owned by his children, actor Jackky Bhagnani and Deepshika Deshmukh.

A source disclosed, "It is obviously not as spacious as Mannat; there is sufficient room to fit his security and other staff." The four rented floors are likely to accommodate the whole Khan family including kids Aryan, Suhana, and AbRam as well as personal security and office personnel. Shah Rukh will be reportedly shelling out Rs. 24 lakh a month as rent for the area.

The shift also includes significant planning for security and privacy. Shah Rukh's team has taken great care to ensure the safety of the family in the new building. Although it is yet to be established if they will stay there for the entire period, sources reveal that the renovation of Mannat may take two years.

Salman elated as 'Andaz Apna Apna' returns to big screen after 31 years

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood's beloved cult comedy 'Andaz Apna Apna' is making a grand return to cinemas, 31 years after its original release.

The re-release is set for April 25, 2025, in a brand-new 4K remastered version with enhanced Dolby 5.1 sound, promising an upgraded cinematic experience for fans.

Expressing his excitement, Bollywood superstar Salman Khan took to his X handle and shared the trailer of the movie, writing, "Amar Prem Ka



Andaaz is back... #AndazApnaApna Re-releasing In Cinemas on 25th April 2025 Nationwide."

The film's makers confirmed the news on social media, generating waves of nostalgia among fans.

The official post read, "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!"

Directed by Rajkumar Santoshi, 'Andaz Apna

Apna' first hit theatres on November 4, 1994, and quickly became a fan favourite.

Its unique blend of humour, iconic dialogues, and memorable performances has earned it cult status in Indian cinema.

The film stars Aamir Khan and Salman Khan in lead roles, alongside Raveena Tandon, Karisma Kapoor, Paresh Rawal, and Shakti Kapoor.

The plot revolves around two charming yet scheming men who compete to win the heart of an heiress, hoping to inherit her father's fortune.

'Ground Zero' trailer: Emraan Hashmi portrays BSF operation

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

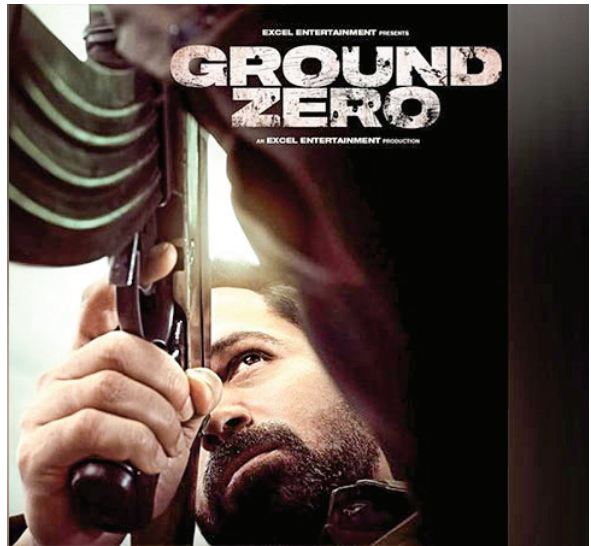
Emraan Hashmi is all set to come up with his film 'Ground Zero', which is inspired by a mission that was awarded "BSF's best operation in the last 50 years".

Set in 2000s Kashmir, Emraan essays the role of a BSF officer, Narendra Nath Dubey, who led the operation in which terrorist mastermind "Ghazi Baba" was killed.

On Tuesday, the makers unveiled the film's trailer.

The trailer showcases the challenges and sacrifices made to bring about a sense of normalcy and harmony in the conflicted region. One of his standout lines from the trailer, "Ab Prahaar Hoga," sets the tone for what lies ahead -- a soldier pushed to the edge, ready to strike back.

Speaking at the trailer launch in Mumbai on Tuesday, Emraan said, "You know there's an old phrase that sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. This phrase is appropriate for this film and story. I remember when I met Mr



Set in 2000s Kashmir, Emraan essays the role of a BSF officer, Narendra Nath Dubey, who led the operation in which terrorist mastermind "Ghazi Baba" was killed.

Dubey for the first time, I told him that your story is more "filmy" than our films. And it really is. It's nothing short of extraordinary and unbelievable the way our BSF officers carried out this operation."

Produced by Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan

Akhtar, and directed by Tejas Deoskar, the film is co-produced by Kassim Jagmagia, Vishal Ramchandani, Sundeeep C Sidhwani, Arhan Bagati, Talisman Films, Abhishek Kumar, and Nishikant Roy. 'Ground Zero' will hit the theatres on April 25.

BRAIN PICKING



I feel, but actually I feel very validated from that film.

— TAMANNAAH BHATIA
(Indian Actress)

'Narcos: Mexico' actor Manuel Masalva in medically induced coma

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

Mexico fame actor Manuel Masalva remains in critical but stable condition after being placed in a medically induced coma following the contraction of a "very aggressive bacteria" while travelling in the Philippines, reported Deadline.

According to the outlet,



go to someone and say that I want to make this film... I didn't want to do that. I wanted to make the film based on my own conviction. When you walk on the path of your own conviction, it is a lonely one, and when you are alone, there is also some fear. But in the end, you realize that the product I have created is mine," he added.

'Tanvi The Great' also stars 'Game of Thrones' actor Iain Glen and will feature sound design by Resul Pookutty, the Academy Award-winning sound designer known for Slumdog Millionaire.

Anupam Kher unveils first look of 'Tanvi The Great'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Veteran actor Anupam Kher has revealed the first look of his much-anticipated directorial project, 'Tanvi The Great', leaving fans intrigued and eager for more.

The teaser, released under the banner of Anupam Kher Studios, hints at a heartwarming and inspiring story centered around a mysterious young girl, Tanvi.

The video introduces audiences to Tanvi, a character whose aura exudes innocence, dreams, hope, and



kindness.

Sharing the first look on social media, Kher wrote, "I made the decision to create #TanviTheGreat almost

four years ago! And then it took four years to write and bring it to life! Now the time has come to share this 'piece of my heart' with all of you! But slowly... and with a lot of love! Is she extraordinary? Is she unique? Does she have a superpower? We don't know. What we do know is... Tanvi is different, but no less!"

The film, directed by Kher himself, features music by Oscar-winning composer M. M. Keeravani and is produced in collaboration with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).

In a conversation with

ANI, Kher opened up about the challenges of bringing 'Tanvi The Great' to life.

"Main koi studio ke paas nahin gaya paise lene, maine koi financier nahin dhunda. Jo bhi logon ne film finance ki hai shuruat mein... dheere dheere aapko yeh kahaniyan pata lagenge," he shared. (I did not go to any studio to ask for funds, I did not look for any financier. Whoever has financed the film in the beginning... gradually, you will get to know these stories.)

Kher admitted the journey was far from easy. "It would have been easier for me to

'Round 2 for Me': Tahira Kashyap opens up about breast cancer relapse

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Filmmaker Tahira Kashyap, known for her directorial debut 'Sharmajee Ki Beti', has revealed that her breast cancer has relapsed after seven years.

Taking to Instagram, Tahira shared a heartfelt note reflecting her determination to fight cancer once again.

In her post, Tahira wrote, "Seven year itch or the power of regular screening--it's a perspective I'd like to go with the latter and suggest the same for everyone who needs to get regular mammograms. Round 2 for me... I still got this."

She added, "When life



gives you lemons, make lemonade. When life becomes too generous and throws them again at you, you squeeze them calmly into your favourite kala khatta drink and sip it with all the good intentions. Be-

cause, for one, it's a better drink, and two, you know you will give it your best once again."

Tahira concluded her note writing, "#regularscreening #mammogram not shying away from saying it #breastcancer #onemoretime #lets-go. Ironically or not, today is #WorldHealthDay. Let's do whatever we can in our capacity to take care of ourselves. #gratitude through and through."

Tahira was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 2018. Last month, she shared an inspiring photo of herself with a clean-shaven head, a result of chemotherapy, along with moments from her treatment journey.

Mom-to-be Kiara Advani to make her Met Gala debut

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood star Kiara Advani is all set to make her debut at Met Gala this year.

The mom-to-be will step onto the grand fashion stage with several celebrities from across the world on May 5 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

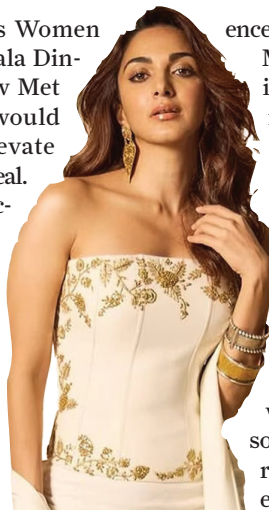
Last year, Kiara made her debut at Cannes as she attended the Red Sea Film

Foundation's Women in Cinema Gala Dinner. And now Met Gala debut would definitely elevate her global appeal.

Previously actors like Alia Bhatt, Deepika Padukone, and Priyanka Chopra have added Indian touch to Met Gala with their stunning pres-

ence. Meanwhile, Kiara is expecting her first child with actor Sidharth Malhotra.

The couple, in February 2025, announced their pregnancy with an adorable post featuring tiny white knitted baby socks. The caption read, "The greatest gift of our lives."



5 PRACTICAL WAYS FOR MEN TO PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE AND ENHANCE THEIR OVERALL WELL-BEING



NILAY MEHROTRA

Selfcare isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. Prioritizing selfcare in men is as significant as prioritizing their career and family. An overall wellbeing avoids ill mental health, chronic diseases, sleep disturbance, depression and anxiety. Here are the 5 practical tips and ideas for men to prioritize self-care and improve their overall well-being

EATING HEALTHY AT REGULAR INTERVALS

Maintaining a balanced diet full of nutrients with regular intervals i.e. 3 meals a day and drinking at least 3-4 litres of water can improve overall health. It keeps energy levels stable, prevents overeating and helps to maintain a healthy weight. In a busy schedule, it is common to experience small hunger pangs during the day, opting healthier options like makhanas or dry-

fruits instead of processed foods can lead to bigger differences in the body.

Do exercise on a regular basis

Exercise is more than just a tool for achieving a toned physique—it is essential for long-term physical and mental well-being. Consistent physical activity, whether through gym workouts, running, or even brisk walking, strengthens muscles and bones, enhances cardiovascular health, and improves endurance. Excessive fat accumulation, commonly associated with obesity, increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease, certain cancers, and even conditions like erectile dysfunction. A structured fitness regimen mitigates these risks, boosts mood, reduces stress, and enhances cognitive function.

SKINCARE FOR THE HEALTHY GLOW

Being the most ignored form of selfcare among men is avoiding skincare, it can be truly a game changer. Throughout the day, men are exposed to dirt, pollution and harmful UV rays. Following a proper skincare routine twice a day, commonly cleansing, moisturising and using Sunscreen (in daytime) keeps the skin



Being the most ignored form of selfcare among men is avoiding skincare, it can be truly a game changer. Throughout the day, men are exposed to dirt, pollution and harmful UV rays. Following a proper skincare routine twice a day, commonly cleansing, moisturising and using Sunscreen (in daytime) keeps the skin fresh, moisturised, reduces sunburns and prevents premature aging.

fresh, moisturised, reduces sunburns and prevents premature aging. For skin concerns like acne, blemishes, dryness, wrinkles amongst others, basic skincare routine can be extended to include targeted serums and ointments.

READING BOOKS TO DECREASE SCREEN-TIME

Reading books before go-



ing to sleep can be considered as the best alternative to using mobile phones. It can lead to sound sleep, improves concentration, vocabulary and relaxes the mind. Fictional books and novels provide escape from stress and divert the mind. Moreover, utilizing excessive mobile phones at night can cause more harm than it seems, the blue light emitting from them results in eye strain and disrupts sleep.

A PROPER DAILY ROUTINE FOR TIME MANAGEMENT

Following a structured daily routine is necessary for good health and mind. Early to bed, early to rise is not just a saying but a key element. It helps to manage time effectively and improve productivity by prioritizing

the tasks. Incorporating activities such as efficient planning of the day, eating healthy, regular exercise, spending quality time with loved ones and fixed sleep schedule results in wellbeing among men. Ultimately, a proper routine empowers them to live a fulfilling life.

CONCLUSION

Self-Care is all about recognizing the needs and pursuing steps to prioritize wellbeing. It's high time to break down the traditional social norms of masculinity and encourage men to emphasize on their health. Listening to the body and balancing activities is vital to maximize their full potential, live healthier and happier. *The author is CEO of Kindly Health.*

MICRONUTRIENTS: THE KEY TO VITALITY AND WELLNESS



FOOD IS MEDICINE

DR ANISH DESAI



Micronutrients are vital for human health, supporting various physiological functions, including immune response, metabolism, and tissue repair. The key micronutrients include vitamins (A, D, C, E, B-complex) and minerals (iron, zinc, selenium, copper, and magnesium).

Micronutrient deficiencies weaken the immune system, making the body more vulnerable to infections. Vitamin A deficiency compromises epithelial barriers, increasing susceptibility to respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses.

Low vitamin D levels elevate the risk of respiratory tract infections, while vitamin C deficiency impairs immune response, worsening pneumonia and colds. Zinc deficiency further weakens immune function, heightening the risk of pneumonia and diarrhea.

Consuming a balanced diet rich in diverse food sources ensures adequate intake of these essential nutrients.

VITAMIN A

Essential for vision, immune function, and cellular growth. Found in liver, dairy products, fish, and egg yolks. Plant sources include carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach, and kale, which provide beta-carotene that converts to vitamin A.

VITAMIN D

Regulates calcium and phosphorus levels, crucial for bone health. Obtained from sunlight exposure, fatty fish (salmon, mackerel), fortified dairy products, egg yolks, and mushrooms.

VITAMIN C

Supports immune function, collagen synthesis, and antioxidant defense. Abundant in citrus fruits (oranges, lemons), bell peppers, strawberries, kiwi, and green leafy vegetables.

VITAMIN B6, B12, AND FOLATE

Vitamin B6 aids in protein metabolism, neurotransmitter function, and immune support, sourced from poultry, bananas, and fortified cereals. Vitamin B12 is crucial for nerve function and red blood cell formation, primarily found in animal products such as meat, eggs, dairy, and fortified plant-based foods.

Folate, important for DNA synthesis is present in legumes, leafy greens, citrus fruits, and fortified grains.

KEY MINERALS AND THEIR FOOD SOURCES

IRON

Essential for macrophage function..

Found in red meat, poultry, fish, lentils, spinach, and fortified cereals. Plant-based sources are better absorbed when consumed with vitamin C-rich foods.

ZINC

Supports immune function, wound healing, and DNA synthesis. Present in shellfish, red meat, poultry, beans, nuts, and whole grains.

COPPER

Involved in iron metabolism and neurological functions. Obtained from nuts, seeds, whole grains, seafood, and meats.

MAGNESIUM

Essential for muscle and nerve function, energy production, and bone health. Rich sources include nuts (almonds, cashews), whole grains, dark leafy greens, and legumes.

Ensuring adequate intake of micronutrients through a well-balanced diet is crucial for maintaining overall health and preventing deficiencies.

A diverse diet incorporating fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, nuts, seeds, and whole grains provides these essential vitamins and minerals, supporting optimal body function and immune health.

Health talk: Adolescence is a period of transition for teenagers

TDG NETWORK

Tagore International School Vasant Vihar organized a health talk in collaboration with Madhukar Rainbow Hospital, Malviya Nagar on the occasion of World Health Day on the 7th of April in the school premises.

Dr. Alka Chaudhary, a senior consultant in Gynaecology and Obstetrics, spoke about Gut and Adolescence Health to students of classes 9th and 10th and its crucial role in influencing digestion, immunity, skin conditions, mental health and welfare. She elaborated on how adolescence is a period of transition for teenagers therefore the nutritional well-being of an individual can impact their physical and mental growth.

Dr. Alka believes that junk or processed foods are not only a risk to gut health but also a huge threat to an individual's mental well-being, therefore suggests that home cooked food along with fresh fruits and vegetables should be added in a growing child's diet to ensure efficient levels of iron and protein. She emphasised that a ruined gut



health can stop the release of healthy hormones and lead to anger issues, depression, and anxiety in teenagers.

Frequent outdoor activities including yoga, cycling and swimming are advisable to reduce stress and

ensure focus in studies. Adding on, less screen time with adequate nature walks are also a method of meditation for a teen.

As per the latest statistics, 67 percent teenagers join the gym before 18 which

leads to growth problems, as the gym mostly focuses on muscle development and neglects height and natural growth. Studies also show that many youngsters join the gym and indulge in substance abuse due to peer pressure leading to several Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases and lung cancer. Prevention is the best remedy therefore Dr. Alka advised that teens should exercise regularly, stop smoking and consume lemon water after exercises for hydration. It was indeed a fruitful and an engaging session for the audience

The journey to better health begins with one step and tisvv took that first step making a big difference in our overall health and prosperity.

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THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF HAPPINESS: WHY INNER PEACE MATTERS MORE THAN SUCCESS

TDG NETWORK

Everyone wants happiness in life! Happiness is a universal human desire, yet it means different things to different people. For some, happiness might be found in external achievements, relationships or material possessions, while for others, it is a deeper, more internal state of contentment and peace. Throughout history, philosophers, spiritual leaders and scientists have pondered the true nature of happiness, seeking to understand what makes life truly fulfilling and happy. At its core, happiness is often seen as a positive emotional state characterized by joy, contentment, fulfillment and a sense of well-being. However, happiness is much more than just fleeting pleasure or momentary satisfaction. True Happiness is built on a strong foundation of peace,

which is experienced with contentment and a sense of fulfillment in life. Happiness can be a lifelong pursuit, shaped by our attitudes, behaviours and how we connect with ourselves and the world around us. Happiness, thus, can be psychological, scientific or even spiritual in nature—sometimes blending all these elements together. Focussing on the spiritual element of happiness, I can say that we have misspelt the word ‘happiness’. ‘Happiness’ should have 3 Ps in it instead of the usually written 2 Ps - each P representing the three peaks of happiness. The first P stands for pleasure, the first peak of happiness that comes from the worldly material possessions, wealth, people, relationships and various achievements but this pleasure is ephemeral, a fleeting feeling of happiness. It fades away as quickly as it builds

up. The second P of happiness represents peace. Peace is the foundation of true happiness for it is achieved through contentment and fulfillment. The third or the highest peak of happiness is in the third P - when an individual achieves purpose in his life. This purpose of life is realized with spiritual Enlightenment. When an individual is Enlightened and spiritually Awakened with the Truth about his life, birth, death, Karma and everything associated to himself, he experiences SatChitAnanda - Eternal Bliss in Truth Consciousness. This happiness a joy that is ever-flowing, pure, everlasting and eternal. We humans strive towards achieving this kind of happiness in our lives. Happiness may be an outward expression and an experience of deep joy and a sense of fulfillment but it is a deeply spiritual emotion.

The spiritual side of happiness centres around finding deeper meaning in life, peace, contentment, fulfillment, Realization of the Truth and Enlightenment beyond material or external factors like success and achievement. Thus, spiritual happiness isn't just about feeling good in the moment, rather, it's about cultivating the lasting contentment and purpose that transcends temporary emotions or worldly achievements. It is about discovering and cultivating a deep sense of inner peace that leads to everlasting bliss and eternal joy. Why does inner peace matter more than success? It is true that success, wealth, material possessions, fame, achievement and even people and relationships lead us to experience joy and happiness but that happiness is short-lived, a fleeting temporary moment of joy; it is

ephemeral and conditional. Success and achievement are conditional factors for the temporary happiness or pleasure. These are the first peak of happiness. But true, everlasting and unconditional happiness is something that is within us and not in this external world and material possessions. One can truly ‘be happy’ by choosing to be happy, rather than depending on external factors to ‘become happy’. True happiness is grounded firmly in the second peak of happiness - peace. Inner peace is a deep and enduring state of well-being that is experienced with an everlasting sense of contentment and fulfillment within us, in our Consciousness, regardless of the external factors and forces. Success can bring temporary satisfaction and pleasure but it often relies on external validation and accomplishments, which are

constantly changing. Inner peace, on the other hand, is a constant. It's not tied to achieving something or meeting external expectations. It depends on acceptance of the circumstances and an attitude of gratitude. When we are at peace with ourselves, happiness is not dependent on what we do or achieve. The pursuit of success can often lead to stress, pressure and burn-out. The constant drive to achieve more can create feelings of inadequacy or fear of failure. Inner peace, on the other hand, helps us calm our mind, reduce stress and increase resilience within us. When we cultivate peace within, we become less reactive to challenges and are better able to handle difficult situations with a clear and calm mind. Success, particularly when focused on external markers like wealth, status, fame, recognition and achievements, can be

fleeting. Once achieved, it may not provide the lasting fulfillment that we expected, rather, it will make us work towards higher and higher peaks of achievements without letting us feel content and fulfilled. Inner peace, however, is sustainable. It grows as we develop a deeper connection with ourself and our values, ultimately, becoming a foundation for eternal happiness and bliss. Success often comes with attachments to the outcomes and lofty expectations. When one starts defining their worth by their achievements, they may constantly chase the next goal, always feeling like they are not enough. Inner peace, however, is freedom from these attachments. It allows us to let go of the need for approval and societal validation, fostering a sense of self-worth that is independent of external success.

Concluding the discussion, we can say that in today's world, success and achievements are necessary. They provide us with material gains and possessions to live a comfortable life but they are not the defining factors of true, lasting happiness. We are usually taught from a very young age that success is happiness - one is happy in life only when he is successful and has lots of achievements. However, that is not true. While success can bring momentary joy, inner peace and contentment offers a deeper, more enduring happiness that is not tied to this ever-changing external world. Therefore, considering the spiritual aspect of happiness and to ensure fulfilled and happy lives of this generation and the generations to come, we must teach that success is not happiness, rather, happiness is true success!

India's sacred waters and temples: Undertaking a spiritual journey



P.V. LAXMIPRASAD

India has been known to celebrate the rituals and practices at home and outside. In particular, people worship the deities in temples which are considered the most sacred places. Temples in India had their first roots found near the rivers due to various factors. They are age old temples in the country. The sanctity of places, the sacredness of river waters and the association with purification hold the basis to spiritual history and legacy. If archaeological excavations date back to those temples as old as 10,000 years ago, the temples located on the banks of the river symbolize a predominantly dominant Hindu culture. The rivers in India are perennially divine manifestations and play a significant role in religious rituals with river waters becoming the spiritual source of life. The history of temples in India has been as old as unknown age of 10,000 years. The divine significance of water is rooted in the Vedas and the Upanishads. We have many famous temples located near rivers, for example, the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi on the Ganges and in a similar way

temples are located on the banks of the river Godavari and Krishna assimilating the concept of spiritual oneness within the country. The countless devotees take a holy dip in the river waters and go for Darshan of the Lord in the temples. The ancient Rishis established these temples on the river banks centuries ago. They found these places to be spiritually enlightened and devotionally oriented. Needless to say, each history of temple has a story to tell from spiritual elements attributed to their origin. Even in the Ramayana, the Rishis took the break for morning rituals alongside these rivers. Ayodhya temple is located on the banks of Sarayu river. Meenakshi temple in Madurai is on the banks of the Vaigai river. All the temples have a history of their own that connects with the rivers. Even architectural beauty of these temples is beyond comparison. The sculptors did a wonderful job. Lord Shri Ram had a brief stopover where the rivers flow and the temples are located. That is how the history of temples is spiritually connected to the rivers. In fact river waters are used for rituals such as ablutions bathing and cleansing. A metaphorical composition of verse goes like this : «It is a river of life/ that flows thru and thru/ Into an ocean of destination/ we seek in the Holy waters / A life of destination / to purify the life of whirlpools / A river of purification/ that flows through body into soul «. In the run up to this interesting story of how temples made their way on the river banks is the presence of natural serene and peaceful atmo-

sphere of surroundings where lotus and flowers bloom, where swans and ducks and other chirping birds play out a rhythmic song to invoke the Deity on the wee hours. The enigmatic temple that one finds is located in Junaraj Gujarat. It is Neelakanteshwar temple renowned for its cyclic existence. It is submerged under the waters for six months in a year. Devotees strongly believe that Lord Shiva resides within the submersion time symbolizing cosmic motivation. Another interesting story that goes to make is one of the temples located in Basar, Nirmal, Telangana. It is the temple of Jnana Sarawati situated on the banks of river Godavari. It is recalled that Sage Veda Vyasa established this temple during his visit to take the holy dip in the river waters. Perhaps in the country this is the only temple known as temple of learning. A kind of spiritual aroma spreads through the premises of the temple. Devotees throng the temples on Vasant Panchami - the sacred day of initial learning is done to children on the day. River and temple in Basar make the national news headlines. The Gods and Goddesses reside in the river side temples. In Hindu mythology, the Asuras and the Lords take a holy dip in the river waters and worship the deities in the temples. Next dimension added to this is the selection of temple and the chief presiding deity where positive vibrations evoke positive energy among the deities. In the temples, marriages are solemnized to root out the evil forces. The chief deity is placed in the center of temple called Garbagriha known

for such vibrations. Ganga Jal also known as Holy Water carries a rich legacy and history of ancient times. Nothing is holier than Ganga Jal. The entire river flows from the Himalayan glaciers touching the North and the Bay of Bengal as Life giving Goddess. Another spiritual dimension of temple location on the river banks consist of three important features 1) Sangam 2) Tirtha 3) Prayaga Sangam is the confluence of rivers representing the union of individual self (Jiva) with the universal self (Brahman). Tirtha is another term synonymous with river banks where pilgrims can take shelter from the worldly to the spiritual realm. Prayag is the point of location where two rivers meet synthesising the union of opposites - Masculine and Feminine. Rituals include daily worship of Puja (Offerings) and Aarti (Prayer). Bathing is considered the next important step to purify oneself before worshipping at temples. Funeral rites are conducted on the river banks such as cremation or immersion of ashes. Many temples in India were established by the Rishis and the great Sages on the river banks. These spiritual elements create a sacred environment or connect one with the divinity and nature. Temples of river banks have served as places of worship, fostering a spiritual journey towards fulfilling higher goal. These temples offer serenity, greenery, devotion and peace of mind. P.V.Laxmiprasad is the author and editor of 44 books in English Literature.

BEYOND OUR LIMITED PERCEPTION



MYSTIC MUSING

RAJESH M. IYER

Two words immediately come to mind when we hear the name Hanuman. They are devotion and strength. We've read and heard umpteen times about how he vanquished his opponent through sheer power. An entire kingdom of Lanka was found wanting when he went on a rampage. We've also read about his uncompromising devotion towards Ram. Innumerable tomes have been written about it. Yet strangely, when Tulsidas composed 'Hanuman Chalisa', the hymns in praise of Hanuman, he starts with neither strength nor devotion. Instead, he starts with the line 'Jai Hanuman gyaan gun saagar' (I bow to Hanuman, the ocean of wisdom). Wisdom?



As you analyse Hanuman's life, you'll realise how wisdom precedes both devotion and strength as the inherent quality in all his actions. It's not surprising that Hanuman could see the paramatman in Ram. In Valmiki Ramayan, Ram praises Hanuman for his knowledge of Vedas, correct use of grammar and proper pronunciation in his speech. Ram further tells Lakshman that if a king has a scholar who's also skilled in speech like Hanuman and follows his advice, all works get accomplished well. Similar emotions are reflected in 'Ramcharitmanas'. Little wonder Ram gave him a pedestal, not merely as a devotee but as a brother. In Hanuman Chalisa, Ram says to Hanuman, 'Tum mama priya Bharat hi sam bhai,' which means 'You are as dear to me as my brother Bharat.' In all this, let's not forget that Surya (Lord Sun) was his guru and that Hanuman had mastered all the Vedas. Furthermore, he was the chief counsel to King Surgriva. Apart from this, Hanuman was the first to chronicle the life of Ram, even preceding Valmiki. So next time you think of Hanuman, let it not only be of him crossing the ocean, setting Lanka on fire and fighting a demon. Let the images of Hanuman writing Ram's life story and meditating come to your mind. There's an old saying: don't judge the book by its cover. The same applies for everything else. We might see something in a certain manner. And what we see is not necessarily what is true. Our initial impressions are laced with our perception that are heavily dependent on our conditioning. Then, of course, are the apparently visible facets. But this simple example of the way we have popularly perceived Hanuman teaches us that if we delve deeper, we realise multiple facets, some completely contrary to our initial interpretation. Let's go beyond our limited perception and make sure not to judge before dwelling deep and unravelling the inner details.

What we see if not necessarily what is true. Our initial impressions are laced with our perception that's heavily dependant on our conditioning. Let's make sure not to judge before dwelling deep into it.

ESTABLISHMENT OF 'WORLD SANATAN DHARMA DIWAS' ON THE OCCASION OF RAM NAVAMI IN HONG KONG

TDG NETWORK

In a historic initiative to honor the eternal principles of Sanatan Dharma, the Indian community in Hong Kong has established 'World Sanatan Dharma Diwas.' This significant announcement was made on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami, the sacred day marking the birth of Lord Shri Ram, who symbolizes righteousness, devotion, and truth. This grand event witnessed participation not only from the Indian community in Hong Kong but also from Sanatanis

across India and other countries, making it a globally significant celebration. The key organizers of the event included Lal Hardasani, Dayal N. Harjani, Ramakant Agrawal, Raju Sabnani, Binny Lalji, Rajesh Bhimsaria, Ashok Pritmani, Pishu Mirani, Raju Mukhi, Ramesh Savarthyia, Sohan Goenka, and convener Shashi Bhushan. On this occasion, organizer Lal Hardasani stated, "This is a historic moment for the Indian community in Hong Kong. By initiating World Sanatan Dharma Day, we aim to



spread a wave of peace and spiritual awakening across the globe." Organizer Sohan Goenka, in his address, remarked, "Every year, we celebrate Ram Navami in different ways, but this year, we have resolved to establish it as 'World Sanatan Dharma Day.' Lord Shri Ram is the living embodiment of Dharma. His life is a testament to the principles of Sanatan Dharma. He vowed to rid the earth of evil and injustice and upheld this promise by willingly renouncing his throne and embracing 14 years of exile.

He serves as an inspiration to all of humanity as an ideal son, brother, disciple, friend, king, warrior, enemy, father, and husband. Therefore, no other day could be more appropriate than his birth anniversary to be recognized as 'World Sanatan Dharma Diwas.'" The organizers also highlighted the recent Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, where 66 crore (660 million) devotees from over 70 countries participated, taking a holy dip in the sacred confluence. This, they emphasized, is a clear indication that global consciousness towards Sanatan Dharma is awakening.

KOHLI, PATIDAR POWER RCB PAST MI IN WANKHEDE THRILLER

RCBoutclassed MI in a high-octane IPL clash, clinching victory by 12 runs.

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

In a pulsating encounter that kept fans on the edge of their seats, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) triumphed over Mumbai Indians (MI) by 12 runs in their IPL 2025 clash on April 7. The match was a showcase of explosive batting, strategic bowling, and moments of individual brilliance.

Opting to field first after winning the toss, MI faced an aggressive RCB batting lineup. Virat Kohli led the charge with a masterful 67 off 42 balls, reaching his half-century in just 29 deliveries. His innings included seven boundaries and two sixes, propelling RCB to a formidable total.

Complementing Kohli, captain Rajat Patidar played a scintillating knock, amassing 64 runs off 32 balls. His aggressive approach in the middle overs kept the momentum firmly with RCB.

Jitesh Sharma provided the late fireworks, remaining unbeaten with a rapid 40 off 19 balls. His onslaught in the final overs ensured RCB posted an imposing 221/5 in their allotted 20 overs.

Chasing a daunting target of 222, MI's innings



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal celebrate their partnership during the match against Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League 2025, at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Monday. ANI

had a turbulent start. Rohit Sharma showcased early aggression, scoring 17 off 9 balls, but was bowled by Yash Dayal,

leaving MI at 25/1. Ryan Rickelton contributed 17 off 10 balls before falling lbw to Josh Hazlewood. Suryakumar

Yadav and Will Jacks attempted to stabilize the innings, with Jacks scoring 14 before being caught off Krunal Pandya's bowl-

ing.

Tilak Varma emerged as a beacon of hope for MI, crafting a brilliant 56 off 29 balls. His innings was marked by aggressive stroke play and resilience under pressure.

Captain Hardik Pandya injected momentum into the chase with a blistering 42 off just 15 balls, including multiple boundaries and sixes. His aggressive approach brought MI within striking distance.

As the match approached its climax, MI required 19 runs off the final over. Despite the valiant efforts of Naman Dhir and Mitchell Santner, disciplined bowling from RCB, particularly by Krunal Pandya, restricted MI to 209/7, sealing a 12-run victory for RCB.

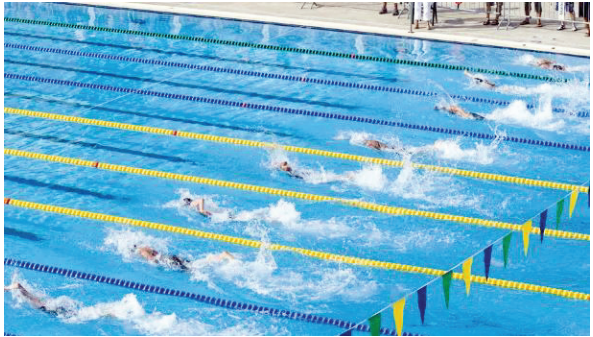
RCB's victory was built on stellar batting performances from Kohli, Patidar, and Sharma, complemented by effective bowling spells from Hazlewood and Dayal.

For MI, despite the loss, the innings of Tilak Varma and Hardik Pandya stood out as exemplary displays of determination and skill.

This match adds a thrilling chapter to IPL 2025, highlighting the competitive spirit and entertainment that the league consistently delivers.

Major irregularities revealed in Delhi Swimming Association election

SANJEEV SHARMA
NEW DELHI



It is only in the case of the swimming mafia that we witness how one society (SFI) suspends another society (DSA) and, on top of it, takes charge and control of all records—which is purely illegal.

Brar as Returning Officer (RO). Ironically, the RO did not send communication to all the voters of DSA at the beginning, but instead told the Ad-hoc committee (wrongfully and illegally formed by the Swimming Federation of India) to do so after the formation of the electoral college.

Furthermore, as per the Sports Development Code 2011, the state association elections are to be held based on district-level associations. Since the DSA constitution has no concept of district-level associations as its members, the malicious game came into force. The RO, rather than calling all the voters of DSA, consulting them, and forming district-level associations by allotting the voters of DSA to

their respective districts herself, delegated this responsibility to people with vested interests in DSA and who aim to control it—which is wrong.

When objected to, the RO said it's not her job.

These people handpicked only those voters who were loyal to them and the multiple clubs they hold. The RO failed miserably to verify whether all the voters had been included in the district-level associations, resulting in the swimming mafia now controlling these district associations—the key to controlling DSA. Why were more than 70 voters informed only after the formation of the electoral college? When questioned, the RO hush-hushed the objection and rejected it.

‘Still work to do in final seconds’: Wrestler Reetika reflects on silver medal win

MANOJ JOSHI
NEW DELHI

Indian wrestler Reetika Hooda, fresh from winning a silver medal at the Asian Championships, opened up about her performance, recurring rivalries, and the mental resilience required in wrestling. In a candid conversation, she addressed how repeated encounters with a Kyrgyz wrestler have cost her victories on multiple international platforms, including the Olympics.

“I lost in the Olympics to her and again at the Asian Championships. After losing at the Olympics, I focused all my energy on correcting my mistakes. I was leading 6-2, and I thought I had it in the bag. But her experience helped her in the final moments,” said Reetika.

Despite her aggressive lead, she lost points in the last 20 seconds—moments that have now become a recurring concern.

She still managed to score in those 20 seconds. I was angry, thinking—just give me one more minute or even ten more seconds, and I could've scored. But what good is venting anger on the mat? I'll work on my technique instead.



In a heartbreaking twist, Reetika revealed how the Indian camp was preparing to celebrate her win just before the tables turned.

“Most of my mistakes happen in the last few seconds—30 seconds, 20 seconds. That's where I lose most of the scores. I'll focus more on that so that I don't repeat such errors.”

She trains at the Chhotu Ram center in Rohtak under the guidance of multiple coaches including Bhaiya ji, Kuldeep ji (from the Navy), and Mandeep sir.

“No, I don't think I need a foreign coach. I qualified and won all my medals here at Chhotu Ram itself. I have full support from my family, coaches, and my brother Amit Bhaiya. Mandeep sir helps me even with the smallest mistakes.”

Reetika's mother has been a constant pillar of support,

accompanying her across trials and championships.

“She's like my second coach. Honestly, those watching from the outside sometimes know more. She knows every technique. She's never been to an international competition with me, but every time she's at an Indian event, I feel a positive vibe. She's like my lucky champ.”

Coming from a military background, Reetika believes discipline is deeply embedded in her lifestyle.

“Papa always made sure we were on time, even five minutes early. That's how it is in the military. It was always my dream to join the forces—and now that I'm in the Navy, I'm happy.”

Reflecting on her gold win at the 2024 World Military Championship, Reetika shared how she pushed through despite falling ill

Despite aggressive lead, she lost points in the last 20 seconds—moments that have now become a recurring concern.

just days before.

“Three-four days before the championship, I had dengue. I was unsure how I'd perform. But my coach Kuldeep sir helped me through. I defeated competitors from the USA and China—some by a 10-0 margin—despite being tired. My counter techniques helped me win.”

Talking about competition at home, Reetika acknowledged tough contenders like Priya Malik and Kiran Bishnoi in the 76kg category.

“In India, we mostly focus on upper body bouts. But internationally, leg attacks are more common, so we have to adapt. At the Asian Championships, I was the first Indian girl to reach the final in the 76kg category. I wanted to break that record too, but those last 20 seconds went wrong.”

On training methods,

Kalinga Super Cup 2025 fixtures announced

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The fixtures for the Kalinga Super Cup 2025 are announced. The tournament, which will be played in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, from April 20 to May 3, will see the participation of 16 clubs (13 from the Indian Super League and three from the I-League) in a single-elimination knock-out format. All matches will take place at the Kalinga Stadium.

The ISL teams were seeded for the round of 16 according to their final league position in the 2024-25 season. Three I-League teams confirmed their participation - Churchill Brothers FC Goa, Inter Kashi and Gokulam Kerala FC. They will face the top three ISL teams (Mohun Bagan Super Giant, FC Goa and Bengaluru FC). These three matchups will be decided by a draw on Wednesday, April 9.

The round of 16 will be played on April 20, April 21, April 23 and April 24, the quarter-finals on April 26 and April 27, the semi-finals on April 30, and the final on May 3. If the scores are level at the end of 90 minutes in the round of 16, quarter-finals and semi-

Kalinga Super Cup 2025 Fixtures			
Round of 16 (seeds in bracket):			
Sunday	April 20 (16:30)	Kerala Blasters FC (8) vs East Bengal FC (9)	
Sunday	April 20 (20:00)	Mohun Bagan SG (1) vs I-League Club - TBC	
Monday	April 21 (16:30)	FC Goa (2) vs I-League Club - TBC	
Monday	April 21 (20:00)	Odisha FC (7) vs Punjab FC (10)	
Wednesday	April 23 (16:30)	Bengaluru FC (3) vs I-League Club - TBC	
Wednesday	April 23 (20:00)	Mumbai City FC (6) vs Chennaiyin FC (11)	
Thursday	April 24 (16:30)	NorthEast United FC (4) vs Mohammedan Sporting Club (13)	
Friday	April 24 (20:00)	Jamshedpur FC (5) vs Hyderabad FC (12)	

QUARTER-FINALS			
QF1	Saturday	April 26 (16:30)	KBFC/EBFC vs MBSG/I-League
QF2	Saturday	April 26 (20:00)	FCG/I-League vs OFC/PFC
QF3	Sunday	April 27 (16:30)	BFC/I-League vs MCFC/CFC
QF4	Sunday	April 27 (20:00)	NEUFC/MSC vs JFC/HFC
SEMI-FINALS			
SF1	Wednesday	April 30 (16:30)	Winner QF1 vs Winner QF2
SF2	Wednesday	April 30 (20:00)	Winner QF3 vs Winner QF4
FINAL			
Saturday May 3 (Time TBC) - Winner SF1 vs Winner SF2			
Venue: Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar.			

finals, there will be no extra time, and a penalty shoot-out will determine the win-

ner. If the scores are level at the end of 90 minutes in the final, there will be extra

time, followed by a penalty shoot-out to determine the champion.

Quarter-final showdowns: Madrid vs Arsenal, Bayern vs Inter

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The UEFA Champions League is entering its final stages, with the quarter-finals set to begin on Wednesday, with more drama and action on the cards in what has been an extraordinary tournament so far, full of surprises and excitement.

In one fixture, defending champions Real Madrid will face off against an inju-

ry-depleted Arsenal, while Bayern Munich will take on Inter Milan in the other.

In the first match, Real Madrid will be hunting for another victory against an Arsenal side that has been ravaged by injuries. Mikel Arteta faces a major dilemma as key players Ben White, Riccardo Calafiori, Gabriel Magalhaes, and Jurrien Timber have all been sidelined.

While Bukayo Saka's re-

turn is a boost for the Gunners, facing a team like Real Madrid without their full-strength squad will be a monumental challenge. Real Madrid enters the match in high spirits, with recent victories in both La Liga and the Copa del Rey. All eyes will be on Kylian Mbappe, who is increasingly being viewed as a future legend at the club, drawing comparisons to Cristiano Ronaldo's time there.

Heinrich Klaasen's international future uncertain as batter

TDG NETWORK
JOHANNESBURG

Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Monday announced the central contract list for men's senior team for 2025-26, with Heinrich Klaasen and Tabraiz Shamsi being two omissions from the list, pace sensation Kwenza Maphaka getting his debut contract and in a first, David Miller and Rassie Van Der Dussen getting "hybrid contracts".

CSA has awarded 18 na-

tional contracts and two hybrid contracts, which will run from June 1, 2025 - May 31, 2026, as per a CSA press release.

With the introduction of hybrid contracts, David Miller and Rassie van der Dussen will be contracted to participate in specific agreed-upon bilateral tours and ICC events as they are two big names in the T20 league circuit.

National contracts have been awarded for the first time to seam bowler Lizaad

Williams and all-rounder Senuran Muthusamy. They are joined by pacer Maphaka, who made his international debut in all formats this past season.

Lions all-rounder Wiaan Mulder, batter David Bedingham, and his provincial teammate Kyle Verreynne all earned contract upgrades during the current season and have been retained for the upcoming season.

Discussions regarding Klaasen's future are ongo-

ing, and a final decision will be made in due course. Also other players missing out on contracts as per ESPNcricinfo include Andile Phehlukwayo and spinner Bjorn Fortuin.

The contracts will cover a busy season for the national team with bilateral tours away to Zimbabwe, Australia, England, Pakistan and India, as well as a home series against the West Indies. The calendar will also feature two major ICC events: the World Test Champion-

ship (WTC) Final against Australia, which will take place at Lord's in England in June, and the T20 World Cup 2026, to be played in India and Sri Lanka early next year.

Director of National Teams and High Performance Enoch Nkwe said: "I want to congratulate all the players who have been awarded national contracts for the next 12 months, especially the players who have been contracted for the first time.