



**4**  
**POLL RESULTS TO  
DECIDE COALITION OR NO  
COALITION GOVT: AIADMK**



**11**  
**WHERE BIOLOGY BINDS:  
UK'S APEX COURT DEFINES  
'WOMAN' IN EQUALITY ACT**



**16**  
**MUMBAI INDIANS BEAT  
SUNRISERS HYDERABAD  
BY 4 WICKETS**

## GOVT WILL NOT DENOTIFY WAQF ASSETS TILL MAY 5

The Supreme Court grants a week to the Centre to file response to pleas challenging the Waqf Act

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday assured the Supreme Court that it will neither denotify Waqf properties, including "Waqf by user", nor make any appointments to the Central Waqf Council and Boards till May 5.

The assurance of solicitor general Tushar Mehta came when he informed a bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan that the Waqf law was passed by Parliament with "due deliberations" and it should not be stayed without hearing the government.

The Centre also strongly opposed the apex court's proposal to pass an interim order against the denotification of Waqf properties, including "Waqf by user", aside from staying a provision allowing the inclusion of non-Muslims in the Central Waqf Councils and Boards.

"During the course of hearing, the solicitor general states that the respondent (Union of India) would like to put in a short response within seven days. He further states and assures that till the next date of hear-

### GOVT DEFENCE

■ Waqf law was passed by Parliament with "due deliberations" and it should not be stayed without hearing the government: Solicitor general Tushar Mehta

■ "We, as a government, and Parliament, are answerable to the people."

■ Private properties were usurped as Waqf in several places.

■ The bench has decided to hear only five of the total number of pleas before

■ Gpvt will neither denotify Waqf properties, including "Waqf by user", nor make



any appointments to the Central Waqf Council and Boards till May 5.

■ "Waqf by user" refers to a practice where a property is recognised as a religious

or charitable endowment (Waqf) based on its long-term, uninterrupted use for such purposes, even if there isn't a formal, written declaration of Waqf by the owner.

"If your lordships are going to stay a statutory provision... it by itself is rare. We will have to take your lordships to the history of legislation, followed by amendment".

- Tushar Mehta, Solicitor General

ing, no appointments will be made to the Council and Boards under sections 9 and 14 (of the Act)," the bench said.

The bench noted Mehta, appearing for the Centre, has also said that till the next date of hearing, Waqf prop-

erties, including "Waqf by user" already registered or declared by way of notification, shall not be disturbed and denotified.

The bench then granted a week's time to the Centre to file a preliminary response to the pleas challenging the

validity of the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 and posted the matter on May 5.

"If your lordships will say something about 'Waqf by user', what will be the fall-out?" Mehta said.

■ P3

## Maharashtra makes Hindi mandatory as 3rd language

MUMBAI: The Maharashtra government has made Hindi a compulsory third language from Std I-V in Marathi and English medium schools in the state as per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.



The Opposition Congress has slammed the government, saying the move amounts to the imposition of Hindi. Currently, only Marathi and English are being taught as mandatory languages from Classes 1 to 4 in these schools.

DETAILS ■ P2

## India slams Pak Army Chief's comments on Kashmir

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday responded to Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir's comments on Kashmir, emphasising that the view of Kashmir being a "jugular vein" is baseless.

While addressing a press briefing on Thursday in New Delhi, on the comments by Pakistan Army chief terming Kashmir as a jugular vein, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "How can anything foreign be in a jugular vein? This is a Union territory of India. It's only relationship with Pakistan is the vacation of illegally occupied territories by that country..."

Jammu and Kashmir's only relationship with Pakistan is that of Islamabad vacating the illegally occupied part of the Union Territory, India said on Thursday.

In his address at an event in Islamabad this week, Gen Munir described Kashmir as the "jugular vein" of Pakistan and asserted that no one would be able to separate Kashmir from his country.

On Pakistan's attempts to wash its hands off the 26/11 terror accused Tahawwur Rana, Jaiswal said: "Pakistan may try very hard but its reputation as the epicentre of global terrorism will not diminish."

"The extradition of Rana serves as a reminder to Pakistan that it needs to bring to justice other perpetrators of

the Mumbai attacks whom it continues to shield," he said.

Rana, 64, was brought to India on April 10 after all hurdles for his extradition were removed by the US.

A Canadian national of Pakistani origin, Rana is now in the custody of Indian investigating agencies.

He further said that the reputation of Pakistan as the epicentre of global terrorism will not decrease.

"Pakistan may try very hard, but its reputation as the epicentre of global terrorism will not diminish. The extradition of Rana serves as a reminder to Pakistan that it needs to bring to justice other perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attacks, whom it continues to shield," Jaiswal said.

## 'Golconda Blue' diamond goes under hammer

It is a once in a lifetime grand appearance on the auction circuit, likely to fetch \$35-50 million

AGENCIES  
LONDON

A rare 'Golconda Blue' diamond with its rich royal history tracing back to the Holkar dynasty is set for a "once in a lifetime" grand appearance on the auction circuit as it goes under the hammer in Christie's 'Magnificent Jewels' sale in Geneva next month.

The exceptional pear-

shaped blue diamond, estimated to fetch between USD 35-50 million, is associated with Yeshwant Rao Holkar, the Maharaja of Indore and a member of the Holkar dynasty, who along with his wife was known for a grand lifestyle in the 1920s and 1930s.

A Knight of the Order of the Indian Empire, the Maharaja spent much of his time abroad, cultivating a



COURTESY OF CHRISTIE'S  
strong affinity for Western art, design, and jewellery.

"Exceptional noble gems of this calibre come to market once in a lifetime," said Rahul Kadakia, Christie's International Head of Jewellery.

"Over the course of its 259-year history, Christie's has had the honour of offering some of the world's most important Golconda diamonds, including the Archduke Joseph, the Princie, and the Wittels-

## Judiciary cannot direct President: V-P

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday said India cannot have a situation where the judiciary directs the President, adding that Article 142 of the Constitution has become a "nuclear missile against democratic forces for the judiciary."

Speaking at the Valedictory Function of the sixth Rajya Sabha Internship Programme at the Vice-President's Enclave, Dhankhar proposed an amendment to Article 145(3), which deals with the composition of the bench required to decide substantial questions of constitutional law.

"We cannot have a situation where you direct the President of India, and on what basis? The only right you have under the Constitution is to interpret the Constitution under Article 145(3). There, it has to be five judges or more. When



"Article 142 of the Constitution has become a nuclear missile against democratic forces for the judiciary."

- Jagdeep Dhankhar  
Vice-President

Article 145(3) was there, the number of judges in the Supreme Court was eight, 5 out of 8, now 5 out of 30 and odd. But forget about it; the judges who issued a mandamus virtually to the President and presented

a scenario that it would be the law of the land have forgotten the power of the Constitution. How can that combination of judges deal with something under Article 145(3) if preserved, it was then for five out of eight. We also need to make amends for that now. Five out of eight would mean interpretation will be by majority. Well, five constitutes more than the majority in eight. But leave that aside. Article 142 has become a nuclear missile against Democratic forces, available to the judiciary 24 x 7," Dhankhar said.

He further said a structured platform will be set up to provide the public with comprehensive and authentic information on legislative activities in the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha.

"I will work out with the Hon'ble Speaker, and in about two months' time, we will launch it. So, people of the country will have the benefit of having au-

■ P3

## Mansarovar Yatra set to resume soon

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday said there is a possibility of resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra soon and preparations for it are underway.

India and China have been looking at resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra as part of efforts to improve ties after the two countries completed disengagement of troops at the two remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang under the framework of a pact sealed in October last year.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said both India and China have agreed in principle to resume flight services between the two sides as well and that relevant modalities are being worked out.

The move to resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and flight services is part of efforts by India and China

■ P3



A Border Roads Organisation (BRO) vehicle clears snow from a path for an accessible commute to the Manali-Leh highway, in Kullu on Thursday. ANI

## Bengal Guv likely to visit riot-hit areas

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE  
KOLKATA

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Thursday met a group of victims of the Murshidabad riot at Raj Bhavan and then announced plans to visit neighbouring Malda district on a "fact-finding" trip. Hundreds of victims of the trouble-torn areas have taken shelter in Malda, which



lies across the river from Murshidabad. This came despite Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urging him not to embark on the trip.

Governor CV Ananda Bose overrides MC Mamata Banerjee's advice

Speaking at a media conference at the State secretariat Nabanna, Banerjee urged non-locals not to visit Murshidabad. "I would ap-

peal to the Governor to wait for a few more days, as confidence-building measures are underway. The situation is normalising," she said.

The Chief Minister said that she herself decided against visiting the affected areas at present to avoid triggering political one-upmanship.

Despite Mamata Banerjee's request, Governor

■ P3

## Dawoodi Bohra delegation meets PM, lauds Waqf Act

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A delegation of Dawoodi Bohras met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to express their gratefulness to him for the Waqf (Amendment) Act, which has accommodated some of their key demands.

Officials said the community members told Modi that it was their long-pending

■ P3



PM Modi in a meeting with a delegation from the Dawoodi Bohra community, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI



# MAHA MAKES HINDI MANDATORY AS 3RD LANGUAGE FOR CLASSES 1-5

## Congress slams move, says it amounts to imposition of Hindi on Marathi people, it should be made optional

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government has made Hindi a compulsory third language from Std I-V in Marathi and English medium schools in the state as per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

The Opposition Congress has slammed the government, saying the move amounts to the imposition of Hindi.

Currently, only Marathi and English are being taught as mandatory languages from Classes 1 to 4 in these schools.

According to a Government Resolution (GR) issued on Thursday, Hindi as a third language will be compulsory from Class 1

### STATE ROLLS OUT NEP

- Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the state has already implemented the NEP.
- Currently, only Marathi and English are being taught as mandatory languages from Classes 1 to 4 in these schools.
- We would have had no problem if Hindi were an optional language. But making it mandatory is like imposing it. It is wrong to hurt Marathi sentiments. Can we demand Marathi as a third language in Madhya Pradesh, UP, Congress said.
- For Std VI to X, the language policy will be as per the state curriculum, it said.



to 5 from the next academic year. The new syllabus as per NEP will be implemented for Class 1 in 2025-26.

For Classes 2, 3, 4 and 6, the policy will be implemented in 2026-27, for Classes 5, 9 and 11 from 2027-28, and for Classes 8,

10 and 12 from 2028-29, the GR said.

All schools in the state, other than Marathi and English medium, are currently following the three-language formula. For such schools, the language of the medium, English and

Marathi will be taught, said the GR.

For Std VI to X, the language policy will be as per the state curriculum, it said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the state has already implemented the NEP.

## Haryana Cong leaders detained during protest against ED 'misuse' in Chandigarh

### Internal rifts surface as Selja, Surjewala skip rally amid ED heat on party

TDG NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana Congress staged a protest in Chandigarh on Thursday against what it called the "political misuse" of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) by the BJP government. The protest, led by former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and state Congress chief Chaudhary Udaibhan, saw the detention of several senior leaders, including MP Deepender Hooda and many MLAs, after a scuffle with the police.

The Congress workers were marching towards the ED office to protest against the ED's actions in the National Herald and Gurugram land cases involving Congress leadership and businessman Rob-

ert Vadra, husband of Priyanka Gandhi. The protest was also aimed at condemning the recent chargesheet filed against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

The police stopped the march midway by placing heavy barricades and later detained the leaders. They were taken to Sector 3 police station and released after a few hours. Even inside the police station, Congress workers raised slogans against the BJP government and the ED.

Thousands of Congress workers from across Haryana joined the protest. Senior leaders like Jitendra Baghel, Varun Mullana, Jai Prakash, and several former MLAs

also courted arrest. The scene turned tense as the protesters tried to break through police barricades.

Speaking to the media, Bhupinder Singh Hooda said, "If independent agencies are misused for political reasons, it is dangerous for democracy. This entire action is nothing but political revenge against the top Congress leadership."

Chaudhary Udaibhan also slammed the BJP, saying, "The BJP is afraid of Rahul Gandhi's growing support. That's why they are trying to target him and our party through ED. But we will fight this battle—on the streets, in court and in Parliament. The Congress never bowed down before the British, and we

will not bow before the BJP either." Interestingly, senior Congress leaders Randeep Surjewala and Kumari Selja stayed away from the protest despite being invited, once again highlighting the internal rift within the Haryana Congress. Their absence was also noted during a previous protest in Chandigarh against the Adani issue. On Wednesday, Selja held a protest in Sirsa accusing the union government of political vendetta.

"Filing of chargesheet in the National Herald case is motivated only by political sentiment. But this fight against the BJP is not just of Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi. This fight is between truth and lies. This is the fight of every citizen who is suffering from unemployment, inflation and injustice against the conspiracy to crush democracy. We will fight on the streets and in Parliament and will strongly oppose this dictatorship of the BJP," she said.

## Naveen files nomination paper for BJD chief's post

TDG NETWORK  
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha's former Chief Minister and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) supremo Naveen Patnaik on Thursday filed his nomination for the post of BJD president, marking his bid for a ninth consecutive term.

Speaking at a press conference, BJD State Returning Officer (SRO) and party MLA Pratap Keshari Deb confirmed that Patnaik was the sole nominee for the top post.

"We are currently in the process of conducting the party's organisational

elections. Today, Naveen Patnaik filed his nomination between 10 AM and 1 PM, the designated time slot. Since there is only one nomination, he will be declared the next party president," Deb said.

The official announcement of Patnaik's unopposed election is expected the day after tomorrow, following completion of procedural formalities. He has been elected as the BJD president eight times consecutively since the party's inception in 1997, with his most recent election being in February 2020.



Deb also informed that the lists of district presidents and state council members have been finalised. "The next step will be the selection of the state executive members," he

added. Patnaik filed the nomination for the post of Biju Janata Dal president on Thursday. The nomination was filed in the presence of senior party leaders and State Returning Officer (SRO) Pratap Deb at Sankha Bhawan in Bhubaneswar.

Notably, he filed his nomination on the 28th anniversary of his father's death, Biju Patnaik, after whom the regional party, the Biju Janata Dal, is named.

Earlier today, Biju Janata Dal leaders paid tribute to former Odisha Chief Minister Biju Patnaik on his

## Shah hails CRPF for fight against Naxalism

TDG NETWORK  
NEEMUCH

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday hailed the Central Reserve Police Force's major contribution to ending naxalism in the country. He added that by March 2026, the country will be completely rid of naxalism.

"Whenever there is unrest in any part of the country, being the Home Minister, when I come to know that CRPF personnel are there, it puts me at ease. I have full trust that if the CRPF



is there, the success is certain... Be it fighting against terrorists in Kashmir Valley or maintaining peace in the Northeast or confining Naxalites to just four districts - in all these things, CSPF personnel have always had

a major contribution in such tasks," Shah said.

The Union Home Minister was addressing the 86th Central Reserve Police Force Day Celebration in Neemuch in Madhya Pradesh today. "There are

many such occasions in the history of 76 years of independence, where the CRPF has protected the honour and pride of the country. On October 21, 1959 in Ladakh, only a few selected soldiers fought the Chinese army and all of them attained martyrdom. Therefore, all the police forces of the country celebrate October 21 every year as Police Smriti Diwas," Shah said. Further, he congratulated the CRPF's Cobra Battalion, which he said has become a symbol of bravery.

death anniversary in Bhubaneswar.

The 2024 elections in Odisha saw a stark contrast in the performance of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in the assembly and Lok Sabha polls. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 78 seats out of 147, surpassing the majority mark and forming the government under Mohan Charan Majhi.

The BJD secured 51 seats, losing power after 24 years. Three independent MLAs later joined the BJP, increasing its tally to 81 seats. The Indian National Congress (INC) won 14 seats.

AJIT MAINDOLA  
NEW DELHI

Robert Vadra, husband of Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, has once again hinted at joining active politics, even as he remains under investigation in an alleged land scam case in Gurugram.

After three days of continuous questioning by the enforcement authorities, Vadra told reporters that he would "definitely enter politics" and

## 'Untainted' Bengal teachers unimpressed by SC breather

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE  
KOLKATA

The Supreme Court on Thursday allowed the West Bengal Government to let assistant teachers who have not been found guilty of any wrongdoing to continue working in State schools for now, citing the academic interest of students in Classes 9 to 12. It directed the State Government to initiate a fresh recruitment process by May 31 and complete it by December 31. However, the breather failed to enthuse large sections of the sacked teachers who are sitting in dharna for days.

The apex court also said that no non-teaching staff or teachers identified as tainted will be allowed to remain in their posts. It directed the West Bengal Government, the State Education Board, and the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) to submit an affidavit by May 31. The affidavit must include an advertisement for fresh recruitment of teachers and a written assurance that the selection process will be completed by December 31, 2025.

The Supreme Court said those currently allowed to continue as teachers would not receive any benefit in the

upcoming recruitment test.

The "untainted" teachers expressed dissatisfaction over what they described as mere «short-term relief,» even as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee welcomed the order and said there was now a «sense of relief».

The order came on the pleas of the State Government which moved court after the April 3 verdict which invalidated the appointment of 25,753 teachers and staffers in various schools, calling the entire selection process «vitiated and tainted».

Addressing a press conference at the State secretariat Nabanna shortly after the court ruling, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said: «The court has given time till December. This is a relief for now. We were concerned about their salaries as the earlier ruling had barred salary disbursement. We were looking for an alternative way. The court has responded positively to our plea so that they don't suffer. We are happy with the SC order... there is a sense of relief. I would request the teachers not to worry, the issue will be resolved.»

Hailing the SC order, Education Minister Bratya Basu asked the jobless «eligible

teachers not to worry as the apex court acknowledged the point made by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education that invalidation of jobs of thousands of «untainted» teachers will severely disrupt the academic functioning of State-run and State-aided schools.

The jobless eligible teachers, however, asserted that only permanent reinstatement would bring them justice.

Pankaj Roy, one of the teachers, said: «With all respect to the Honourable Supreme Court, let's voice our dissatisfaction over the order which has allowed us to attend classes only till December 31. What happens after that? The SC has asked the State to issue a fresh notification. We've already made it clear that we will not sit for fresh exams after clearing the 2016 recruitment test as eligible candidates. Roy, a political science teacher at a secondary school in North Bengal, had observed a three-day hunger strike last week outside the WBSSC office in Acharya Bhavan, demanding the publication of a list distinguishing «tainted» from «untainted» candidates from the 2016 recruitment batch.

## Cong calls meet tomorrow ahead of hearing in National Herald case

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

After the Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a chargesheet against Congress leaders Rahul and Sonia Gandhi in connection with the alleged National Herald case, party President Mallikarjun Kharge has called a meeting on Saturday to finalise the strategy ahead of the hearing in the Delhi Rouse Avenue Court on April 25.

According to sources, after discussing with his lawyers, LoP Rahul Gandhi left for Boston, US, as per his pre-scheduled program.

Rahul and the lawyers have decided to participate in the legal process at the Rouse Avenue Court and will not directly approach the High Court, sources said. The lawyers told Rahul that he would have to appear before the court on April 25 or a later date, for which the Congress leader is fully prepared, it added. Kharge will hold a meeting of all the general secretaries, in-charges, and heads of all frontal organisations at Indira Bhawan in the national capital, in the absence of Rahul Gandhi, to discuss organisational issues. According to the sources, the meeting will also discuss the strategy in response to the actions taken by the ED against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. On April 15, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) against top Congress members Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi in connection with the National Herald

## Vadra quizzed by ED for third day

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Robert Vadra arrived at the ED office on Thursday for the third consecutive day for questioning in connection with the Gurugram land case.

Congress MP and his wife, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, accompanied him to the ED office. On his arrival at the ED office, Robert Vadra said, "I have answered all questions. The same questions were asked in 2019 as well. This is nothing new. This is the style of campaigning of this Government, their style of misusing. We have the strength to stand this, and we will do so." Earlier today, in response to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summons, Robert Vadra slammed the action as a "political vendetta," accusing the government of misusing investigative agencies to target opposition voices. Speaking to ANI, Vadra questioned the ED's impartiality, alleging selective action against leaders



from non-BJP parties while vowing to continue his fight against "injustice." "This is a political vendetta. Agencies are being misused. This is wrong. How will there be trust in agencies when they are after any candidates for the CM position in the country, or when a party is doing well? Which BJP minister or member has been summoned by the ED? Why has none of them been summoned? Is everyone in the BJP good? Do they not have any allegations against them? There are several allegations," Vadra said.

money laundering case.

The said chargesheet also names Congress leader Sam Pitroda, Suman Dubey and others, including several firms.

The matter has been listed for arguments on cognisance in the Delhi Rouse Avenue Court on April 25.

The prosecution complaint has been filed under Sections 44 and 45 of the Prevention

of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, for the offence of money laundering, as defined under Section 3, read with Section 70, and punishable under Section 4 of the PMLA, 2002.

The complaint was filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy against Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, their associated companies, and other individuals.

## Robert Vadra's entry into politics looks more 'definite' after ED grilling

work for the Congress party, with the support and blessings of his family.

Vadra is being investigated in connection with land deals, where he is accused of buying land in violation of certain legal and procedural norms. The probe, which has put him under intense scrutiny, appears to be getting deeper.

Despite this, Vadra maintains that such inquiries are not new to him and are often used as pressure tactics. He

stated that he is not afraid of summons and will continue working for the people.

Although Priyanka Gandhi and Vadra are handling the situation personally, the Congress party has kept a distance from the matter. The focus within the party currently remains on senior leaders like Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

There is no official party support or public statement regarding Vadra's case, and no significant political move-

ment has emerged from it either.

Vadra has long expressed a desire to enter politics and was even speculated to be a potential candidate from Amethi during previous elections.

However, reports suggest that his political entry was not fully supported within the family. He has repeatedly said that he is ready to take up political responsibilities but has not received a clear opportunity yet.



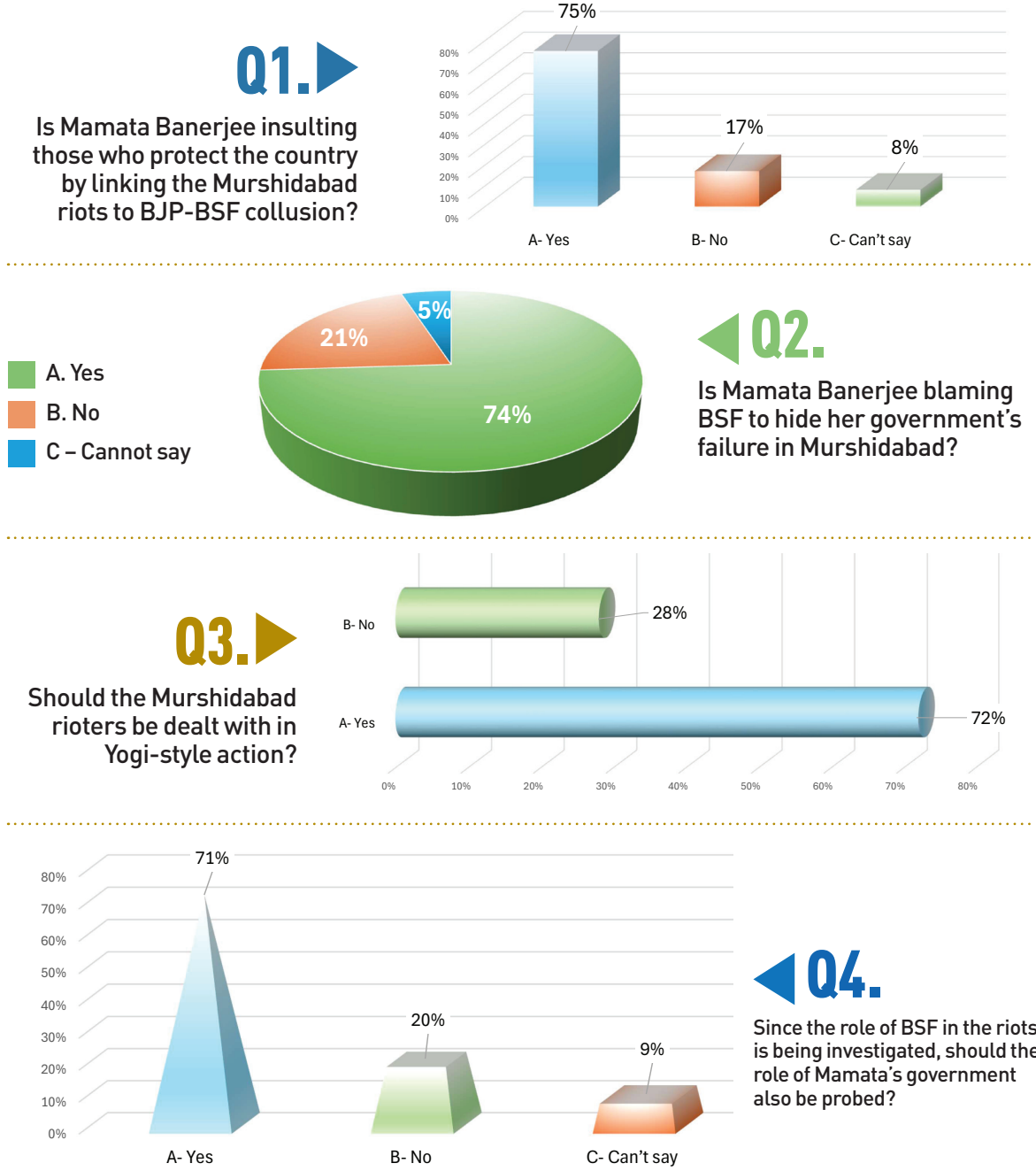
THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BENGAL'S MURSHIDABAD VIOLENCE

74% believe Banerjee blames BSF to hide her govt's failure

West Bengal Police has formed a 9-member SIT to probe recent violence in Samserganj and Jan-gipur. All officers were asked to

report by 12 pm on April 17. CM Mamata Banerjee termed the violence "pre-planned" and blamed the BJP. The unrest during anti-

Waqf Act protests left three dead, hundreds homeless, and led to over 200 arrests and internet suspension.



Opposition leaders gather at RJD office in Patna for key talks

AGENCIES  
PATNA

Leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation and other opposition parties convened at the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) headquarters in Patna on Thursday to begin discussions within the Mahagathbandhan alliance.

The meeting involves more formal deliberations, focusing primarily on seat-sharing arrangements and the formulation of a Common Minimum Programme ahead of the upcoming assembly elections in Bihar.

Speaking to the reporters, Kunal, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation leader, said, "These are preliminary discussions (on seat sharing). We will have to talk about forming a Common Minimum Programme and set an agenda."

Kunal further added, "There are several issues across the country, across the state, for which we will have to think about together...Tejashwi is the leader of the biggest party...A Mahagathbandhan government will be formed..."

Meanwhile, BJP leader Shah Nawaz Hussain launched a sharp attack on the Mahagathbandhan, calling it a "complete flop show" and predicting a big defeat for the alliance in the upcoming Bihar elections.

"They have no motive to sit down. This is going to be a complete flop show



Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav joins hands with Congress Bihar in-charge Krishna Allawaru, Bihar Congress Chief Rajesh Kumar, VIP Chief Mukesh Sahni and others during a press conference after the Grand-alliance meeting ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, in Patna on Thursday. ANI

because we are saying that we will go to the elections under the leadership of Nitish Kumar, but the people of Mahagathbandhan are not ready to say that they will go under the leadership of Tejashwi Yadav," Hussain said.

Earlier today, Tejashwi Yadav met with Congress to strategise the agenda for winning the upcoming Bihar election.

"These leaders will meet, but it is not going to get hearts completely. The Congress party is divided against itself. The Congress party is not ready to consider Tejashwi Yadav a leader, and Tejashwi Yadav is not ready to give seventy seats to the Congress party," he added.

He also pointed to internal contradictions within the

alliance. Hussain further claimed, "This time, the RJD is going to get less than twenty-three seats. And our alliance, which will fight under the leadership of Nitish Kumar, is going to cross 200. We are definitely going to form the government in Bihar."

Slamming the INDIA alliance, Union Minister Nityanand Rai too called the meeting the "Ghamandia" alliance.

He claimed that there is an internal conflict between Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), and that Tejashwi Yadav was engaged in corrupt, dynasty-based politics. He also criticised Congress for promoting Kanhaiya Kumar, referring to him as a leader of what he termed the "Bharat Tere Tukde

Honge" group.

"It is the meeting of the 'Ghamandia' alliance. There is a clash between Tejashwi Yadav and Congress. Tejashwi Yadav is leading an extremely corrupt political dynasty. Kanhaiya Kumar, promoted by the Congress, is the leader of the 'Bharat Tere Tukde honge' gang," Rai said.

A high-stakes battle is expected to take place in Bihar, with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), comprising Janata Dal (United) led by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, and the Bharatiya Janata Party, competing against the Mahagathbandhan, comprising the Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), and left parties. The Bihar Assembly elections are due to be held later this year.

'Judiciary cannot direct President'

CONTINUED FROM P1

thetic information from a sanctified platform about Members of Parliament, and right from Constituent Assembly debates to the current ones. You will also have access to archives that are privy to the Indian Parliament," Dhankhar said.

Dhankhar's remarks come days after the Supreme Court ruled on April 8 that Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi's decision to withhold 10 bills and reserve them for the President's assent was "illegal and errone-

ous in law" and liable to be set aside.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan observed that the Governor must act based on the aid and advice of the State Legislature.

The top court gave its order in response to the Tamil Nadu government's petition challenging the Governor's refusal to assent to bills passed by the State Assembly.

The court stated that when a bill is returned and re-enacted by the Assembly, the Governor must give assent and cannot refuse

it unless the bill has been changed.

"Action of the Governor to reserve the 10 bills for the President is illegal and arbitrary, and thus the action is set aside. All actions taken by the Governor thereto for the 10 bills are set aside. The 10 bills shall be deemed to be clear from the date it was re-presented to the Governor," the judgment stated.

The court had reserved its judgment on February 10 on the petitions filed by the Tamil Nadu government, some of which dated back to January 2020.

Govt will not denotify Waqf assets till May 5

CONTINUED FROM P1

He added, "We, as a government, and Parliament, are answerable to the people."

The CJI said if the registration of any Waqf property had taken place under the erstwhile 1995 Act, then those properties can't be denotified till further hearing.

The apex court, while hearing the matter on Wednesday, proposed to stay certain key provisions of the Act, including the power to denotify properties declared as waqf by courts and inclusion of non-Muslims in central waqf council and boards.

On Thursday, Mehta asked whether the court might consider staying, directly or indirectly, the Act based upon some prima facie or tentative reading of some of the sections.

"If your lordships are going to stay a statutory provision," Mehta said, "it by itself is rare. We will have to take your lordships to the history of legislation, followed by amendment".

He said the government received several representations, which ultimately resulted into the amended Act.

Opposing the stay, the law officer referred to certain instances and said private

properties were usurped as Waqf in several places.

Terming it a "considered piece of legislation", Mehta said the pleas were filed before the Presidential assent and taken immediately by the bench.

"We are not deciding the matter finally," the bench said.

Mehta argued staying the provisions of the Act may be a "harsh step" and said the government should be allowed to place its preliminary reply.

"Allow me to place within a week my preliminary reply with some materials, documents and statutes to show," he said, "and in one

week, nothing will change".

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, representing a state government, said "heavens are not going to fall if the interim order is not passed for a week or so". Mehta further assured of not making appointments in the respective waqf boards even if some of the states were not before the court.

The CJI said, "We don't want the position to change. Parliament makes laws, executive decides and judiciary interprets."

The bench has also decided to hear only five of the total number of pleas before it and titled the case: "In Re:

Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025".

About 72 petitions, including those by AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi, All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Anwar Basha former chairman Karnataka State Board of AUQAF represented by advocate Tariq Ahmed, Congress MPs Imran Pratapgarhi and Mohammad Jawed, were filed against the law.

Senior counsel including Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Singhvi, Huzefa Ahmadi appear for the petitioners in the case.

Dawoodi Bohra team meets PM

CONTINUED FROM P1

demand as they reposed faith in his vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'. They were accompanied by Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju in the meeting.

The community, a prosperous but miniscule minority among Shia Muslims, was represented by noted lawyer Harish Salve during their representation to the

Joint Committee of Parliament, which was headed by BJP MP Jagdambika Pal, that had scrutinised the bill tabled in Parliament.

It was based on the committee's recommendations that several new amendments were introduced in the bill, which was enacted following its passage in Parliament amid strident criticism from opposition parties.

Mansarovar Yatra set to resume

CONTINUED FROM P1

to repair the ties hit by the over four-year military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

"We will soon issue a public notice on the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and there is a possibility of resumption of the Yatra soon," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"The Yatra will happen this year and we are making preparations. More information will be put out for the public soon," he added.

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra has not taken place since 2020.

On resumption of flight services, Jaiswal said: "In

principle, both countries have agreed that flight operations will resume."

"The technical teams on both sides are looking into the technical arrangements for the flight services to resume. The two civil aviation authorities have met and are discussing the relevant modalities, including the updated framework," he said.

Last month, India and China explored ways to rebuild ties and agreed to initiate efforts to promote people-to-people exchanges, including arrangements for resumption of direct flights as well as Kailash Mansarovar Yatra this year.

In a meeting in Beijing, the two sides also discussed resumption of dialogue mechanisms in a "step-

by-step" manner to utilize them to address each other's priority areas of interest and concern and move the relations on to a "more stable and predictable path".

The relations between the two countries came under severe strain following the Galwan Valley clashes in 2020.

The meeting in Beijing was held between Gourangalal Das, the joint secretary in the MEA's East Asia division, and Liu Jinsong, the director general at the Chinese foreign ministry's department of Asian affairs.

There have been series of meetings between India and China following the disengagement of troops in Depsang and Demchok.

CONTINUED FROM P1

the famed Indore Pear diamonds from French luxury brand Chaumet, marking the beginning of a long-standing relationship with the historic Parisian Maison.

In 1923, during another visit to Chaumet, he commissioned a diamond bracelet set with his own 23-carat pear-shaped 'Golconda Blue' diamond.

Drawn to the firm's avant-garde flare, Yeshwant Rao Holkar appointed Mauboussin as his official jeweller in 1933.

Thereafter, Mauboussin reimagined much of the Maharaja's collection and created an exceptional necklace including the 'Golconda Blue' and the 'Indore Pears', worn by the Maharani of Indore San-yogitabai Devi.

Holkar also collaborated with other iconic international jewellers, including Harry Winston.

In 1946, Winston pur-

chased the Indore Pears from the Maharaja, and the following year, in January 1947, he acquired this 23-carat blue diamond.

Winston later set it in a brooch alongside a matching 23-carat white diamond, which he sold to the Maharaja of Baroda.

The brooch was subsequently reacquired by Winston and resold as a newly designed jewel to its current owner. Now, over a century later, this legendary blue diamond is set to be auctioned for the very first time in its ring setting.

The legacy of Golconda diamonds begins with a reference found in a fourth-century Sanskrit manuscript.

In 327 BC, Alexander the Great brought diamonds from India to Europe, sparking the West's enduring fascination with these rare gems. By 1292 AD, Marco Polo famously chronicled the captivating beauty of Indian diamonds in his travel writings.

Guv likely to visit riot-hit areas

CONTINUED FROM P1

Bose said that he intends to visit the district to make "an objective assessment of the ground situation".

"I will certainly visit Murshidabad. I will go to the field to see for myself the realities. I will have an objective view of the matter. The situation has been brought under control. We should take further steps to prevent similar occurrences in the future. People from the area have requested a BSF camp there," he told reporters.

The Governor's decision comes after State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar and former MP Roopa Ganguli took a number of men, women and children who were victims of the riot to meet the Governor.

Meanwhile, the West Bengal Police announced the formation of a nine-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the recent outbreak of violence in the minority-dominated Murshidabad district, where the protest against the Waqf Amendment Act,

which has been going on for more than a week, became violent.

The SIT comprises an Additional Superintendent of Police (Intelligence Branch), two Deputy Superintendents -- one from the Counter Insurgency Force (CIF) and the other from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) -- five inspectors (including four from the CID and one from Traffic Police), and the in-charge officer of the Cyber Crime Police Station under Sundarban Police District.

In another development, the Calcutta High Court on Thursday instructed Central forces to remain stationed in Murshidabad district. The court also called for restraint, asking all parties to avoid provocative statements amid ongoing tensions.

The directive came from a division Bench comprising Justices Soumen Sen and Raja Basu Chowdhury, which also told the Trinamool Congress-led State administration to constitute

a team for the rehabilitation and resettlement of those who fled the district to escape the violence.

The court suggested that a three-member panel, comprising one member each from the National Human Rights Commission, the West Bengal State Human Rights Commission and State Legal Services Authority, should visit the affected pockets of the district to oversee the restoration of peace and rehabilitation of people displaced due to the violence.

This came after the West Bengal Government told the High Court that the State police were up against a crowd of around 10,000 people as violence broke out.

The 34-page report details out the scale of violence that ripped through Jangipur in Murshidabad district last week, starting on April 11. The report highlighted that an unruly mob of 4000-5000 people had attacked the police and even snatched away the service revolver of a senior officer.



# POLL RESULTS TO DECIDE COALITION OR NO COALITION: AIADMK ON TIE-UP ROW

We will address alliance parties after results of state polls, says party

TDG NETWORK  
CHENNAI

AIADMK spokesperson Kovai Sathyan on Thursday dismissed rift rumours within the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Tamil Nadu, saying alliance 'decisions' will be taken after the election results and slammed "paid media on DMK's payroll" for spreading speculation

Sathyan said the nature of the next government—whether standalone or coalition—would depend on the election outcome.

"Our leader, Edappadi K Palaniswami, made it clear that we have to address the alliance parties after the results of the elections. The nature of the results will determine whether the government is all by itself or a coalition government. Misrepresenting these two ter-

## SLAMS MEDIA FOR SPECULATION

- The nature of the results will determine whether the government is all by itself or a coalition government
- "The ruling parties are there, and they will come and join with this leadership. The BJP and many other parties will come"
- The AIADMK spokesperson added, "Our leader said that EPS would lead the alliance in Tamil Nadu."



minologies in their favour is the handwork of certain paid media on DMK's payroll," he said.

The AIADMK spokesperson added, "Our leader said that EPS would lead the alliance in Tamil Nadu. The ruling parties are there, and they will come and join with this leadership. The BJP and many other parties will come. Knowing that our alliance is very strong and will sweep the upcoming assembly,

DMK wants to create a rift between us."

This clarification comes after the AIADMK and BJP, along with other parties, decided to contest the upcoming Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu together under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The AIADMK also responded to remarks made by Tamil Nadu BJP President Nainar Nagenthiran about ending dynastic politics and

corruption. Sathyan said these points reflect the alliance's Common Minimum Programme (CMP).

"The first two CMP points are crystal clear—end 'parivarvad' and clean up corruption," he asserted.

On Wednesday, AIADMK MLAs protested in the Tamil Nadu Assembly against the DMK-led government for not allowing them to raise a no-confidence motion against state minister K Ponnudhy

## HC asks police to register case against TN minister for his controversial remarks

TDG NETWORK  
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Thursday directed the Tamil Nadu police to file a case against state Forest Minister K Ponnudhy, following his recent controversial remarks and warned of contempt if they failed to do so.

The judge, Justice N Anand Venkatesh, made the observations orally.

Ponnudhy created a controversy recently with his Shaivism-Vaishnavism remarks made in the context of a sex worker at a public meeting, drawing widespread criticism, including from his own party MP Kanimozhi.

On Thursday, the Court cautioned the police that if they do not register the FIR against the DMK leader, it will initiate suo motu (on its own) contempt against them.

When the suo motu revision case



against Ponnudhy relating to a disproportionate wealth case came up for hearing, Justice Anand Venkatesh expressed concern over the remarks made by the DMK leader.

Earlier in the day, the judge asked the Advocate General to get instructions from DGP as to whether any FIR was registered against Ponnudhy and

posted the case to this evening.

When the case was taken up for hearing in the evening, the judge asked AG "where is the FIR". Can this court take that FIR has been registered.

Advocate general P S Raman submitted that the police have received five complaints and that they will investigate and register FIR.

The judge said, "If they don't register FIR, I will initiate suo motu contempt".

"Now, the court has taken cognizance of the matter. Even if they do not have a complaint, register a case and proceed with the investigation," the judge added.

The judge said the damaging video was continuing. "We do not know when it will flare up". There was no escape from this.

The police need not register multiple FIRs and one FIR was enough, the judge added.

## BJP tries to create unrest where they fail to form govt: Raut backs Mamata

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Thursday supported West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's claim that the BJP is behind the violence in state.

Unrest broke out in Murshidabad during protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act on April 11. The law has been a contentious issue in the region. The protests turned violent, resulting in the deaths of three people and injuries to several others, with widespread property damage.

Speaking at the press conference, Raut said, "I completely agree with Mamata Didi. Wherever the BJP fails to form a government, be it in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, or Bengal, they try to create unrest. This is their habit."

While talking about the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Raut defended a recent video in which late



Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray was shown speaking using AI. Raut said, "AI technology is being used, and our country has advanced a lot. China and the US have already moved ahead of us. Our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, talks about AI technology regularly. So, if someone is using this technology, what's wrong with that? There's nothing wrong. Bala Saheb Thackeray is speaking through this technology, and he is telling the truth. If anyone questions what Bala Saheb

said yesterday, whether it was true or false, I'm ready to accept it if it's a lie. We can discuss it in the Nashik camp. Bala Saheb's words are being praised a lot now."

On Wednesday, the Shiv Sena (UBT) leveraged Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate a voice similar to that of the party's founder, Bal Thackeray, in a Shiv Sena (UBT) gathering in Nashik in Maharashtra.

Raut also hit out at Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, calling him a "traitor". "The term 'traitor' was first explained by Balasaheb when Narayan Rane left the party. If we don't call those who betrayed the party traitors, then what should we call them?"

He further criticised the Maharashtra government's cutting down money in the Ladli Behan scheme and said, "There will be a reduction for women, farmers, and students".

## BJP slams DMK over decorating Karunanidhi's memorial as temple

TDG NETWORK  
CHENNAI

Bharatiya Janata Party leader K Annamalai on Thursday attacked Tamil Nadu Minister of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments PK Sekar Babu for decorating Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader Karunanidhi's memorial in the shape of a temple tower and accused the DMK leaders of continuously hurting the sentiments of Hindus.

"In a competition among DMK ministers to see who can be the best servant to the Chief Minister's family, Minister Sekar Babu is acting beyond limits in professional competition by decorating the memorial of the late DMK leader Karunanidhi like a temple tower. The DMK, who claim to have no faith in God, has been making a living by hurting the beliefs of Hindus for a long

and others, who had recently made controversial remarks about Hindu communities and women.

AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said the motion was brought under Assembly rule 72, but Speaker M Appavu did not permit discussion.

While staging a walkout, AIADMK leaders raised slogans like "Where is democracy? No permission to raise people's issues."

The party wants to move a no-confidence motion against ministers K N Nehru, K Ponnudhy, and V Senthil Balaji. While Nehru and Balaji are under ED investigation, Ponnudhy has drawn criticism for derogatory statements.

Speaking on the AIADMK-BJP alliance, EPS said the elections will show the strength of the coalition.

## NHRC expresses concern over health dept's inaction in MP's 'fake doctor' case

TDG NETWORK  
DAMOH

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Member Priyank Kanungo on Wednesday raised serious concerns over the response of the health department in the case of a fake doctor who operated in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, and who allegedly caused deaths of at least seven patients at a Hospital there.

Kanungo said the actions—or lack thereof—by health officials following the revelation of the doctor's forged documents were deeply troubling.

He further questioned the findings and approach of the Chief Medical and Health Of-

## Karnataka cabinet concludes caste census meet, no decision taken

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

The special cabinet meeting on the caste census report concluded on Thursday, and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asked ministers to submit their concerns in writing.

The Karnataka government is likely to convene another round of cabinet discussions on the issue.

Meanwhile, Karnataka CM left the Vidhan Soudha after attending the meeting on the Karnataka Caste Survey report.

Reacting to the Karnataka Caste Survey report, State Minister Priyank Kharge said, "The report is voluminous, it will take time."

Karnataka Minister N. Chaluvaraya Swamy stated that no decision was taken in the cabinet meeting.

"No decision has been taken yet, the subject has been deferred, and the cabinet



meeting is over today. It will be discussed once again in the next meeting (Cabinet), there is no question of rejecting or accepting, it's all about discussing in the next cabinet meeting about the survey. CM and DCM, along with 32, including all Ministers, discussed thoroughly. Some other opinions of the ministers have to be discussed, as many wished to speak on the issue; that's why the subject has been deferred for the next cabinet meeting," the Minister said.

Karnataka Minister KH Muniyappa said, "The dis-

cussion is on and another one or two meetings may take place over it."

After the cabinet meeting, Karnataka Minister Santosh Lad said that the caste census issue is larger and will be taken up again next week.

"It is a larger issue. It still takes a lot of discussion to happen in this, which will happen by next week," Lad said.

The caste survey has been officially titled the "Socio-Economic and Educational Survey," and a special cabinet meeting was called today to discuss it.

On Wednesday, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said that the Backward Class Commission has already submitted its report to the cabinet, and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has advised the ministers to study it and come back with suggestions in the next meeting.

*Kanungo said the actions—or lack thereof—by health officials following the revelation of the doctor's forged documents were deeply troubling*

ficer (CMHO) in the investigation, stating that it resulted in inaction, despite clear indications of fraud.

"The kind of action taken by the health department is concerning. The doctor's fake documents are prima facie information," said Kanungo.

"The investigation by CMHO has led them to inaction... When it is clear that someone has fake documents, then whether the surgery done by the person is right or not is no longer a

matter of investigation. This was negligence on their part in the investigation," he said.

Earlier, Damoh Child Welfare Committee chairman Deepak Tiwari called for a full investigation into the matter after police arrested the man accused in the case.

On April 7, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that his government will take strict action in the case and highlighted that the State government would not make any delay in taking ac-

tion against such cases and instructed that if there is any other such case in the State, the health department should take strict action against them.

An official said the FIR was registered against the person at the Kotwali police station in the district for fraud and presenting fake documents to get appointed at the mission hospital.

The "fake doctor" has been accused of posing as the British doctor N John Kem before, where in July of 2023, he had tweeted (now known as X), asking for Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to be sent to France to stop the riots which ensued then.

## Congress protests against Centre over fuel, LPG price hikes in K'taka

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

MP Randeep Singh Surjewala on Thursday strongly criticised the BJP-led Central government, accusing it of "fleecing the people of Karnataka" through recent hikes in fuel and LPG prices.

The Congress-led Karnataka government launched a state-wide agitation called "Bekitha Kitha Dubari BJP" in Bengaluru to protest against the increase in gas and petrol prices. The demonstrations are being led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and KPCC President DK Shivakumar.

Congress MP Randeep Surjewala said, "This is a reality today of Karnataka and the country. The way in which the Modi government has raised the prices of gas cylinders by Rs 50 and increased excise duty of petrol and diesel by Rs 3, we started a series of protests led by CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM Shivakumar in



Karnataka today from Bengaluru. This is fleecing the people of Karnataka."

He also questioned the silence of BJP and JD(S) MPs, MLAs, and Union Ministers on the issue, accusing them of failing to protect Karnataka's interests.

"Rs 4504 crores is extra burden on account of increased excise duty on petrol and diesel. Rs 515 crores is extra burden on people and sisters of Karnataka on account of increased gas cylinder prices. Why should people of Karnataka pay Rs 5020 crores extra to Modi government? What are the MPs and Union Ministers of Karnataka doing? What

are MLAs of BJP and Janata Dal is doing? If they don't have guts oppose Modi, either they should get all the prices rolled back or they should all resign and go back and face new election," Surjewala added.

In a post on X, Surjewala demanded that the Central government roll back the hike in fuel and gas prices.

"The 'BEKITHA DUBARI BJP' demonstration today at Freedom Park, Bengaluru led by CM, Sh. @siddaramaiah and PCC President, Sh. @DKShivakumar! We demand roll back of Rs50 per Gas Cylinder rise and increase in Excise Duty of Rs 2 per litre.

## Customs search was held in violation of Customs Act: Ranya to High Court

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU

Kannada film actress Ranya Rao, also known as Harshavardhini Ranya, who was arrested in a high-profile gold smuggling case, told the Karnataka High Court on Thursday that the search and seizure carried out by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) violated provisions of the Customs

Act.

Appearing before Justice S Vishvajith Shetty, senior advocate Sandesh J Chouta, representing Ranya, argued that the search was conducted in violation of Section 102 of the Customs Act, which mandates that any person being searched has the right to be taken before a magistrate or a gazetted customs officer.

He claimed that failure to

comply with this provision rendered the entire seizure invalid.

Chouta also highlighted procedural irregularities in the search and arrest, citing discrepancies in the mahazar and the notices issued before the operation.

He pointed out that the officer who led the search and arrest was merely stated to be a gazetted officer, raising doubts about the legality of



the entire operation.

In addition, Chouta told the court that the grounds of arrest were not formally communicated to Ranya's family members in writing, as required under the law.

"They (officials) only informed Ranya's husband over a phone call, which is not in accordance with the mandate," he submitted.

To support his arguments, Chouta cited two Supreme

Court rulings: Vihaan Kumar v. State of Haryana and Anr and Radhika Agarwal v. Union of India and Ors.

Justice Shetty asked whether Ranya had disputed her signature on the consent notices, to which her counsel responded in the negative.

Chouta further argued that offences under the Customs Act—being compoundable and punishable

with less than seven years' imprisonment—are typically considered for bail by magistrate courts.

He also noted that Ranya, being a woman, has already been in custody for over 45 days.

The court adjourned the bail plea filed by Ranya and her co-accused, Tarun Konduru Raju, to April 21, directing the authorities to file their objections by then.

Ranya was arrested at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru after authorities seized gold bars worth Rs 12.56 crore.

A subsequent raid at her residence led to the recovery of gold jewellery worth Rs 2.06 crore and Rs 2.67 crore in cash.

She faces charges under multiple provisions of Sections 135 and 104 of the Customs Act.



# PM REVIEWS YAMUNA CLEANING WORKS

Discusses measures like public participation and use of real-time data and space tech to revive the heavily polluted river

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-headed review meeting on Yamuna rejuvenation on Thursday discussed measures like public participation and the use of real-time data and space technology to revive the heavily polluted river, said a statement.

The Prime Minister emphasised that the experience of the Chhath Puja celebration by the people of Delhi should improve, it said.

The meeting held at the PM residence was attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and others.

Agency-wise action plan to clean the river was reviewed in the meeting to assess the current status of the Yamuna river and discuss ongoing and plans for its cleaning and rejuvenation, the Delhi government statement said.

Prime Minister Modi said the experience of the people of Delhi while celebrating the festival of Chhath Puja



## ACTION PLANS

- A 'Jan Bhagidari Movement' will involve volunteers, public events to strengthen the people-river connection and raise awareness about Yamuna rejuvenation.
- Real-time data, space technology will be used to monitor sewage treatment plants, drains, and pollution levels.
- Special attention will be given to the Braj region, incorporating the 'Braj Yatra' into the river rejuvenation efforts to strengthen cultural ties to the river.
- The rejuvenation efforts are divided into short-term (3 months), medium-term (3 months to 1.5 years), and long-term (1.5 to 3 years).
- Delhi's drinking water system will be upgraded to reduce leakages and non-revenue water, aligning it with the city's master plan.

should improve and emphasised the need to create a people-river connection to inculcate respect for the river and make it a part of

the lives of people living in the cities settled along the Yamuna, it said.

A 'Jan Bhagidari Movement' enlisting volunteers

for Yamuna rejuvenation and holding public events around the river were also emphasised. In addition to the Delhi stretch, special

attention may also be paid to the culturally rich area around Braj, making the 'Braj Yatra' a part of the river-people movement, the statement said.

The prime minister advised that the best available technology should be harnessed to gather micro-level real-time data to measure the flows in the drains as well as monitor the functioning of the sewage treatment plants.

Further planning and implementation of pollution abatement infrastructure should be based on this data, it said.

The data must also be used for improving governance to ensure that the existing infrastructure is functioning effectively.

He also advised that space technology may be used for this purpose, the statement added. Actions to be taken for rejuvenating the river stretches in Haryana, Delhi as well as the stretch downstream up to Sangam at Prayagraj were deliberated in the meeting.

# Foreign aid: Durgesh Pathak, Kapil Bhardwaj under CBI lens

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday conducted searches at the premises of former AAP MLA and party's Gujarat polls co-incharge Durgesh Pathak after registering an FIR against him for allegedly receiving foreign donations for his party in contravention of FCRA norms, officials said. Besides Pathak, the agency booked another office bearer of the party Kapil Bhardwaj (now deceased) in the case.

The FIR was registered on a complaint from the Ministry of Home Affairs which had alleged that the party had received foreign donations in contravention of the provisions of Foreign Contribution (Regulations) Act (FCRA) 2010 (as amended in 2020).

The CBI FIR alleged that receipt of contributions from foreigners by a political party is prohibited under section 3 of the FCRA Act 2010 and section 29B of the Representation of the People Act 1951.

Sources said during the course of investigation, the top brass of the party may



AAP leader Durgesh Pathak with Delhi party Chief Saurabh Bharadwaj addresses a press conference in New Delhi. ANI

“I think they came to scare me as I have started working in Gujarat for the AAP. They came so that nobody joins us in Gujarat”

— Durgesh Pathak

be asked to join investigations and explain the alleged anomalies in the records.

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders, including Pathak, slammed the government for the CBI action, saying it is a “conspiracy born out of fear” and an effort to “intimidate” him due to his growing political activity in Gujarat.

“A team of five-six CBI officers came to my house and

searched every corner of my two-room premises for around three-four hours. They did not tell me why they had come or for which case.

They showed me a search warrant, and I welcomed them. They searched everything but couldn't find anything,” Pathak said later at a press conference.

“I think they came to scare me as I have started working in Gujarat for the AAP.

# Debt incurred after Covid forces engineer to go on stealing fres

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a man who was allegedly involved in a series of thefts from hospitals across multiple cities in the country, an official statement said on Thursday.

The accused, identified as Vikas (31), was apprehended by the Anti-Narcotics Squad (ANS) of South-East District.

According to police, the accused carried out thefts in the NCR, Jaipur, Mumbai, and Pune, leading to the recovery of multiple stolen items and solving several cases registered

against him across states.

The arrest followed a complaint filed on April 10 by a staff member of Apollo Hospital, who reported that a laptop and mobile phone were stolen from Room No. 1110, Oncology OPD, during doctor rounds. An e-FIR was registered under Section 305 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at PS Sarita Vihar.

Police said that more than 400 CCTV clips were reviewed from the hospital and surrounding areas. The suspect was seen at the hospital and was later traced to a hotel in Paharganj, Delhi.

# Clear drain before monsoon: HC

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the removal of structures blocking a drain in southeast Delhi and said it was a “shame” people lived in such conditions in the national capital.

A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Manmeet PS Arora observed monsoon on the anvil and stressed on clearing Taimoor Nagar drain of blockages to make it functional at the earliest to avoid “flooding” in various colonies in the area.

“It is a shame that we are living in Delhi in this condition. Monsoon is just one month away. Anything, including jhuggi jhopri



Representative Image

clusters and colonies, which comes in the way of free flow of water in the drain will be removed. This drain has to be cleaned and laid within the next one month,” the bench said.

A colony falling on a drain cannot be regularised, it added.

The bench examined a topographical survey and alignment plan of the drain

submitted by the chairperson of the special task force (STF).

The court found a “substantial unauthorised encroachment” in the entire width of the drain owing to the “complete neglect” by the authorities, including Delhi Development Authority, Delhi government, Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Delhi Jal Board.

# DJB advisory: Supply will be hit in several areas on April 21

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has announced that water supply will be disrupted in several parts of the national capital on April 21st.

According to the DJB, water supply will be interrupted from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM in some areas. Additionally, residents of Dwarka will face a prolonged disruption, with the water supply being affected from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM on the same day.

The disruption is expected to impact daily routines, and the DJB has urged residents in the affected areas to make necessary arrangements in



Representative Image

advance. According to an official press note from the Water Board, “Due to interconnection work in 1200 mm dia Dwarka water main at Ranhola Mod on April 21, the evening water supply of the following areas will not be available from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on April 21 (Monday).” The areas that will be affected include Udyog Nagar DSIDC, Jwala

Puri R Block, GH-12 Paschim Vihar Rishal Garden, Chander Vihar, Ranhola Baprola, Jai Vihar GOC, Chanchal Park, CIG Flats Hastal, Vikas Nagar GOC, Vttam Nagar GOC, Jai Vihar, Om Vihar 1 to 5, Maharani Enclave, Ram Chander Enclave, Pratap Enclave, Shiv Vihar, Rajan Vihar, Hastal Vihar, Press Enclave, Anand Vihar and others.

# ‘Garbage mountains will disappear like dinosaurs in 5 years', says Sirsa

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Thursday said the government was exploring the possibility of hiring an additional agency to expedite the waste processing and asserted the city's garbage mounds would “disappear just like dinosaurs” in the next five years.

Inspecting the Ghazipur landfill site in east Delhi, he said the government was working on a war footing to clear the legacy waste and free the city from its piles of garbage that have accumulated over the years, resembling hills. “I want to offer my commitment that the garbage



mountains in Delhi will disappear just like dinosaurs,” he told reporters.

The minister said that of the 80 lakh metric tonnes of waste at the site, 14-15 lakh tonnes have already been processed. The pace of biomining has picked up, and about 7,000-8,000 metric tonnes of waste will be pro-

cessed daily over the next six months. However, it will still take at least five to six years to remove the waste already lying at the site, Sirsa said.

The Delhi government is also exploring the possibility of hiring an additional agency to expedite the waste processing work, the environment minister said.

“If we engage another agency and carry out parallel work...the task can be completed faster,” he said.

He also stressed monitoring the progress of the work and said, “The CM's office and our department will monitor all dumps and landfills continuously.”

In the future, every vehicle entering Delhi will be monitored, and every construction site over 500 square meters will be under surveillance, he highlighted. All data will be uploaded daily to a government dashboard, including pollution levels and waste removal statistics, and those who fail to meet deadlines will face penalties, he asserted.



An aerial view of the city's skyline on a hot summer day, in New Delhi. ANI

# Eight Bangladeshi nationals living illegally in city detained

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a major crackdown on illegal immigration, the staff of Police Station South Campus, South West District, Delhi, has detained eight Bangladeshi nationals found residing unlawfully in various areas of the city.

The operation was executed on April 15, 2025, following a tip-off regarding the presence of illegal migrants near Satya Niketan Market. Following their detention, the deportation process was promptly initiated with the assistance of the Foreigners Regional

Registration Office (FRRO), Delhi, and all eight individuals were transferred to the designated deportation centre on April 16. Investigations revealed that most of them had entered India illegally between 2007 and 2023 through various borders, including Tripura, Ghoja Donga, and Benapole, with some using the help of brokers. Several were found working in Delhi as domestic help or enrolled in the vocational training program. Earlier, a team of Delhi police apprehended a Bangladeshi national “residing illegally” in the national capital. He was later sent to the Deportation Centre with the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO).

# Man goes on stealing spree in hospitals across multiple cities, held

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A 38-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly making a hoax call regarding bombs planted at the Jama Masjid and the Red Fort under the influence of alcohol, police said on Thursday. Accused Asif made the threat call from a mobile phone he had found in Uttarakhand's Roorkee and used a lost SIM card in an attempt to evade identification, they added.

On April 10, a call was received on emergency



helpline number 112, claiming that bombs were planted at the two prominent

locations, following which a case under the relevant sections of the Bharatiya

Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered at the Jama Masjid police station, a senior police officer said.

Investigators used digital forensics, technical surveillance, IMEI tracking, call detail records (CDRs) and CCTV analysis to identify the source, he added.

The mobile number was traced to a man named Saddam from Ghaziabad, who had reported that his phone was lost in Kaler, Roorkee, on April 6. Further surveillance led police to Asif, who had found the phone and

was using it. He had since vacated his Karawal Nagar residence.

After extensive efforts, the accused was apprehended near the Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital around 11 pm on April 14. During interrogation, he confessed to making the hoax call from the Paharganj area under the influence of alcohol, the officer said. He later broke the SIM card and disposed it of to cover his tracks, he said, adding that the mobile phone used in the offence has been seized.



# DJB GETS RS 3,000 CR BOOST FOR 27 NEW SEWAGE PLANTS

DJB aimed to build 40 DSTPs since 2023, but progress stalled due to funding delays.

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

In a significant development to clean the Yamuna river, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), grappling with a severe financial crunch, has received a much-needed boost with the approval of over Rs 3,000 crore to set up 27 DSTPs across the national capital. Although the DJB initiated the decentralised sewage treatment plants (DSTP) plan in 2023 with a target of constructing 40 such units, progress had stalled due to the delay in funding approval.

“This is the first major (financial) push we have received,” a DJB official said.

The funds, sanctioned by the Expenditure and Finance Committee headed by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, will be used to set up 27 DSTPs across the city. Work on these projects has already begun, the official added.

Additionally, the committee has approved the construction of a 10 mil-



lion gallons per day (MGD) capacity sewage treatment plant (STP) at Delhi Gate.

“DSTPs treat wastewater at the site of origin and are more flexible and sustainable than large, centralised plants that require extensive infrastructure,” the official explained.

Chief Minister Gupta had earlier outlined cleaning the Yamuna River as a key priority, committing Rs 500 crore to set up 40 DSTPs and other related projects,

such as procurement of weed harvesters to remove wild growth in the river.

These DSTPs will be set up in JJ clusters, unauthorised colonies and other areas where large-scale infrastructure is unfeasible. Some of the identified locations include Rangpuri, Dera Mandi, Fatehpur Beri, Jafarpur village, Shikarpur village, Jaunti, and Ghewra.

A report prepared by former chief secretary Naresh Kumar last year highlighted

the slow pace of land allotment and the DJB’s inability to utilise funds allocated under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) for 13 planned DSTPs.

At present, Delhi produces approximately 792 MGD of sewage, of which DJB’s 37 operational STPs can treat only about 610 MGD. The remaining untreated sewage often ends up in the Yamuna. DSTPs will help bridge the gap.

However, experts stress the need to improve existing facilities. “Instead of focusing only on new DSTPs, the government should prioritise upgrading the performance of current STPs. Industrial waste, which these plants aren’t designed to treat, continues to be a major problem, Rs said water activist Varun Gulati.

The newly approved 10 MGD plant at Delhi Gate is also seen as critical. Initially slated for completion by March 2025, work on it is yet to start, another official said. “This plant will handle sewage from the Walled City and nearby areas that currently flows untreated into the river near the Rajghat power plant,” the official added.

The poor state of sewerage infrastructure was a major election issue during the Delhi Assembly polls held in February. The BJP had blamed the former AAP government for allegedly mis-managing the DJB and turning it into a “den of corruption.”

## Delhi govt’s excise revenue rises to Rs 7,766 cr in 2024-25

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government’s excise revenue in 2024-25 rose to around Rs 7,766 crore as compared to Rs 6,762 crore three years ago, showing signs of recovery from the disruptions caused due to allegations of irregularities related to the excise policy for 2021-22, officials said on Thursday. The excise revenue of the government in 2021-22, including excise duty and Value Added Tax (VAT) on liquor, was Rs 6,762.61 crore, a growth of more than 15 per cent, they added.

It rose to Rs 6,830 crore in 2022-23, Rs 7,430.97 crore in 2023-24 and Rs 7,765.97 crore in 2024-25, the officials said.

The figure for 2024-25 is likely to go up slightly as the data on excise duty and VAT is available only till February. The Delhi government last month extended the existing excise policy for three



more months as it is yet to frame a new version of it.

The extended policy, also known as the old excise policy, came into operation in September 2022 after the then Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government scrapped its reformative policy (2021-22) that ran into rough weather amid allegations of irregularities in its formulation and implementation.

The old policy has since been extended for varying periods as the Delhi govern-

ment is yet to come up with a new policy.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta recently said that her government is working on a new, foolproof and transparent excise policy to augment revenue. She said the new policy will be prepared on the basis of the best practices followed in other states.

Under the extended policy, four Delhi government corporations operate more than 700 retail liquor vends across the city.

## Minor domestic help found dead at employer’s house in south Delhi

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

A girl working as a domestic help was found hanging from a shower pipe in the bathroom of her employer’s house in south Delhi’s Vasant Kunj area, police said on Thursday. Police are trying to confirm the girl’s age as according to her parents, she was 17 years old but her employers claim that she was aged around 19-20. On the other hand, a preliminary medical examination has suggested that she was 14 years of age, police said.

“As of now, no foul play is suspected and we are awaiting post-mortem reports. However, prima facie, it appears to be a case of suicide,” a senior police officer said.

According to the girl’s family, she had studied up to Class



8 and stopped going to school two years ago, the officer said.

The Vasant Kunj South police station received a call regarding the incident on Wednesday. A team was rushed to the spot and it found the girl hanging from a shower pipe in the bathroom, police said.

The girl, a native of Uttar Pradesh’s Rae Bareilly, was working at the house for the last month and a half.

On Wednesday, she came to the house around 8 am. At around 4 pm, she opened the

door for house owner Deepak (39) when he returned home, the officer said.

“After this, Deepak, his wife and their children went to sleep. At about 6 pm, the cook came. When the girl did not answer the doorbell, Deepak’s wife opened the door and realised that the girl was nowhere to be seen,” he added.

Eventually, they opened the bathroom door with a key after repeated knocking went unanswered, found the girl hanging from the shower pipe and called police, the officer said.

The body was taken to the Safdarjung Hospital for the preliminary medical examination and has been kept at the mortuary, he added.

Inquest proceedings under section 174 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) are underway, the officer said.

## Jilted youth shoots 20-yr-old woman in Delhi

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old welder allegedly obsessed with a 20-year-old woman, who resisted his sexual advances and refused to snap ties with another youth, shot her dead in North-East Delhi’s GTB Enclave area, police said on Thursday. Police arrested Rizwan, the accused, from Karnal in Haryana within 48 hours of the incident, which occurred on the night of April 14, officials said.

A resident of Sunder Nagri, Rizwan allegedly developed an infatuation for the victim whom she met through Instagram a few months ago, police said in a statement, adding that the accused used Google Translate to “impress” the woman despite being a Class-9 dropout. However, enraged

over her refusal to sever ties with another youth, Rizwan called her for a meeting on April 14 and fatally shot her twice, ACP (Crime Branch) Sanjay Sain said.

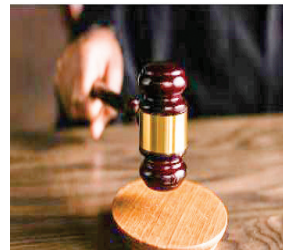
The accused has been booked under the relevant sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Arms Act, he said.

“The police zeroed in on Rizwan after he went missing following the murder. He was traced to a roadside eatery, wearing the same clothes seen in the CCTV footage from the crime scene. The clothes and shoes have been seized,” the ACP said. During interrogation, Rizwan said he became emotionally attached to the woman after meeting her. They were in touch via Instagram and phone but disagreements arose when he saw her with another man.

## Court sentences private security guard to 20 years in jail for raping minor

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

A court here has sentenced a private security guard to rigorous imprisonment of 20 years for repeatedly raping a 12-year-old girl in 2021, saying undue sympathy shown to a convict by imposing an inadequate sentence would harm the criminal justice system. Additional Sessions Judge Susheel Bala Dagar was hearing the arguments on sentencing against the 32-year-old man, who was convicted earlier this month under the penal provisions



of rape and Section 6 (aggravated penetrative sexual assault) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Additional Public Prosecutor Yogita Kaushik Dahiya said the convict did not deserve any leniency for his abominable act of kidnab-

ping, committing repeated penetrative sexual assault and threatening the girl in March 2021.

In its verdict dated April 15, the court cited a 2015 Supreme Court verdict, according to which, “Undue sympathy by imposing an inadequate sentence would do more harm to the justice system by undermining the public confidence in the efficacy of the law.”

It also cited another 2006 apex court verdict that said the quantum of sentence must depend upon the conduct of the accused, the state

and age of the sexually-assaulted female and the gravity of the criminal act, and that crimes of violence upon women need to be severely dealt with. The court said,

“Taking into consideration the aggravating and mitigating circumstances, including the gravity of the offence, the age of the victim and the convict, the family condition of the convict and the child, social and economic factors governing them, the convict is sentenced to 20 years’ rigorous imprisonment (RI) under Section 6 of the POCSO Act.”

## Chhattisgarh Cabinet rolls out major relief measures for traders, students, low-income families

**TDG NETWORK**  
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and his council of ministers took several key decisions to benefit common people, small traders, students, and local businesses during an important cabinet meeting held today in Raipur. The government announced lower property registration fees for low-income families, land leases for small urban businesses, exam fee refunds for students, ownership rights for long-term leaseholders, and

a tax waiver for old VAT cases. A new NIFT campus will also be set up in Nava Raipur. These steps aim to reduce financial pressure, support small businesses, create job opportunities, and boost overall development in the state.

In a major step toward making housing more accessible, the cabinet approved a reduction in stamp duty charges for low-income families. Under the new provision, individuals will now be required to pay only Rs 37,000 per unit for prop-

erty registration. This decision comes as a major relief for families who have long dreamed of owning a home but were deterred by high registration costs. The move is also expected to boost activity in the housing sector and help more people turn their homeownership aspirations into reality.

In a student-friendly move, the state government announced that exam fees will be refunded for Chhattisgarh residents appearing in competitive exams conducted by the Public Service Com-

mission, Vyapam, and other recruitment boards. This initiative will particularly benefit students from economically weaker backgrounds, reduce financial stress, and increase participation in public service examinations. It marks a positive step toward inclusive governance and youth empowerment.

The cabinet also approved a pivotal decision allowing leaseholders who have held land for over 10 years to convert their leases into ownership rights by paying Rs 25,000 per square meter.

## Not defamation if homebuyers peacefully protest against builders, SC holds

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday held homebuyers have a right to protest peacefully against builders for their grievances and it doesn’t amount to defamation.

A bench of Justices K V Viswanathan and N Kottiswar Singh said any attempt to portray it as a criminal offence, sans necessary ingredients, would be a clear abuse of process and ought

to be “nipped in the bud”.

“A right to protest peacefully without falling foul of the law is a corresponding right, which the consumers ought to possess just as the seller enjoys his right to commercial speech,” the bench said.

The observation came when the bench quashed a criminal defamation case against homebuyers for erecting banners being dissatisfied with the services of the developer.

“We find that the manner

of the protest resorted to by the appellants was peaceful and orderly and without in any manner using offensive or abusive language. It could not be said that the appellants crossed the lakshman rekha and transgressed into the offending zone,” the bench said.

The top court observed “no foul” or intemperate language used by the homebuyers against the developer.

“There is no reference to any expression like ‘fraud, cheating, misappropriation’,



etc. In mild and temperate language, certain issues, which the appellants perceived as their grievances have been aired...,” it noted.

banner depicts is what they thought were their grievances against the respondent with whom they had a business relationship.”

The bench added, “The banner sets out that one of the issues was ‘ignoring grievances’ implying thereby that there have been running issues between the two – something which is bound to occur in a builder-buyer relationship.”

The top court said the careful choice of the words, conscious avoidance of in-

temperate, rude or abusive language and the peaceful manner of protest, points that banners were erected to protect the legitimate interests of the homeowners.

“Their case wholly falls within the sweep, scope and ambit of exception 9 to Section 499. Their peaceful protest is protected by Article 19(1)(a) (b) and (c) of the Constitution of India. The criminal proceedings levelled against them, if allowed to continue, will be a clear abuse of process,” it

held.

In the top court, homebuyers challenged the summons in the defamation case filed by the builder.

The defamation case was filed against homebuyers for erecting banners with “false and defamatory statements” against the builder.

The Borivali magisterial court in Mumbai on October 4, 2016, after examining the complaint and verifying the complainant’s statement, issued summons against the homebuyers.



# ADANI PORTS TO ACQUIRE AUSTRALIAN TERMINAL IN \$2.4 BILLION NON-CASH DEAL

This strategic move is part of APSEZ’s global growth plan, aiming to double its cargo volumes to 1 billion tonnes by FY30.

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Adani Ports and SEZ Ltd, India's biggest private port operator, announced on Thursday a USD 2.4 billion non-cash acquisition of a coal export terminal in Australia from a group company to strengthen its presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Board of APSEZ “approved the acquisition of Abbot Point Port Holdings Pte Ltd (APPH), Singapore, from Carmichael Rail and Port Singapore Holdings Pte Ltd, Singapore (CRPSHPL)”, the company said in a statement.


CRPSHPL is a related party.

APPH owns the entities which own and operate the North Queensland Export Terminal, a dedicated export terminal with a current nameplate capacity of 50 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). The terminal is located at the Port of Abbot Point, approximately 25 km north of Bowen in North Queensland on Australia's east coast.

APSEZ had originally, in 2011, acquired the North Queensland Export Terminal (NQXT) at Abbott Point

KEY POINTS

- The acquisition involves issuing 14.38 crore new equity shares to Carmichael Rail and Port Singapore Holdings.
- APSEZ aims to double its cargo volumes to 1 billion tonnes annually by FY30 as part of its global growth plan.
- The deal expands Adani Ports' global portfolio to 19 ports and terminals.
- The North Queensland Export Terminal strengthens APSEZ's strategic foothold in key Asia-Pacific markets



Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone. (ANI Photo)

for USD 2 billion. Two years later, in 2013, the Adani family purchased the asset from APSEZ for the same amount, along with the capital invested, enabling the company to concentrate on expanding its domestic operations.

Now, with a strengthened balance sheet and a dominant position in India, APSEZ is re-acquiring the terminal as part of its global growth strategy.

“The transaction will be completed on a non-cash basis. APSEZ will issue 14.38 crore new equity shares to CRPSHPL in exchange for

the acquisition of 100 per cent interest in APPH. This is based on an enterprise value of NQXT of Australian Dollar 3.975 billion (about USD 2.4 billion),” the statement said.

The acquisition is valued at almost similar levels to the transfer done in 2013. This valuation is despite capital investments, growth and inflation of the past 12 years and at slightly discounted multiples to the recent deals in the region.

“As part of the transaction, APSEZ will also assume other

non-core assets and liabilities on APPH's balance sheet, which APSEZ will realise within a few months of the acquisition (zero net impact on the transaction valuation). APSEZ's leverage will remain at similar levels post the transaction,” the statement said without giving details of the liabilities.

The acquisition will accelerate the APSEZ's target of doubling its volumes to 1 billion tonnes per annum by FY30, with a potential to near quadruple its volume - from 35 million tonnes in FY25 to

120 million tonnes, including potential exports of green hydrogen from Australia, the company said.

This is the fourth overseas acquisition for India's largest port developer in the past two years. With this, the company will have a portfolio of 19 ports and terminals - 15 domestic and 4 overseas. A port in Israel, terminals in Tanzania and Sri Lanka are the other three international locations where APSEZ has its operations.

NQXT has a contract with Bravus Mining and Resources (formerly Adani Mining, fully owned by Adani Enterprises) for the export of 9.3 million tonnes of thermal coal from the Adani Carmichael coal mine.

The move by APSEZ comes at a time when the global ports industry is gaining strong prominence amid rising trade tensions, particularly between the US and China.

US investment giant BlackRock is reportedly seeking to acquire Panama Ports from Hong Kong-based conglomerate CK Hutchison for USD 23 billion but has faced resistance from Chinese stakeholders.

## Infosys misses growth target, forecasts weak fiscal start

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Infosys Ltd, India's second biggest IT services company, missed its revenue growth target for fiscal year FY25 and slipped on profit, despite besting analyst estimates on both fronts. The company also projected its slowest growth for the fiscal at the start of the year in a decade.

The Bengaluru-headquartered company ended the 12 months through March 2025 with \$19.28 billion in revenue, beating a Bloomberg estimate by 46 analysts of \$19.16 billion. But its 4.2% year-on-year (y-o-y) revenue growth in constant currency terms (not taking currency fluctuations into account) missed the guidance of 4.5-5% that it had outlined in January 2025.

On the profit front, Infosys's net profit for the year fell 0.28% to \$3.16 billion. A survey of 44 analysts by Bloomberg had pegged net profit at \$3.09 billion.

Alongside, the company projected flat to 3% revenue growth for the current fiscal (FY26) in constant currency terms, its slowest guidance since April 2009, when it had projected a revenue decline of 6.7-3.1% for FY10.

Peer Wipro Ltd also expects to grow its topline at its slowest pace in the first three months of FY26. On



*On the profit front, Infosys's net profit for the year fell 0.28% to \$3.16 billion. A survey of 44 analysts by Bloomberg had pegged net profit at \$3.09 billion.*

Wednesday, Wipro outlined a quarterly revenue decline between 3.5% and 1.5% in constant currency terms. Wipro gives guidance for the following quarter whereas Infosys gives guidance for the full year.

“At the bottom end of the guidance, we have baked in some deterioration in the environment, some heightened uncertainties,” said Jayesh Sanghrajka, chief financial officer of Infosys, in the company's post-earnings media briefing on Thursday.

The company's chief executive officer Salil Parekh, though, said clients have not paused and things could change quickly. “Things can change in a short period in terms of what can

happen with the economic outlook,” said Parekh in the media briefing.

TCS and Wipro have also called out their clients' slow decision making and pause on tech projects. All of this could mean lower job opportunities in the largest IT service providers for the country's 2.5 million college graduates.

The gloomy outlook stems from US President Donald Trump announcing reciprocal tariffs on 2 April, which he suspended a week later for 90 days following market choppiness. Such uncertainty might prompt the world's largest companies, which are clients of homegrown outsourcers, to hold back spending on tech projects.

## ‘Stay patient, believe in long-term wealth’: Sitharaman’s advice to investors

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's address at the 150-year celebrations of BSE had a message for all stakeholders of the financial markets, including the largest of all - the investors.

Finance Minister Sitharaman, in particular, urged

*Investor education increasingly becomes vital in a rapidly growing market with increasing retail participation, she said.*

investors to remain informed, patient, and confident in the long-term promise of disciplined wealth creation.

To the market intermediaries and exchanges, she called for innovation with purpose, but investor interest should always be at the centre. “To our corporates -- let transparency, sound governance, and commitment to shareholder value be your guiding principles.

To our regulators -- remain proactive, agile, and responsive in a world defined by rapid change,” the finance minister said.

Addressing the BSE event, she opined that to truly democratise investment, stock exchanges must continually innovate and design products

that are accessible, understandable, and aligned with the risk appetite and savings behaviour of our citizens.

She told the exchange officials that the goal must be to make capital markets inclusive and rewarding for all strata of society.

Investor education increasingly becomes vital in a rapidly growing market with increasing retail participation, she said.

## SEBI to review existing regulations, remove outdated ones: Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Stressing the need for an optimum regulation in the financial markets, the new SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Thursday that they will review existing regulations, besides removing those that are outdated.

Speaking at the BSE's 150-year celebration, the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chief said the role of the regulator is not only to ensure market integrity and promote trust, but also the development of the market.

SEBI chief said, “We must therefore move forward with the optimum regulation approach which is mindful of the cost of compliance, while exploring alternatives to achieve our objectives.”

“We will be looking to review our existing regulations, weed out those which are outdated, and rationalise those which may be necessary,” the SEBI Chairman added.

Pandey added that SEBI will intensify its consultations



Mumbai (ANI): Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey. (ANI Photo)

with stakeholders in this regard to prepare a pragmatic roadmap for achieving its objectives of simplified yet effective regulations.

Moreover, under the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), chaired by the Finance Minister, there is a robust institutional mechanism for financial regulators to come together for the harmonisation of policies and regulations, ease of doing business, and reducing the cost of compliance in a rapidly growing securities market.

“It is also imperative to

further accelerate SEBI ecosystems, ongoing efforts for investor education and awareness, including on cyber frauds and fraudulent investment advice. We will comprehensively intensify these efforts,” the SEBI chief noted.

Earlier in his address, he also delved into the growth trajectory of India's financial markets.

He said Indian markets routinely handle about 2,000 crore orders and transactions, one of the highest volumes in the world.

In just five years, the num-

ber of unique mutual fund investors has grown from 2 crore to 5.4 crore. He also noted about the sharp rise in demat accounts, investment in equity-linked mutual funds, increasing FPI investments in India.

“Sustained capital formation is indispensable to our collective aspiration of Viksit Bharat. We need safe and efficient capital markets where informed investors and credible issuers come together under an optimally regulated ecosystem. While we must never grow complacent, all stakeholders in our capital markets can take pride in the remarkable journey we have traversed over the years,” he said.

In his address, he also emphasised the importance of expanding investor education and awareness, enhancing cyber resilience, maintaining robust risk buffers, swiftly detecting and punishing fraudulent behaviour, and upholding the highest standards of disclosure and governance.

## China confirms ongoing working-level talks with US amid tariff dispute

AGENCIES  
BEIJING

China on Thursday said it is in working-level communication with the US on the deadlock over their high-intensity tariff war but asserted that the person who tied the bell should untie it. The Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson He

will be held at official levels before any dialogue between top leaders.

In response to a question, spokesperson told the media briefing here that the ministry has been always maintaining working-level communication with its US counterparts.

While expressing Beijing's willingness for talks

*Analysts here said talks between the two countries will be held at official levels before any dialogue between top leaders.*

Yongqian was reacting to a jibe from US President Donald Trump, who was quoted as saying, The ball is in China's court, and China needs to make a deal with us.

In response, the Chinese spokesperson quoted a proverb, saying, ‘The person who tied the bell must be the one who unties it.’

Analysts here said talks between the two countries

he, however said, ‘We urge the US to immediately stop its maximum pressure tactics, coercion, and blackmail, and resolve differences through equal dialogue based on mutual respect.’

China on Wednesday appointed Li Chenggang, previously China's Ambassador at World Trade Organisation (WTO) as its new international trade representative.

## Markets show positive signs: Sensex surges over 1,000 points, Nifty up over 300 points

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Indian stock markets turned around on Thursday after a negative start in the morning session. The markets surged around 1 per cent by mid-session due to a strong domestic structural story and FPI buying.

The Nifty index gained more than 250 points to 23,707.45 or 1.15 per cent up after opening down 35.35 points or 0.15 per cent, while the BSE Sensex also surged more than 950 points to reach 78,007.05 by mid-session, gaining +950.76 or +1.27 per cent.

Ajay Bagga Banking and Market Expert told ANI “India held up well in the post April 2 sell off. There



*Nifty IT also reduced the gap and was down by 0.95 per cent at the time of filing this report, as in the opening it had declined more than 2 per cent.*

has been a positive rerating of the Indian markets in view of the domestic structural story and lack of external sector fragility

FPIs have turned net buyers this week on the back of rerating rupee strength and forward outlook of a resilient Indian corporate

sector A normal to above normal monsoon forecast has strengthened the domestic consumption story Add to that the monetary easing and the ample domestic liquidity injected by the RBI, that is helping the financial conditions and the market's sentiment both”

In the sectoral indices, except Nifty IT, all other sector stocks surged into the green territory. Nifty Banking shares led in gains with the Private Bank index gaining more than 1.3 per cent, while other sectors also showed signs of recovery.

Nifty IT also reduced the gap and was down by 0.95 per cent at the time of filing this report, as in the opening it had declined more than 2 per cent.

## India produced 238 lakh tonnes sugar so far: ISMA

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India has produced approximately 238 lakh tonnes of sugar, with around 200 sugar mills (38 per cent of the total mills) still operational as of April 15, Indian Sugar and Bio-energy Manufacturers Association said in a statement Thursday. Sugar marketing season in India runs from October to September.

Around 35 lakh tons of sugar is expected to be diverted towards ethanol production this year, against last year's estimated diversion of 21.5 lakh tonnes.

Around 22 factories are still operational in Uttar Pradesh. Out of which around 16 factories are operating in West UP.

## RBI fines Kotak Mahindra, IDFC First, PNB for ‘compliance issues’

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed penalties on Kotak Mahindra Bank, IDFC First Bank, and Punjab National Bank for non-compliance with regulatory directions.

The RBI on Thursday said it has imposed penalties on Kotak Mahindra Bank, IDFC First Bank, and Punjab National Bank for certain deficiencies in regulatory compliance.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in a statement said a penalty of Rs 61.4 lakh has been imposed on Kotak Mahindra Bank for non-compliance with certain directions on ‘Guidelines on Loan System for Delivery of Bank Credit’ and ‘Loans and Advances Statutory and Other Restrictions’.



In another statement, RBI said a penalty of Rs 38.6 lakh has been imposed on IDFC First Bank for non-compliance with certain directions of Know Your Customer (KYC).

Penalty of Rs 29.6 lakh has been imposed on Punjab National Bank for non-compliance with certain directions issued by RBI

on ‘Customer Service in Banks’.

In all the three cases, the central bank the penalties are based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their customers.



# EXTRADITING JUSTICE: RANA’S CASE AND THE NEED FOR DEEPER INDIA-US LEGAL TIES

## OPINION

V ABHINAV DEEP DORA &  
PROF V VIJAY LAKSHMI



Tahawwur Rana’s extradition to India represents a significant milestone in increasing collaboration between India and the United States in combating terrorism but also conveys a powerful message that those involved in serious crimes cannot evade justice by crossing international borders. Nonetheless, numerous high-profile cases are still unresolved, underscoring the existing delays and bureaucratic obstacles in the extradition process between the two countries. To ensure justice is served promptly, it is crucial to establish a more efficient, transparent, and time-sensitive extradition framework. Both nations should work to strengthen legal collaboration, tackle procedural issues, and foster mutual trust to improve the

outcomes of extradition efforts. While this case marks a positive start, ongoing commitment is necessary to ensure that all offenders face justice. The Extradition Treaty between India and the United States was signed on June 25, 1997, and became effective on July 21, 1999. This treaty establishes a legal basis for the extradition of fugitives between the two nations, allowing either country to request the return of individuals who are charged with or have been convicted of criminal offences. The Extradition Treaty between India and the USA incorporates essential provisions to guarantee a fair and lawful extradition process. A fundamental principle known as *dual criminality* requires that the alleged crime must be recognized

as an offense in both nations. The offence should be an *extraditable offence* which is defined as those crimes that carry a minimum penalty of one year in prison. Nonetheless, extradition may be refused under the *political offense exception*, which safeguards individuals who are sought for political motives. Additionally, the *death penalty clause* permits the U.S. to deny extradition if the case involves capital punishment, unless India offers specific assurances. The *rule of specialty* ensures that prosecution is limited to the particular offense for which extradition was granted, thereby providing legal protections for the accused.

Tahawwur Rana’s extradition to India represents a notable diplomatic achievement in India’s quest for justice for the victims of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. Rana, who is closely linked to David Coleman Headley—responsible for conducting reconnaissance for the attacks who thought to have played a significant role in planning and facilitating the assault that resulted in the deaths of more than 200 individuals. Securing Rana’s presence in India is essential for further exposing the intricate network of conspirators behind the attacks. His questioning and subsequent trial could yield valuable information regarding the operational relationships among Lashkar-e-Taiba, David Headley, and other entities, potentially including the involvement of Pak-



*India has submitted over 65 extradition requests to the United States, but only 11 have led to successful extraditions. This statistic underscores the considerable obstacles faced in the extradition process between the two countries.*

istani intelligence agencies. His appearance in an Indian courtroom could bolster the evidentiary foundation and reinforce India’s long-standing assertions regarding Pakistan’s role in supporting terrorism. Additionally, this extradition enhances the credibility of India’s legal and investigative framework on the international stage and propels India’s ongoing efforts to ensure that all those

responsible for the 26/11 attacks are held accountable, regardless of their location. However, with this diplomatic achievement, yet its practical implications for revealing new insights or achieving justice may be limited. This is largely due to the fact that David Headley, the principal figure behind the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, has already provided extensive testimony and is currently serv-

ing a 35-year sentence in the United States. Consequently, Rana’s involvement may be viewed as secondary. His extradition is unlikely to substantially enhance the investigation or prosecution of other individuals implicated, especially since vital evidence has already been gathered and presented during Headley’s testimony. True justice for the victims of the Mumbai attacks hinges on securing the extradition of David Headley himself. As the main conspirator who conducted thorough reconnaissance of the targeted locations and worked closely with Lashkar-e-Taiba and ISI operatives, Headley has direct knowledge of the attacks’ planning and execution. His trial in India would not only bring closure to

the families of the victims but also represent a significant step toward holding all accountable parties responsible within Indian jurisdiction. However, the complexities surrounding Headley’s cooperation with U.S. authorities and his plea agreement make his extradition a challenging endeavour. Nonetheless, India must persist in its efforts to secure his custody as a matter of justice and national integrity. India has submitted over 65 extradition requests to the United States, but only 11 have led to successful extraditions. This statistic underscores the considerable obstacles faced in the extradition process between the two countries. Many requests have been stalled for years or denied due to discrepancies in legal stan-

dards, procedural holdups, or issues related to human rights, prison conditions, and the death penalty in India. With nearly one-third of India’s total extradition requests worldwide aimed at the U.S., this slow progress raises significant concerns regarding the efficacy of current legal cooperation between the two nations. This scenario highlights the urgent need for India and the United States to enhance their extradition framework through stronger diplomatic and legal collaboration. Addressing gaps in mutual legal understanding, aligning procedural requirements, and fostering clear communication between law enforcement agencies are vital steps to move forward. Furthermore, a strong political commitment, supported by strategic diplomatic efforts and timely follow-ups, can facilitate the swift resolution of outstanding cases. Building stronger bilateral relations centered on mutual legal assistance and trust is essential to prevent fugitives from taking advantage of legal discrepancies or differences in judicial systems. Only through ongoing efforts and a shared commitment can both countries ensure that justice is delivered promptly and effectively.

*V Abhinav Deep Dora, Assistant Professor, Vignan Institute of Law, VFSTR, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh  
Prof V Vijay Lakshmi, Professor, Dr Br Ambedkar college of Law, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh*

# The underrepresented queens in Indian curriculum

## OPINION

P.V. LAXMIPRASAD



To the question of what history is, it is the study of past events, particularly human affairs. It is otherwise the whole series of past events connected with a particular person. So history is the study and documentation of the past. History is an umbrella term comprising past events as well as the memory, discovery, presentation and interpretation of these events. India’s struggle for independence was really a saga of courage, resilience, and sacrifice deeply rooted in the love and patriotism of its people. On a fascinating journey through the chapters of India’s struggle for independence, the spotlight shifts to an ensemble of remarkable women who, against the challenging backdrop of their time, played pivotal roles in shaping the destiny of our nation.

This article sheds light on the incredible stories of women freedom fighters who played pivotal roles in the independence movement, making immense sacrifices to secure a free and sovereign India. Having looked at history in particular the freedom struggle, many queens laid down their lives fighting against the enemy. Their sacrifices were underrepresented in history. It was the Moghul rulers who invaded India and it was later followed by British rule for more than 150 years. For the most period, India was under these alien rulers. But who made it to history textbooks? This question has been debated over the last few years on TV channels and other platforms. If the invaders and the aliens impressed the historians, they did a great injustice to these queens. The historians treated Indians as subalterns. Their long-drawn battles were not highlighted anywhere in their research. On the contrary, these pseudo-scholars glorified the history of the invaders and the alien rulers of the country. India was projected in the darker side to the taste and

delight of foreign readers. This is never considered to be an act of patriotism. It is a betrayal of history where the acclaimed scholars of Indian history showed an act of disloyalty and dishonour to our queens who fought valiantly against the aliens. Only the East India Company and the Doctrine of Lapse were highlighted in history textbooks. Nowhere did they project the sacrifices of these queens in the curriculum too. They are Rani Velu Nachiyar, Kittur Chennamma, Rani Avantibai, Rani Laxmi Bai, Ranikarunavati, Rani Durgavati, Rani Jindan Kaur, Rani Rashmoni, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Marangoni Hazra, Abbakka, Rami Tarabai Bhonsle and others known for their courage and resistance against British colonial rule. It is because of the lack of coverage of Indian queens in text books that children cannot have access to learn about the queens. The colonial rulers focused mainly on the battles led by kings and thus neglected the queens in encyclopedia. It could perhaps be due to patriarchal bias, predominant focus on political history, poorly documented socio political events, limited space in syllabi, national significance over regional subalterns, overlooking queens. Historically, women were given a second position in society. Interestingly the history of Mughal Empire figured in Indian History books. Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jah-



*Yet we ignore the contributions of these queens who fought against the British. The curriculum designers should keep these queens in the curriculum. Indians should avoid glorifying the alien rulers under the Westernized fashions.*

angir and other rulers made it to the text books because of these pseudo historians in India. Another interesting twist that historians made was putting emphasis on Taj Mahal built by Mughal Emperor, Shah Jehan in memory of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Begum. But Indian historians who claimed to be great scholars have deliberately avoided these Queens with a motive to underrepresent their contributions in research or text book curriculum.

The school children can well narrate the importance of Taj Mahal. At the same time, they are particularly ignorant of these queens. The historians have under-rated the significance of queens in their books. The successive governments too paid little attention to the valiant queens and their long lasting contribution. Who then are the traitors? Indians themselves are to take the blame. Under the magic spell of Western taste

to attract readers, they glorified the colonial rulers and the Moghul rulers thus ignoring the sacrifices of native Indian Queens. Moghul India attracted the historians whereas the Rajput Rebellion (1708-1710) was hardly a subject of national interest. They deliberately avoided the coverage of such great milestones in textbooks or research books. They just concentrated on the glorification of the alien rulers thus ignoring the great sacrifices by the queens. Is this national spirit? Such books were recommended for curriculum in UPSC exams and Universities. The native queens were ignored in their research while the aliens were projected in historical theses and books. Even NCERT ignored the inclusion of such legendary

queens in their textbooks. Major funding Agencies funded those projects which are deeply rooted in the glorification of British rule in India. Sahitya Akademi is promoting Indian Literature in translation. It should also promote Indian history from the perspective of these Queens. Many debates were organized on TV Channels. Yet we ignore the contributions of these queens who fought against the British. The curriculum designers should keep these queens in the curriculum. Indians should avoid glorifying the alien rulers under the Westernized fashions. The history of Indian queens should be known to the schoolchildren. The people enjoy the fruits of freedom but they forget the great sacrifices. The histori-

ans paid very little attention to the native queens. These writers were honoured with the highest civilian honours in India. It has been a great injustice that these queens were under-represented in history. Their roles in resisting colonial rule and their individual courage and leadership might not be as thoroughly explored as some other figures in Indian history. These brave women, at a crucial juncture of India’s decisive phase, who with a unique history and contribution, collectively represented the diverse spectrum of roles they had played during India’s struggle for independence. They exemplified the indomitable spirit and selfless commitment to the cause of freedom. Their legacy continues to inspire generations, reminding India of the integral role women played in shaping the destiny of a nation. Unfortunately, they did not make it to curriculum. All these queens had a unique place in India’s history as they led a fierce battle against the colonial rulers. Recognizing their tombs (“Samadhis”) as a Monument of National Importance will preserve their legacy. A special program highlighting the sacrifices of queens should be undertaken on International Women’s Day every year.

*P.V.Laxmi Prasad is the author and editor of 43 books in English Literature.*



*India's ancient traditional medicines, from Vedic origins to Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani, offer a rich history of holistic healing practices deeply intertwined with culture and nature, still relevant today.*

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India boasts a rich and multifaceted history of traditional medicine, a legacy stretching back thousands of years, deeply interwoven with its culture, philosophy, and spiritual beliefs. These ancient systems of healing, developed through generations of observation, experimentation, and intuitive understanding of the natural world, continue to play a significant role in the healthcare of a large segment of the Indian population and are increasingly gaining global recognition for their holistic approach to well-being.

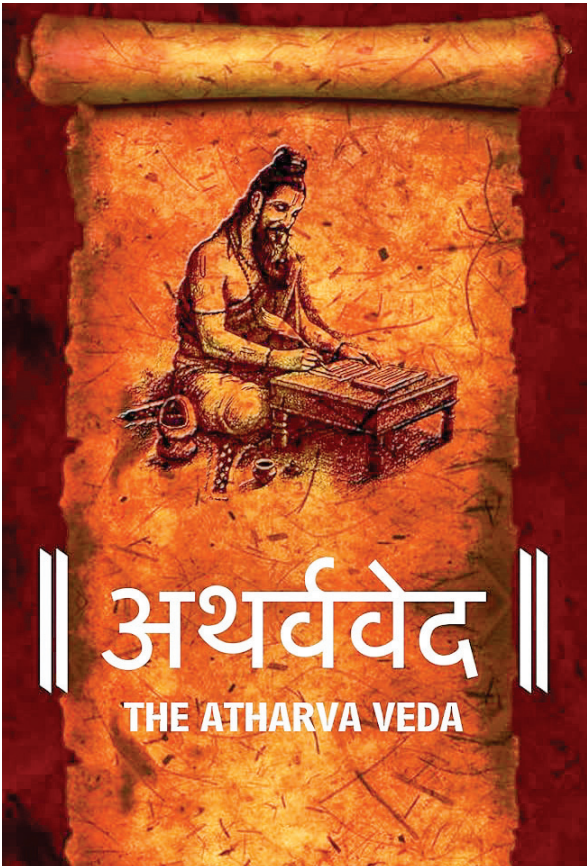
The earliest roots of Indian traditional medicine can be traced to the Vedic period (circa 1500-500 BCE). The Rigveda, one of the four sacred texts, contains hymns that mention medicinal plants and concepts related to health and disease. The Atharvaveda, in particular, is considered a primary source for early medical knowledge, detailing various ailments, their causes (often attributed to supernatural forces alongside physical factors), and remedies involving herbs, rituals, and incantations. This period marks the nascent stage where empirical observations began to merge with metaphysical explanations of health.

The subsequent era, often referred to as the Classical period of Ayurveda (circa 800 BCE - 1000 CE), witnessed the systematic codification and flourishing of medical knowledge. This era produced the foundational texts of Ayurveda, the most prominent and widely practiced traditional system in India. The Charaka Samhita, attributed to Charaka, primarily focuses on internal medicine, detailing the principles of Tridosha (the three fundamental energies: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), diagnosis, prognosis, and a vast pharmacopoeia of plant-based remedies. The Sushruta Samhita, attributed to Sushruta, is renowned for its advancements in surgery, describing intricate surgical procedures, instruments, and classifications of diseases. The Ashtanga Hridaya and Ashtanga Sangraha by Vagbhata represent a concise synthesis of the principles laid down in the Charaka and Sushruta

Samhitas. These texts not only documented existing knowledge but also contributed significantly to the theoretical understanding of physiology, pathology, and therapeutics. The establishment of early medical universities like those at Taxila and Nalanda during this period facilitated the dissemination and advancement of Ayurvedic knowledge.

Parallel to the development of Ayurveda, another significant indigenous system, Siddha medicine, evolved predominantly in South India, particularly in the Tamil-speaking regions. Its origins are deeply intertwined with the ancient Tamil civilization and spiritual traditions. The term "Siddha" translates to "perfection" or "attainment," and its practitioners, the Siddhars, were revered as spiritual masters who possessed profound medical wisdom and often alchemical knowledge. While sharing some fundamental principles with Ayurveda, such as the concept of five basic elements, Siddha developed its unique theories, diagnostic methods (including pulse diagnosis - Naadi pariksha), and a rich pharmacopoeia that includes not only herbs but also minerals and metals, often prepared through complex alchemical processes. The literature of Siddha is primarily in Tamil, with key texts attributed to the eighteen Siddhars, with Agasthya being considered the founding father of the system.

The arrival of Unani med-



icine in India around the 12th century CE marked a significant confluence of medical traditions. Originating in Greece with Hippocrates and Galen, the Unani system was further developed and enriched by Arab and Persian scholars before being introduced to the Indian subcontinent by Arab rulers and physicians. The Delhi Sultanate, the Khiljis, the Tughlaqs, and the Mughal emperors provided significant patronage to Unani scholars, leading to its widespread adoption and integration into the Indian medical landscape. Unani medicine is based on the concept of four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile) and em-

phasizes maintaining their balance for good health. It utilizes a wide range of herbal remedies, dietary modifications, and physical therapies. Over centuries, Unani practitioners in India adapted the system, incorporating local knowledge and medicinal plants into their practice, leading to a distinct Indo-Unani tradition.

Beyond these three major codified systems, India has a vast and diverse array of local and tribal medical traditions. These often orally transmitted systems are deeply rooted in the specific ecological knowledge and cultural practices of individual communities. They utilize locally available

# INDIA'S ANCIENT HEALING HERITAGE



A woman taking Ayurvedic treatment in Kerala. (Credit: Kerala Tourism)

HOME REMEDIES
Ancient India's medical systems, particularly Ayurveda, extensively utilized a rich pharmacopoeia of herbs and spices for their therapeutic properties. Ginger, revered for its digestive benefits and anti-inflammatory action, was a staple. Turmeric, with its potent curcumin, was valued for its antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant qualities. Cumin aided digestion and possessed antimicrobial properties.
Neem, a versatile herb, was employed for skin disorders, wound healing, and as an insect repellent. Ashwagandha, an adaptogenic herb, was used to combat stress and enhance vitality. Cardamom and cinnamon were favored for their respiratory benefits and ability to improve circulation. Sacred basil (Tulsi) held immense significance for its immune-boosting, stress-relieving, and anti-microbial properties.
Beyond these, other notable mentions include triphala (a combination of three fruits for detoxification), brahmi (for cognitive enhancement), licorice (for soothing the throat and digestive system), and fenugreek (for metabolic and digestive support). These herbs and spices were often used in complex formulations, tailored to individual constitutions and ailments, highlighting a sophisticated understanding of their synergistic effects. Their profound influence continues to shape traditional and modern herbal medicine practices globally.



A historical book on Indian Unani herbal medicine. File Photo

plants, animal products, and traditional healing rituals to address health concerns. While not always formally documented, these traditions represent an invaluable repository of indigenous knowledge about the medicinal properties of the local flora and fauna and often provide primary healthcare in remote and underserved areas.

The period of British colonial rule in India brought about a significant shift

in the healthcare landscape. Western medicine, with its emphasis on empirical evidence and scientific methodology, was introduced and gradually gained prominence, particularly in urban centers. Traditional systems faced periods of neglect and even suppression. However, they continued to be practiced by a large segment of the population who often found them more culturally relevant, accessible, and

affordable.

Following India's independence in 1947, there was a renewed focus on recognizing and promoting the indigenous systems of medicine. The government established research institutions, educational bodies, and regulatory frameworks to support the development and standardization of Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani, collectively often referred to as AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) - with Homoeopathy being a system adopted from the West but widely integrated into Indian healthcare). This period witnessed efforts to integrate traditional medicine into the national healthcare system, alongside modern medicine, to provide a more comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach to healthcare delivery.

The late 20th and early 21st centuries have seen a resurgence of inter-

est in traditional Indian medicines, both within India and globally. Factors contributing to this revival include a growing awareness of the limitations and potential side effects of modern medicine, a desire for more holistic and natural approaches to health, and increasing scientific research validating the efficacy of some traditional remedies. The establishment of the Ministry of AYUSH by the Indian government in 2014 further underscores the commitment to promoting and developing these traditional systems.

However, the path forward is not without its challenges. Issues such as standardization of formulations, quality control of raw materials, scientific validation of traditional claims, integration with modern healthcare practices, and the protection of traditional knowledge from biopiracy need to be addressed. Despite these challenges, the rich history and enduring legacy of traditional medicines in India highlight their profound impact on healthcare and their potential to contribute to global well-being. From the ancient Vedic hymns to the sophisticated formulations of Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani, and the invaluable knowledge held within local traditions, the history of Indian traditional medicine is a testament to the enduring human quest for health and healing, deeply rooted in a harmonious relationship with nature and a holistic understanding of the human body and mind. The continued exploration and responsible integration of these ancient wisdom traditions hold immense promise for the future of healthcare.



Turmeric is very common spice used as medicine in Indian households. File Photo



FRAGRANCE OF ROYALS: ITRA TRADITIONS OF RAJASTHAN'S KINGS AND QUEENS

TDG NETWORK

In the majestic courts of Rajasthan, where heritage dripped from every carved arch and jeweled turban, itra—the natural, alcohol-free perfume—was more than just a scent. It was an identity. It was tradition bottled in fragrance. Among the many symbols of royalty—embroidered silks, swords in gold sheaths, palaces of marble—itra held a unique and intimate place in the daily life of Rajasthani kings and queens.

A SYMBOL OF ROYALTY AND REFINEMENT

The royal families of Rajasthan, especially the Rajput clans, were renowned for their courage, grace, and highly refined aesthetic sensibilities. From the way they dressed to the rituals they followed, every detail reflected sophistication and discipline. In this world, fragrance was a silent yet powerful emblem of elegance. Itra, made through delicate distillation of flowers, roots, and herbs, was considered the purest form of perfume—fit only for royalty.

The use of itra was often ritualistic. It was applied before court appearances, religious ceremonies, and especially during festivals and matrimonial alliances. The application of itra marked the beginning of something auspicious. It was believed to purify the body, calm the mind, and prepare the spirit. In a desert land where dust and heat prevailed, fragrance was a kind of oasis—comforting,



cooling, and majestic.

THE ART OF MAKING ITRA

Unlike modern perfumes, which are typically alcohol-based and synthetically enhanced, traditional itra is a result of patience, purity, and craftsmanship. The process begins with the careful plucking of flowers such as rose (gulab), jasmine (chameli), and kewra in the early morning when the blossoms are most fragrant. These are then subjected to a process called deg bhapka, a hydro-distillation method using copper cauldrons, clay seals, and bamboo pipes.

This method is slow and labor-intensive, often taking several days to complete a single batch. Sandalwood oil is typically used as the base, not only for its own rich, woody aroma but also because it acts as a natural preservative. The final product is a deeply concentrated essence, a drop of which can linger on fabric or skin for days.

The royals of Rajasthan



patronized this craft extensively. Each royal court had its own attarwala (perfume master), who would curate blends specific to seasons, events, and even moods. Some itras were cooling and floral, used in summer. Others were spicy and warm, used in winter or for martial occasions.

ITRA IN DAILY ROYAL LIFE

For queens and princesses, itra was part of their beauty regimen. Mixed with oils, applied after baths, or dabbed gently behind the ears and on wrists, it created an aura of timeless

grace. For kings, itra was also a statement of authority and mystique. Historical anecdotes suggest that kings would often use musk-based itras before battle, believing it strengthened their resolve and heightened their presence among soldiers.

The use of itra also extended to textiles and furnishings. Royal garments were stored in perfumed chests or lightly scented before wearing. Pillowcases, bedsheets, and even tents for travel were sometimes infused with itra. Walking into a royal chamber was as much an olfactory experience



On occasions like Rakhi, Teej, and Diwali, gifting itra was a common custom. Nobles would present intricately bottled itras as tokens of goodwill, diplomacy, or love. These bottles were often made of colored glass, sometimes hand-painted, sealed with silk threads or wax, and stored in carved wooden boxes—luxurious from start to finish.

GENDERED FRAGRANCES: SCENT AS IDENTITY

Interestingly, the choice of itra often followed the rules of gendered scent preferences. Queens preferred floral itras—rose, champa, mogra, and jasmine. These evoked femininity, grace, and serenity. Kings leaned toward bolder profiles—musk (kasturi), amber (ambar), oud, vetiver (khus), and saffron (kesar). These were earthy, smoky, and powerful, meant to convey strength and masculinity.

However, scent was also seen as an extension of one's personality and not just gender. A philosophical

ruler might choose a softer floral base, while a warrior might blend oud with a hint of rose to balance aggression with grace.

A CULTURE PRESERVED IN SCENT

The legacy of itra did not end with the fall of kingdoms. Many royal families continued the tradition in their private lives even after the dissolution of princely states. Some families maintained private perfumers for generations. In certain regions of Rajasthan, families who once served the royals as attar artisans continue the practice, passing down their formulas through oral tradition and guarded secrecy.

The value of itra has also been passed down culturally in folk stories, songs, and traditions. In Rajasthani weddings today, the application of itra on the groom is still considered a good omen. In rural areas, women often prepare their own floral waters using ancestral methods, a distant

echo of the royal past.

REVIVAL AND MODERN INTERPRETATIONS

In recent years, as interest in slow, sustainable, and organic products has grown, itra has found a new audience. Boutique brands, often inspired by Rajasthani heritage, are now working with traditional artisans to create handcrafted itras that stay true to old methods.

Tourists visiting palaces-turned-hotels in Jaipur, Udaipur, and Jodhpur often find themselves enchanted by the lingering scent of rose or sandalwood in the air. Some heritage hotels have even curated scent experiences—where guests can learn about and blend their own itras, experiencing a slice of royal life.

The government of Rajasthan, too, has shown interest in preserving this intangible cultural heritage by supporting local distillers and encouraging the documentation of traditional perfume recipes.

THE BOTTLED LEGACY

Itra, for the royals of Rajasthan, was far more than a perfume. It was identity, ritual, diplomacy, and luxury—bottled. It whispered tales of moonlit palace corridors, perfumed gardens, and velvet-clad courtiers. In every drop was a memory of a bygone era—rich with scent, symbolism, and style.

Today, as Rajasthan continues to blend tradition with modernity, the story of itra lives on—not just as a fragrance but as a heritage that refuses to fade.

Phad Painting: The Vibrant Traditional Art Form of Rajasthan

TDG NETWORK

Phad painting is a traditional and intricate art form that originates from the vibrant land of Rajasthan, India. Known for its rich colors, detailed imagery, and storytelling techniques, Phad painting has been a significant part of Rajasthani culture for centuries. This art form, primarily associated with the Bhilwara region of Rajasthan, reflects the folklore, mythology, and spiritual beliefs of the people. Its uniqueness lies in its large-scale canvases and its role in narrating stories through vivid and expressive paintings.

Phad painting traces its roots back to the 7th century AD, with the tradition being passed down through generations. The word "Phad" refers to a long piece of cloth or canvas, on which these paintings are created. Traditionally, the paintings were done on cloth, which was stretched and painted with natural dyes and pigments. The early patrons of Phad art were the Rajput kings and wealthy merchants who commissioned these paintings for religious and cultural purposes.

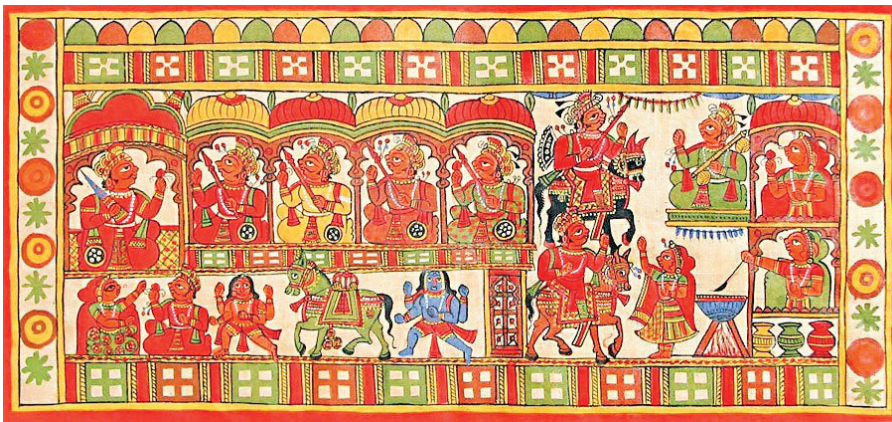
Phad paintings are mostly created to depict the lives and deeds of various gods and goddesses, particularly the deities worshiped by the people of Rajasthan. The most commonly depicted deities are Pabuji, Devnarayan, and others from Rajasthan's folk traditions. These paintings often served as visual narratives during religious rituals and were used as a backdrop during religious festivals and ceremonies.

Phad paintings are renowned for their distinct style and vibrant colors, with natural dyes used for the color palette. The colors are derived from natural sources, such as flowers, minerals, and vegetables, which provide deep and earthy hues. The artists make use of brushes made from goat hair to create intricate details, while the borders are often embellished with fine designs.

The Phad canvas itself is made of cloth, traditionally a length of coarse cotton fabric, which serves as the backdrop for the paintings. In some cases, the cloth is treated with a special mixture of ingredients to make it more durable and suitable for painting. The painting process is incredibly time-consuming and intricate, with artists applying multiple layers of paint to create depth and texture.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Phad painting is the elaborate and symmetrical designs that are characteristic of the art form. The artists often work on a large scale, creating enormous canvases that can be up to 30 feet long and several feet wide. The paintings are filled with details that reflect the intricacies of Rajasthani culture, including animals, landscapes, and mythological characters.

The primary themes of Phad painting are religious and mythological in nature. The art form is a visual storytelling medium, with each painting telling the story of a specific deity, hero, or mythical event. Pabuji, a folk deity and a revered hero in Rajasthan, is



one of the most commonly depicted figures in Phad paintings. His exploits, such as his battle with demons and his devotion to his faith, are immortalized on large canvases that showcase his life's story.

Similarly, the deity Devnarayan is often depicted in Phad paintings. Devnarayan is considered a savior figure by the people of Rajasthan and is believed to protect them from evil forces. Paintings depicting his various avatars, his battles with demons, and his miracles are often created with intricate details and symbolism. Phad paintings also depict religious ceremonies and rituals, often with vibrant depictions of temples, sacred animals, and divine blessings. The intricate detailing of gods, goddesses, and legendary heroes helps to convey the cultural and spiritual values of Rajasthan.

Phad painting holds immense cultural and religious significance in Rajasthan. Historically, the Phad was used as a form of visual storytelling by traveling priests, known as "Bhopas." These priests would carry the Phads to different villages and towns and use them to narrate the

stories of gods and legends to the local people during religious ceremonies. The Phads were often displayed in temples or carried by the Bhopas during processions, acting as a visual aid to help devotees connect with the divine figures being worshipped.

The Phad paintings were also used to perform rituals, and the paintings were considered to be an embodiment of the gods and goddesses they depicted. Devotees believed that the Phad had the power to invoke blessings and divine protection from the deities, making it an essential part of religious observances. The connection between Phad paintings and religious worship continues to this day, with the paintings still used in temples and homes for devotional purposes.

However, in recent years, there has been a revival of interest in traditional art forms, including Phad painting. Efforts have been made to promote the art form both locally and internationally, with government initiatives, cultural festivals, and exhibitions providing platforms for artists to showcase their work. Moreover, the development

of the craft sector in Rajasthan has opened up new opportunities for Phad artists, who are now able to sell their paintings in domestic and international markets.

Phad painting is a beautiful and timeless art form that continues to hold significance in Rajasthan's rich cultural heritage. The intricate details, vivid colors, and religious themes of Phad paintings tell the stories of gods, heroes, and legends, offering a glimpse into the spiritual and cultural life of Rajasthan. Despite facing challenges over the years, Phad painting has experienced a resurgence, and today it stands as a testament to the skill, creativity, and perseverance of the artisans who have preserved this age-old tradition. Phad painting not only showcases the artistic brilliance of Rajasthan but also serves as a powerful symbol of the state's enduring connection to its cultural roots. Through this art, the traditions and stories of Rajasthan continue to be passed down from generation to generation, ensuring that the legacy of Phad painting lives on for future generations to admire and appreciate.

Reviving Rajasthan's Heritage Through Handcrafted Textiles and Sustainable Crafts

TDG NETWORK

Rajasthan, known as the land of kings, brings to mind grand forts, colorful markets, and lively festivals that brighten the desert with tradition and celebration. But beyond this lively image lies something special—beautiful handmade crafts that show the true heart of Rajasthan. Every item, carefully made by skilled hands, tells a story of tradition, pride, and creativity. These are not just decorative things—they are a part of living history, passed down from one generation to the next.

Shilpkars are traditional artisans and craftspersons in India, known for their skills in various forms of handicrafts, sculpture, woodwork, stone carving, metalwork, and other artistic crafts. The word "Shilpkar" comes from the Sanskrit word "Shilpa", which means art or craft, and "kar", meaning doer or maker—so a Shilpkar is essentially a "maker of art" or "craftsman." Shilpkars have historically been an important part of the cultural and artistic heritage. They created temple sculptures, decorative architecture, jewelry, pottery, textiles, and other traditional crafts. Their work was often commissioned by kings, nobles, or religious institutions. Many Shilpkar communities are known for mastering a specific craft that's been passed down for generations.

They reflect the culture and artistic spirit of the state. The people of Rajasthan proud of its deep rooted cultural fabric have been trying to highlight and keep it alive.

So, With a vision and aim to promote the state and its traditions a three-day exhibition, "Summer Edit 2025" by Shilpkaree, a leading platform dedicated to preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of Indian handloom and handicrafts, was organised. The exhibition was inaugurated by the Guests of Honour: Director of Arch College of Design, Archana Surana; Director of AKFD, Jyoti Kasliwal; Founder of Neerja Potteries, Leela Bordia and Chairperson of Kamla Poddar Group (KPG), Kamla Poddar and renowned arts patron, Sudhir Mathur. Founder of Shilpkaree,



Shilpi Bhargava, informed that the exhibition featured exquisite weaves crafted from natural fibers, which are perfect for the summer weather, including Khadi, Linen, Kala Cotton, Chanderi, Ikat and Jamdani. She said that the designers presented contemporary adaptations of age-old techniques such as Crochet, Phulkari, Eco Print, Shibori, Batik and Kalamkari, blending timeless artistry with modern aesthetics. Eco-friendly innovations like 'Sabai Grass' handicrafts and bags made from recycled plastic were also displayed, reinforcing the importance of conscious consumerism and sustainability.

This exhibition featured a meticulously curated collection of handwoven fabrics, intricate embroidery techniques, and sustainable crafts, providing a platform for artisans and designers who are keeping India's textile legacy alive. The exhibition saw a remarkable response, with a large number of people attending and deeply appreciating the artisans. The collections were highly praised, with many attendees expressing how they were impressed with the innovative blend of traditional techniques and contemporary designs.

Shilpkaree is more than just an exhibition – it is a movement that honours India's artistic heritage while adapting it to contemporary lifestyles. Rooted in the philosophy of "From Soil to Style," Shilpkaree works to bridge the gap between rural artisans and urban connoisseurs, ensuring that age-old crafts find relevance in modern wardrobes and homes.

Each collection at Shilpkaree is hand-picked, representing not just the craft but also the story of the hands behind it. By supporting sustainable production methods and ethical sourcing, the platform aims to create a meaningful impact on artisan communities while offering consumers the finest handcrafted treasures.



# WHERE BIOLOGY BINDS: UK'S APEX COURT DEFINES 'WOMAN' IN EQUALITY ACT

*By clarifying that “woman” in the Act refers to biological sex and does not inherently include transgender women with GRCs, the court has provided a definitive legal interpretation.*

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The UK Supreme Court's recent unanimous ruling on the definition of “woman” within the context of the Equality Act 2010 has ignited a significant debate with far-reaching implications for the application of equality law across Scotland, England, and Wales. The court's decision clarifies that the terms “woman” and “sex” in the Act refer to biological sex and do not inherently include transgender women, even those holding Gender Recognition Certificates (GRCs). This judgment, stemming from a legal challenge brought by the gender-critical campaign group For Women Scotland (FWS), has the potential to reshape how single-sex spaces, services, and regulations are interpreted and applied.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CORE OF THE RULING

At its heart, the Supreme Court's ruling addresses a fundamental question: what constitutes the legal definition of “woman” under the Equality Act, a piece of legislation designed to protect individuals from discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment and wider society. The specific point of contention was whether this definition encompasses transgender women who have obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate, a legal document that recognizes their affirmed gender in the UK.

The court unequivocally stated that the terms “woman” and “sex” within the Equality Act are to be understood as referring to

biological sex. This means that for the purposes of the Act, a “woman” is defined as a female person based on their biological characteristics at birth. The ruling explicitly excludes transgender women, even those with a GRC, from this inherent definition.

The 88-page judgment emphasized the binary nature of sex as understood by the law, stating that “the concept of sex is binary, a person is either a woman or a man.” The court reasoned that interpreting “sex” to include “certificated sex” (i.e., the gender recognized on a GRC) would create inconsistencies and undermine the clear definitions of “man” and “woman” as protected characteristics within the Act.

## THE PATH TO THE SUPREME COURT

The case that culminated in this landmark ruling originated from a legal challenge initiated by For Women Scotland (FWS) against the Scottish government. This challenge was specifically directed at the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018, legislation aimed at improving gender balance on public sector boards in Scotland.

The initial point of contention arose when an amendment to the Scottish government's bill broadened the scope of the legislation's definition of “woman” to include all transgender women, irrespective of whether they held a Gender Recognition Certificate. FWS, a group holding gender-critical views, launched a judicial review, arguing that this inclusive definition would have broader ramifications



for single-sex spaces and groups, such as hospital wards and prisons. Their concern was that treating transgender women as legally equivalent to biological women would compromise the purpose and safety of these spaces.

In response to the initial judicial review, Scottish ministers revised the statutory guidance to align with the Equality Act, limiting the definition of “woman” for the purpose of the public boards legislation to include only transgender women who possessed a GRC. However, FWS pursued a further judicial review, arguing that even this revised definition was too broad. This second judicial review was dismissed, leading FWS to escalate the case to the UK Supreme Court, the highest court in the land for matters of significant public or constitutional importance.

## THE EQUALITY ACT

It is crucial to understand that the Equality Act itself already contains provisions that allow for the exclusion of transgender women (including those with a GRC)

from single-sex groups and services under specific circumstances. Section 7(2)(f) of the Act states that a person is not to be treated as the same sex as another person if they are a transsexual person. Schedule 3, Part 1, Paragraph 26 of the Act further elaborates on this, permitting the exclusion of transgender individuals from single-sex services if it is “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.”

FWS argued that if they lost their case and the legal definition of “woman” was deemed to inherently include transgender women with GRCs, the application of these exemptions would become significantly more complex. They contended that a transgender woman legally recognized as a woman would then be able to claim sex discrimination if excluded from a women-only space, potentially undermining the ability of such groups to maintain their single-sex nature for their intended beneficiaries.

## THE SUPREME COURT'S RATIONALE

The Supreme Court's ruling

rested on a careful interpretation of the language and structure of the Equality Act. The five judges unanimously concluded that the natural and ordinary meaning of “sex” in the Act refers to biological sex. They argued that if “sex” were interpreted to include “certificated sex,” it would create a fundamental conflict with the Act's clear distinction between the protected characteristics of “sex” (male and female) and “gender reassignment.”

The judgment highlighted the practical difficulties that would arise for providers of single-sex spaces if “sex” were not consistently understood as biological sex. The court reasoned that if a transgender woman with a GRC were legally defined as a woman for all purposes under the Act, it would complicate the justification for excluding them from spaces like changing rooms, homeless hostels, and medical services, potentially leading to legal challenges and undermining the ability to provide services tailored to the specific needs of biological women.



## IMPLICATIONS OF THE RULING

The Supreme Court's decision has several significant implications: Clarity on the Definition of “Woman” in the Equality Act: The ruling provides a definitive interpretation that “woman” and “sex” in the Equality Act refer to biological sex. This offers a clearer legal framework for understanding these terms within the context of anti-discrimination law.

No Change to Existing Exclusion Provisions: The ruling does not alter the existing provisions within the Equality Act that allow for the exclusion of transgender women from single-sex spaces and services if such exclusion is a “proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.” However, the clarity on the definition of “woman” may influence how these provisions are applied and interpreted in future cases.

Potential Calls for Legislative Reform: Despite the court's interpretation, the ruling is likely to fuel further debate and calls for potential revisions to the Equality Act. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the body responsible for enforcing the Act, had intervened in the case, suggesting that Parliament may not have fully appreciated the implications for women if transgender women with GRCs were legally considered female for all purposes under the law.

This suggests a potential divergence between the legal interpretation and the intended scope of inclusivity.

Impact on Policy and Guidance: The ruling will likely necessitate a review and potential revision of policies and guidance across various sectors concerning single-sex spaces and services to ensure they align with the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Equality Act.

## PERSPECTIVES ON TRANS RIGHTS

Lord Hodge, the Deputy President of the Supreme Court, explicitly urged against viewing the decision as a victory for one group at the expense of another. He emphasized that all transgender individuals retain clear legal protections against discrimination and harassment under the Equality Act, specifically under the protected characteristic of “gender reassignment.” This highlights that while the ruling clarifies the definition of “woman,” it does not diminish the legal rights and protections afforded to transgender people.

## REACTIONS TO THE RULING

The ruling has elicited diverse reactions from different communities and campaign groups: Transgender Community: Campaign groups like Scottish Trans expressed concern and urged calm within the trans community. Stonewall, a prominent LGBTQ+ charity,

described the ruling as “incredibly worrying.” These reactions underscore the potential impact of the decision on the sense of inclusion and legal recognition for transgender women.

Gender-Critical Campaigners: Groups like Sex Matters, who actively participated in the case, welcomed the ruling. Maya Forstater, the group's chief executive, stated that the court had provided “the right answer” by affirming that “sex – male and female – refers to reality, not to paperwork.” This perspective emphasizes the importance of biological sex in the context of equality law and single-sex provisions.

## THE PATH FORWARD

Following the Supreme Court's judgment, the immediate next steps involve understanding and implementing the implications of the ruling across various sectors. Scotland's First Minister, John Swinney, stated that the Scottish government accepts the ruling and that “protecting the rights of all” will guide its response.

This suggests a commitment to navigating the complexities arising from the judgment while upholding the rights of both women and transgender individuals. The ruling has brought to the forefront the intricate balancing act required in equality law to protect individuals from discrimination while also addressing the specific needs and concerns related to sex-based provisions. The debate surrounding the definition of “woman” and its implications for single-sex spaces is likely to continue, potentially leading to further discussions about legislative reform.

# Bangladesh vs India: Can Dhaka afford a trade war?

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Tensions between Bangladesh and India have reached a boiling point, raising serious concerns about the future of their economic partnership. With India suspending crucial transshipment facilities and Bangladesh halting yarn imports through key land ports, the already fragile trade relations between the two neighbors are under immense pressure. The fallout could have wide-reaching implications—not only for the two countries but also for landlocked neighbors like Bhutan and Nepal, who rely on these corridors.

## INDIA HALTS TRANSSHIPMENT

In April, India made the strategic decision to suspend its transshipment facility for export cargo bound for Bangladesh. This facility had served as a vital trade link not only between the two countries but also for Nepal and Bhutan, which depend on Indian routes to access Bangladeshi ports. Soon after, Bangladesh retaliated by suspending the import of yarn through major land ports including Benapole, Bhonra, Sonamajid, Banglabandha, and Burimari. The impact of these deci-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Bangladesh's interim leader, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus. File Photo

sions is already being felt across the region.

## POLITICAL STRAINS & ECONOMIC FALLOUT

The deteriorating political relationship between India and Bangladesh is central to this trade standoff. The political upheaval in Bangladesh that saw the exit of long-time Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led to a rise in anti-Hindu attacks, drawing sharp condemnation from Indian political leaders. As nationalist sentiments flared on both sides, diplomatic engagements lost their effectiveness.

Although Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh's interim leader, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, met recently to ease tensions, their discussions failed to yield any tangible progress. The aftermath saw both countries taking increasingly defensive measures—culmi-

nating in trade suspensions that suggest politics is now overpowering economic rationality.

## B'DESH'S PIVOT TOWARDS PAKISTAN

Amid souring relations with India, Bangladesh is seemingly warming up to Pakistan. In a notable development, Bangladesh has initiated efforts to enhance direct shipping links with Islamabad. Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Amna Baloch, recently visited Dhaka for the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC), signaling renewed diplomatic and trade engagement between the two countries.

## NUMBERS BEHIND THE TRADE TIES

Despite current tensions, India remains Bangladesh's most significant trade partner. According to the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), bilat-

eral trade between the two countries reached \$12.9 billion in FY24. India exports a wide range of products to Bangladesh—over 5,620 in total—including cotton, mineral fuels, automobiles, food industry by-products, and various machinery and electronics.



## TEXTILE SECTOR IN THE CROSSHAIRS

Perhaps the most vulnerable area of Bangladesh's economy amid this escalating trade tension is the textile sector. As the backbone of the country's industrial output, textiles contribute around 11 percent to Bangladesh's GDP and employ millions across the country. The sector is heavily reliant on Indian cotton imports—India supplies approximately 35 percent of Bangladesh's cotton needs.

## CAN B'DESH AFFORD A TRADE WAR?

The unfolding scenario begs a pressing question: Can Bangladesh risk a full-blown trade war with India? The answer is complicated. On one hand, asserting economic sovereignty and exploring new partnerships—such as with Pakistan—could diversify Dhaka's trade portfolio.

# Trump's tariffs and the decline of western economic dominance

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In 2025, the return of President Donald Trump to the White House has reignited global economic tensions, as his administration aggressively implements a sweeping tariff strategy aimed at reasserting U.S. economic independence. However, rather than bolstering domestic industry, these measures have triggered widespread disruption in international trade, raised fears of a global recession, and exposed cracks in the foundations of Western economic leadership.

## TARIFFS AND TENSIONS

The Trump administration's decision to introduce a 10% across-the-board tariff—along with even higher rates targeting strategic sectors such as automotive, electronics, and steel—has provoked significant backlash from some of America's most important trading partners. Canada, Mexico, China, and the European Union have responded in kind, imposing retaliatory tariffs on American exports ranging from agricultural goods to manufactured products. This tit-for-tat escalation has had a chilling effect on global trade. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO),



international trade volumes are expected to fall by 0.2% in 2025, a drop that could deepen if further tariffs are enacted. For an interconnected global economy still reeling from post-pandemic disruptions and inflationary pressures, this decline is more than symbolic—it signals a retreat from decades of trade liberalization.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

Markets have responded nervously. A recent Bank of America survey reveals that investor confidence has plummeted to its lowest level in 30 years. The S&P 500 has experienced significant declines amid fears of stagflation—where inflation persists even as economic growth stalls. Businesses and investors alike are grappling with the uncertainty of a trade environment that appears increasingly politicized and unpredictable.

The specter of a U.S. recession looms large. Rising input costs due to tariffs, particularly on imported

components and raw materials, have increased operational expenses for American companies. In response, many have scaled back investment and hiring. Consumers, facing higher prices on everyday goods from electronics to groceries, have also tightened their spending.

## DISRUPTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAINS

One of the clearest consequences of the tariff strategy has been a disruption to global supply chains. Earlier this year, importers rushed to bring goods into the U.S. ahead of the new tariffs. But these efforts provided only temporary relief. Forecasts now predict a 20% decline in containerized imports in the second half of 2025, threatening inventory shortages and pushing up consumer prices.

Industries heavily dependent on global supply chains, such as electronics, automotive, and retail, have been especially hard-hit.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

As companies scramble to reconfigure their logistics and sourcing strategies, the result has been delays, rising production costs, and fewer choices for consumers—all of which feed into broader inflationary trends.

## LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

The United States—and the West more broadly—has long championed free trade as a pillar of its global influence. By taking a protectionist turn, the Trump administration risks unraveling the very structures that enabled the rise of Western economic dominance in the 20th and early 21st centuries. If the current trajectory continues, the global economy could shift toward a more multipolar model, with trade and economic power more evenly distributed among a broader group of nations. This transformation could have far-reaching consequences. The erosion of Western leadership in trade could embolden alternative economic models and ideologies, diminish the role of Western financial institutions, and complicate international cooperation on major global issues like climate change and digital regulation.



# SPACEX LEADS BID FOR TRUMP'S GOLDEN DOME MISSILE DEFENSE

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

In 2025, Elon Musk's SpaceX, along with technology startups Palantir and Anduril, emerged as a leading contender to build a critical component of President Donald Trump's ambitious missile defense initiative, dubbed the "Golden Dome." This development marks a significant moment in the intersection of Silicon Valley's burgeoning tech sector and traditional defense contracting, highlighting the increasing role of private companies in national defense programs.

The Golden Dome is envisioned as a massive missile defense system designed to protect the United States from missile attacks, seen as one of the most catastrophic threats by President Trump, according to his January 2025 executive order. SpaceX and its partners are

THE MISSILE BID

- Proposal includes 400-1,000 satellites for missile detection and 200 attack satellites.
- SpaceX suggests a subscription-based model for faster deployment.
- Pentagon's decision-making process is still in early stages.
- Golden Dome project could cost billions, with initial capabilities set for 2026.
- SpaceX faces competition from traditional defense contractors like Boeing and Lockheed Martin.



Elon Musk gives a tour to US President-elect Donald Trump of the control room before the launch of the SpaceX Starship rocket, in Texas, US, November 19, 2024. File Photo

bidding to play a central role in this project, which would involve constructing a network of satellites to detect and track missiles. SpaceX's proposed plan includes launching between 400 and 1,000 satellites that would be part of a larger system aimed at preventing missile attacks on U.S. soil. A separate fleet of 200 attack satel-

lites, capable of intercepting missiles through missiles or lasers, would complete the system, although SpaceX itself would not be involved in the weaponization aspect. The significance of this proposal lies not only in its technological ambition but also in its approach. SpaceX has proposed a subscription-based model

for the Pentagon, offering the government access to missile defense technology without the need to outright own the system. This subscription service model could expedite the deployment process by circumventing traditional Pentagon procurement protocols, potentially allowing for quicker rollouts of the

necessary technologies. However, the subscription approach has raised concerns within some parts of the Pentagon, with critics questioning the long-term implications of relying on private companies to manage critical national defense assets.

SpaceX's entry into the defense contracting arena is not surprising given the company's track record with space exploration and satellite technology. Musk's company already operates a large fleet of rockets, including the Falcon 9, and has launched numerous satellites for various purposes, including military applications.

This infrastructure gives SpaceX a clear advantage over other bidders, as the company already possesses the technological know-how and logistical capabilities to deploy large constellations of satellites.

# US accuses Beijing of tariff evasion

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

The administration of US President Donald Trump is preparing to urge countries to reduce trade with China as part of negotiations over US tariffs, according to a report from The Japan Times.

The US plans to request that they take measures to limit China's manufacturing capabilities, to prevent Beijing from finding ways to circumvent Trump's tariffs. Trump's chief economic advisers are contemplating the proposal of asking officials from other nations to impose what are referred to as secondary tariffs, essentially monetary penalties, on imports from countries that have close ties with China. The US also seeks to encourage trading partners to avoid taking on excess goods from China, according to other sources cited by The Japan Times.

This initiative represents an attempt by Trump's team to rally traditional allies to surround China and increase pressure on Beijing to alter its economic behaviours, as highlighted in The Japan Times report.

China has consistently been a focus of criticism from Trump and previous administrations regarding its trade surplus, alleged theft of intellectual property, and government subsidies that the US claims



undermine competition with American firms, The Japan Times report indicated.

Peter Navarro, Trump's trade advisor, has mentioned that China uses Vietnam to ship products in order to evade tariffs, a practice known as transshipment, characterising Vietnam as "a colony of communist China," as quoted by The Japan Times.

The discussions between the European Union and the U.S. this week yielded little progress in addressing trade disagreements, with Trump's advisers signalling that most of the 20% tariff imposed on the EU will likely remain, according to The Japan Times.

# UK alarmed by Chinese drones in its soil

AGENCIES  
LONDON

UK government officials have expressed private worries that drones manufactured in China are being utilised to capture high-resolution imagery of essential national infrastructure locations in the UK, contrary to guidance provided by the nation's security services, as per media reports.

National Grid Plc, which manages the country's electricity and gas distribution networks, employs drones produced by Shenzhen-based SZ DJI Technology Co. to record videos, take photographs, and capture thermal images of its electricity substations, according to details shared on its website as recently as September.



The reports also indicated that DJI drones have been utilized for surveying the construction of Electricite de France SA's Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant, inspecting solar energy facilities, and by Thames Water for overseeing reservoirs and water supplies.

The use of these drones oc-

curs despite a 2023 warning from the UK's National Protective Security Authority (NPSA), a division of the domestic security service MI5, advising British organizations responsible for sensitive sites to exercise caution when employing drones "produced in countries with coercive data sharing practices," referencing China.

Furthermore, in 2022, the US Department of Defense placed DJI on a blacklist of Chinese companies with military connections.

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation has cautioned that drones manufactured in China "present a considerable risk to critical infrastructure," given that they "may exhibit vulnerabilities that could allow data theft or enable network breaches."

Meanwhile, the advisory from the UK's NPSA to British firms states: "The foremost defense for organisations intending to utilise unmanned aerial systems (UAS) might be to limit UAS and their corresponding component procurement from nations that pose a security threat."

# Russian apex court temporarily suspends ban on Taliban

AGENCIES  
MOSCOW

Russia's Supreme Court on Thursday suspended the over two decades old ban on Afghanistan's ruling Taliban, paving the way for the establishment of full-fledged relations between Moscow and Kabul.

Russia had proscribed the Taliban movement as a terrorist outfit in 2003. However, since the hasty withdrawal of the US troops in August 2021, the Taliban has gained control over Afghanistan.

"By decision of the Russian Supreme Court, the previously established ban on the activities of the Taliban movement, included in the



Taliban fighters celebrate the third anniversary of the withdrawal of US-led troops from Afghanistan, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Wednesday, Aug. 14, 2024. File Photo

unified federal list of organizations recognized as terrorist, is suspended," the judge was quoted as saying by the state-run TASS news agency.

The apex court's decision comes into force immedi-

ately.

The advocate and representatives of the Taliban were present for the in-camera hearing.

In December 2024, the Russian Duma amended the law which allowed the tempo-

rary lifting of the ban on the Taliban to facilitate interaction with the group.

"We are grateful for the decision, it will help strengthen cooperation," the Afghan embassy in Moscow was quoted as saying by the Russian news agency.

Prosecutor General Igor Krasnov had filed a petition in the Supreme Court with a request to lift the ban on the Taliban.

The apex court's ruling removes legal obstacles to full-fledged political and economic relations between the two countries, Russian special presidential envoy for Afghanistan and top diplomat's advisor Zamir Kabulov told TASS.

# Temporary tariff pause mitigates trade contraction: WTO

AGENCIES  
GENEVA

The volume of world merchandise trade is expected to decline by 0.2 per cent in 2025 under current conditions, nearly three percentage points lower than what would have been expected under a "low tariff" baseline scenario, according to the WTO Secretariat's latest Global Trade Outlook and Statistics report released on April 16.

"This is premised on the tariff situation as of 14 April. Trade could shrink even further, to -1.5 per cent in 2025, if the situation deteriorates," said the report.

"Services trade, though not directly subject to tariffs, is also expected to be adversely affected, with the global volume of commercial services trade now forecast to grow by 4.0 per cent, slower than expected."

Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said, "I am deeply concerned by the



uncertainty surrounding trade policy, including the US-China stand-off. The recent de-escalation of tariff tensions has temporarily relieved some of the pressure on global trade. However, the enduring uncertainty threatens to act as a brake on global growth, with severe negative consequences for the world, the most vulnerable economies in particular. In the face of this crisis, WTO members have the unprecedented opportunity to inject dynamism into the organization, foster a level-playing field, streamline decision-making, and adapt our agreements to

better meet today's global realities."

At the start of the year, the WTO Secretariat expected to see continued expansion of world trade in 2025 and 2026, with merchandise trade growing in line with world GDP and commercial services trade increasing at a faster pace. However, the large number of new tariffs introduced since January prompted WTO economists to reassess the trade situation, resulting in a substantial downgrade to their forecast for merchandise trade and a smaller reduction in their outlook for services trade.

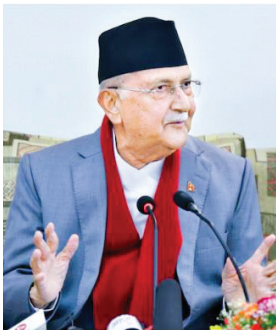
# No amnesty for heinous crimes committed during Maoist conflict: Nepal

AGENCIES  
KATHMANDU

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on Thursday asserted that individuals responsible for heinous and inhuman crimes committed during Nepal's decade-long Maoist insurgency will not be granted amnesty, as he emphasised the need to uphold justice and expedite the transitional justice process.

Inaugurating the Sixth National Convention of the National Ex-Army and Police Organisation of Nepal (NEAPON) here, Oli, who also chairs the ruling Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML), said transitional justice mechanisms must ensure justice for victims of the conflict that lasted from 1996 to 2006.

Oli emphasised the importance of two transitional justice bodies — the Truth and Reconciliation



Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli

Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) — in investigating conflict-era crimes and delivering justice. He acknowledged the delay in their effective functioning but asserted that further postponement would not be tolerated. He reiterated that such crimes are incompatible with the democratic system Nepal has embraced after years of political struggle and the fall of authoritarian rule.

# Yunus's rise raises fears of Islamist surge and strategic realignment

AGENCIES  
DHAKA

Political tremors continue to ripple across South Asia following Bangladesh's dramatic leadership change last August, when mass protests led by a wide-ranging coalition of student groups, civil society activists, and radical Islamists forced Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign.

In her place emerged Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohammed Yunus, widely hailed for his work in micro-finance, who was appointed as interim leader amid high hopes for reform and unity.

But those early hopes are now giving way to growing unease, both at home and abroad. Yunus's apparent tolerance of Islamist forces and a sharp pivot in foreign policy toward China and Pakistan have raised fears about Bangladesh's internal cohesion and its regional alliances—especially its historically close ties with India.



Bangladeshi nationals raise slogans during the protest against the Head of Bangladesh's interim government Mohammad Yunus outside a hotel in New York. Agency

## B'desh seeks apology from Pak over 1971 atrocities

TDG NETWORK  
DHAKA

Bangladesh raised "historically unresolved issues" and sought a public apology from Pakistan over the 1971 atrocities as the two countries held their first foreign secretary-level talks in 15 years here on Thursday.

Dhaka also asked Pakistan to pay USD 4.3 billion as its

share from the combined assets at the time when East Pakistan split from Pakistan in 1971 to form an independent Bangladesh.

"We have raised the historically unresolved issues with Pakistan," Bangladesh foreign secretary Jashim Uddin told reporters after the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) with his visiting Pakistani counterpart Amna Baloch.

# Pakistan Army Chief describes Kashmir as 'jugular vein'

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

Army Chief General Asim Munir described Kashmir as Pakistan's "jugular vein" during a diaspora event, where he asked overseas Pakistanis to pass on the country's story to their children, emphasising that their forefathers believed

Hindus and Muslims were different in every possible aspect of life.

"Our stance is very clear, it was our jugular vein, it will be our jugular vein, and we will not forget it. We will not leave our Kashmiri brothers in their heroic struggle," Gen Munir said while addressing the first Overseas Pakistanis Convention in

Islamabad on Tuesday, attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, senior ministers and Pakistanis living abroad.

India has repeatedly told Pakistan that the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of the country.



Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir

The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019.

In the same address, the powerful general urged the diaspora to preserve the val-

ues and vision for which Pakistan was created and share its story with their children.

"You have to tell Pakistan's story to your children so that they don't forget that our forefathers thought we were different from Hindus in every possible aspect of life," he said, evoking the two-nation theory propa-

gated by Pakistan's founder M A Jinnah.

"Our religions are different, our customs are different, our traditions are different, our thoughts are different, our ambitions are different. That was the foundation of the two-nation theory that was laid there. We are two nations, we are not one nation," he

added.

The general tried to present the case of a country that had a great past and a promising future.

"No matter where you live, remember - your roots lie in a high civilisation, noble ideology, and proud identity," he said. "We have never bowed down before adversity, and we never will."



## VINCY ALOSHIOUS ACCUSES SHINE TOM CHACKO OF MISCONDUCT ON FILM SET

AGENCIES  
KOCHI

Malayalam actress Vincy Alosious has formally lodged a complaint against actor Shine Tom Chacko, alleging inappropriate and unprofessional behaviour on the sets of the film ‘Soothravakyam’, while he was reportedly under the influence of alcohol.

The complaint has been submitted to both the Kerala Film Chamber of Commerce and the Malayalam film industry’s internal complaints committee. Vincy, who is known for her roles in films like ‘Rekha’, ‘Vikruthi’, and ‘Jana Gana Mana’, revealed her discomfort in an Instagram video, sharing that the ac-



tor’s behaviour, particularly on the sets of ‘Soothravakyam’, was inappropriate and unprofessional.

In the video, Vincy shared her experience and expressed that she would no longer work with individuals who misuse substances such as alcohol or drugs. The actress clarified her position after her earlier statements at an anti-drug awareness campaign garnered mixed reactions on-

line. In the video, she explained that her decision to avoid working with drug users stemmed from an unpleasant experience with a co-actor. While she did not initially name the actor, she later filed the complaint following support from the office bearers of AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists).

In the video, Vincy said, “Some days back, at an an-

ti-drug campaign, I made a statement that I will not work with people I know use drugs. After that, there were several comments questioning my statement, and I felt the need to clarify why I made it. I am making this video to make my stand clear.”

Vincy went on to describe specific incidents that made her feel uncomfortable during the shoot. She alleged that the actor, who was the lead artiste in the film, misbehaved with her and a fellow colleague under the influence of drugs. One such incident, she said, involved the actor offering to accompany her to fix a wardrobe malfunction in front of the entire crew. Vincy found the offer inappropriate and difficult to accept.

## Anurag Kashyap slams censorship of ‘Phule’, questions denial of casteism

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap has voiced his frustration over the censorship hurdles faced by ‘Phule’, a biographical drama directed by Ananth Mahadevan. The film, starring Pratik Gandhi and Patralekha as social reformers Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule, was originally slated for release on April 11, to coincide with Jyotirao Phule’s birth anniversary. However, it has been postponed to April 25 fol-



lowing objections from a section of the Brahmin community.

Taking to Instagram, Kashyap questioned the ongoing denial of casteism in India while pointing out the irony of the backlash, “Bhai mil ke decide kar lo. India mein casteism hai ya nahi...” (Brother, let’s decide together. Does casteism exist in India or not?)

The ‘Gangs of Wassey-pur’ director expressed concern over what he sees as a broader trend of suppressing bold and unapologetic cinema.



Malaika Arora snapped in a peplum-style floral top with a brown satin skirt at Global Spa Awards, in Mumbai, on April 16. (Image credit: Instagram)

## Mrs. Globe International 2025 winner Anuradha heading to Cannes Film Festival

KAUSHAL VERMA  
NEW DELHI

Mrs. Globe International 2025, Anuradha Garg, is all set to attend the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, scheduled for mid-May. She will be the first-ever woman with this title to represent India on such a renowned global platform.

“My calendar is packed with various activities and commitments in the coming days. Attending the Cannes Film Festival is one of them,” Anuradha said in an interview with The Daily Guardian. On this global stage, her foremost message to women in India is to never give up on their dreams. “Never focus on the constraints—focus on the solutions and your goals in life,” she emphasized.

“After winning the crown, my life has completely changed. I’m overwhelmed by the love and affection people have been showering on me,” she shared.

“My husband, in-laws, and 13-year-old daughter have supported me immensely. Family is an integral part of my life,” she said.

She added that this type of



pageants have no age restrictions, so women, regardless of their age, can participate and make their dreams come true.

Speaking about beauty pageants, she clarified that it’s not just about physical appearance but the overall personality and character of a person. “It’s not only about how beautifully you answer the questions. What truly matters is your holistic approach. They observe how humble, grounded and disciplined you are. They also notice how gracefully you handle different situations.

Integrity and grace are what truly stand out,” she said.

When asked about her entry into the film industry, Anuradha said it’s too early to talk about, but she’s open to any promising opportunities. “It’s premature to speak on that, but I’ll never say never to a good opportunity,” she noted. Addressing the disparity between the support received by Miss and Mrs. titleholders, she acknowledged that the level of sponsorship and recognition for Miss titleholders is still significantly higher.

## ‘Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins’ cast discusses thrills and ambitious heist

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Netflix is gearing up to release its much-anticipated heist thriller ‘Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins’, starring Saif Ali Khan, Jaideep Ahlawat, Kunal Kapoor, and Nikita Dutta in key roles. The film begins streaming on April 25. In a conversation with ANI, the cast shared insights into their characters and what audiences can expect from this high-octane thriller.

Jaideep Ahlawat, who plays Rajan Aulakh, described the



film as a gripping, fast-paced rollercoaster ride.

“A heist movie should be sharp, pacy, full of twists—and we’ve tried our best to bring that. I’m sure the audience will love it,” he said.

Kunal Kapoor, portraying

the determined cop Vikram Patel, highlighted the clarity in the character’s design.

“Everyone else’s character is grey. Mine is black and white—a ruthless, straightforward cop. If the writing is strong, acting becomes

effortless,” he noted. Nikita Dutta, who plays Farah, expressed her excitement about being the only female actor among a powerful male ensemble.

“It’s a dream to be a part of this kind of world,” she said, praising producer Siddharth Anand’s signature style of presenting women glamorously.

Speaking about her enigmatic character, she added, “A lot of people have actually come to me and asked, they are not able to understand what I am up to in the film I really enjoy it because I feel



BRAIN PICKING

The more you do, the more you think, the better you get.

— KRITI SANON  
(Indian Actress)

## John Mulaney, Kathryn Hahn, Sienna Miller join cast of ‘Madden’

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

David O. Russell’s upcoming biographical drama ‘Madden’ has expanded its star-studded cast, with John Mulaney, Kathryn Hahn, and Sienna Miller now in talks to join the project. They’ll star alongside Nicolas Cage, who will portray legendary NFL coach and broadcaster



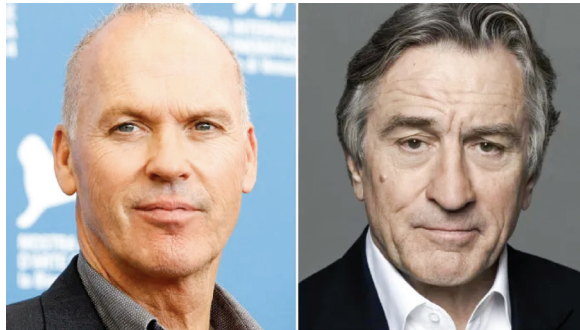
John Madden, and Christian Bale, set to play iconic Raid-

## Michael Keaton joins Robert De Niro in ‘The Whisper Man’

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Michael Keaton is set to join the ensemble cast of ‘The Whisper Man’, a crime thriller from Netflix and AGBO, starring Robert De Niro. The film, based on Alex North’s novel, follows a widowed crime writer who turns to his estranged father, a retired police detective, for help when his eight-year-old son is abducted.

In addition to De Niro, the impressive cast includes John Carroll Lynch, Hamish Linklater, Owen Teague, and Acston Luca Porto. Keaton is set for a cameo role, much to the excitement of fans eager to see him share



the screen with De Niro for the first time since Jackie Brown.

The film will be directed by James Ashcroft, with the script adapted by Ben Jacoby and Chase Palmer. Anthony Russo, Joe Russo, Angela Russo-Otstot, and Michael Disco will produce the film for AGBO.

Production is scheduled

to begin this spring on the East Coast, as per Deadline.

‘The Whisper Man’ marks the sixth collaboration between Netflix and AGBO, following hits like ‘Mosul’, ‘Extraction’, ‘The Gray Man’, and ‘Extraction 2’. AGBO is also producing ‘Avengers: Doomsday’ and ‘Avengers: Secret Wars with Marvel’.

## Tom Hiddleston navigates self-discovery in ‘The Life of Chuck’ trailer

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

The first full trailer for ‘The Life of Chuck’, directed by Mike Flanagan and based on Stephen King’s novella ‘If It Bleeds’, has been released—offering a heartfelt glimpse into a story that explores love, loss, and the beauty of human connection.

The trailer showcases three chapters in the life of Charles “Chuck” Krantz, played by Tom Hiddleston, as he navigates love, loss, and

self-discovery. The film follows Chuck’s journey from his childhood, where he is raised by his grandparents, Albie and Sarah, played by Mark Hamill and Mia Sara, who teach him the importance of music, dance, and practicality.

As Chuck grows, he faces heart-break and

learns to appreciate the small moments in life.

The ensemble cast includes Chiwetel Ejiofor, Karen Gillan, Matthew Lillard, Carl Lumbly, Benjamin Pajak, Jacob Tremblay, and Heather Langenkamp. Nick Offerman serves as the narrator, as per Deadline.

‘The Life of Chuck’ won the People’s Choice Award at the Toronto International Film Festival.





# Short hair, big statement: Bollywood actresses who are slaying the crop cut



**KRITI SANON: ASYMMETRICAL AND EDGY**

Known for her girl-next-door image, Kriti Sanon surprised everyone with her sleek asymmetrical bob. The hairstyle added an instant edge to her appearance, complementing her tall frame and sharp features. Her short hair debut marked a bold step into more experimental fashion territory, one that fans wholeheartedly embraced.

## TDG NETWORK

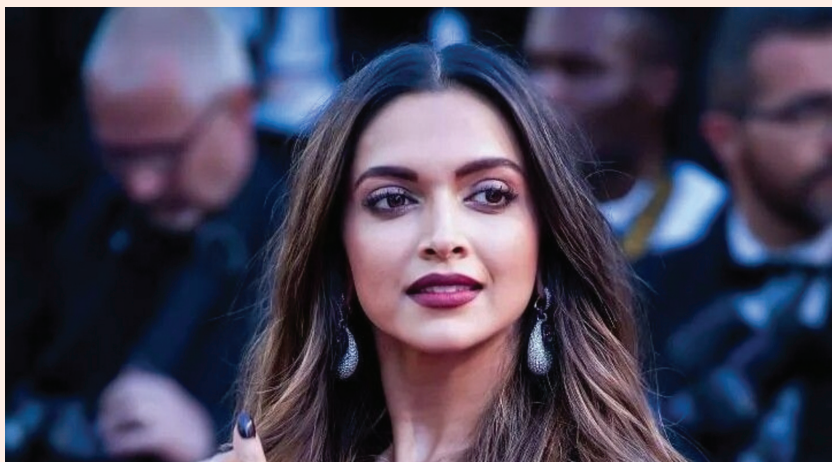
In an industry where long, flowing hair once reigned supreme, a new wave of Bollywood divas is redefining beauty standards with bold, short hairstyles. From chic bobs to edgy pixie cuts, these actresses are not only turning heads on screen and red carpets, but also inspiring millions of fans to chop it all off.

### ALIA BHATT: WAVY BOB GOALS

Alia Bhatt has been a trendsetter ever since she entered Bollywood. Recently, her shoulder-grazing, softly layered bob has become one of the most talked-about hairstyles. Alia's short hair has a fresh, youthful vibe and effortlessly transitions between casual, glamorous, and traditional looks. She's made it clear—short hair can be just as versatile as long tresses.

### SHRADDHA KAPOOR: SOFT LAYERS, STRONG IMPACT

Shraddha Kapoor's shoulder-length hair with subtle layers offers a soft, romantic take on the short hair trend. She often styles it in loose waves or tucks it



**DEEPIKA PADUKONE: POWER WAVES**

In the action-packed film Pathaan, Deepika Padukone sported a shoulder-length layered cut with beachy waves, a departure from her signature long hair. The look added a fearless, free-spirited aura to her character and quickly became a fan favorite. Deepika's new look signals that even the most elegant stars are embracing a more relaxed, modern hair game.

behind her ears for a clean, polished look. Her hairstyle adds to her charm while showing that short can still be feminine and delicate.

### MORE THAN JUST A CUT

These Bollywood ac-



tresses are not just embracing shorter hairstyles for fashion—they're making a statement. Short hair represents freedom, change, and individuality. It's no longer just a trend; it's a reflection of evolving identities and bold personalities. As these stars continue

to slay with their cropped styles, one thing is clear—short hair has officially claimed its space in Bollywood's style book. Whether it's a bob, lob, or pixie, the message is loud and clear: cutting your hair can be the most powerful thing you do.



**ANUSHKA SHARMA: THE EASYGOING LOB**

Anushka Sharma, known for her grace and effortless style, has been seen flaunting a long bob—or "lob"—post motherhood. The look is low maintenance, modern, and elegant, suiting her laid-back personality perfectly. Her shorter hair also reflects a larger trend among women seeking stylish yet practical solutions to their busy lifestyles.

### RADHIKA APTE: THE PIXIE QUEEN

Radhika Apte has always marched to the beat of her own drum, and her hairstyle choices are no different. Her classic pixie cut stands out in an industry still obsessed with long, luscious locks. The minimalist, no-fuss look matches her offbeat roles and fearless personality. Radhika proves that short hair can be chic, intellectual, and incredibly empowering.



## Foot scrubs you can make in your kitchen: Pamper your feet naturally

### TDG NETWORK

Our feet take us everywhere, yet they're often the most neglected part of our body. Dryness, cracks, and dull skin can build up over time, especially if you're always on the move. But here's the good news: you don't need expensive spa treatments to give your feet some much-needed TLC. With a few kitchen ingredients, you can create effective, all-natural foot scrubs that exfoliate, soften, and refresh tired soles.

#### 1. SUGAR AND OLIVE OIL SCRUB

This is the easiest and most nourishing scrub. Sugar gently removes dead skin, while olive oil deeply moisturizes.

- Ingredients:
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
  - 1 tablespoon olive oil

##### HOW TO USE:

Mix both ingredients in a bowl and apply the mixture to clean feet. Gently scrub in circular motions for 5–10 minutes, then rinse off with warm water and pat dry. Follow with a foot cream or lotion.

#### 2. COFFEE AND COCONUT OIL SCRUB

Caffeine isn't just for waking you up—it also improves circulation. Combined with coconut oil, this scrub energizes and hydrates.

##### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons used coffee grounds
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- A few drops of vanilla extract (optional for a sweet scent)

##### HOW TO USE:



Massage the scrub onto your feet, especially heels and soles. Let it sit for a couple of minutes before rinsing. The result? Smooth, soft feet with a refreshing coffee aroma.

#### 3. SEA SALT AND LEMON SCRUB



Perfect for those with tired, swollen feet or minor odor issues, this detoxifying scrub exfoliates while lemon acts as a natural de-

odorizer.

##### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons sea salt
- Juice of half a lemon
- 1 tablespoon olive or almond oil

##### HOW TO USE:

Combine and scrub gently. Avoid this scrub if you have cuts or sensitive skin,



as lemon can sting. Rinse thoroughly and moisturize.

#### 4. OATMEAL AND HONEY FOOT POLISH

This soothing scrub is ideal for sensitive skin. Oatmeal acts as a gentle exfoliant, while honey hydrates and has antibacterial properties.

##### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons ground oatmeal
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon milk or yogurt

##### HOW TO USE:

Make a paste and massage onto feet. Leave it on for 5–10 minutes before rinsing. This mask-like scrub softens rough patches without irritation.

5. Baking Soda and Peppermint Foot Soak & Scrub  
Baking soda helps with odor and calluses, and peppermint oil refreshes tired feet.

##### INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tablespoons baking soda
- A few drops of peppermint essential oil
- Water (to make a paste)

##### HOW TO USE:

Make a paste and use it to scrub feet, or add it to a tub of warm water for a relaxing soak and scrub combo.



##### FINAL TIP:

For best results, exfoliate your feet once or twice a week. Always finish by rinsing with warm water, drying thoroughly (especially between toes), and applying a rich moisturizer or foot cream.

Footcare doesn't have to be complicated. These DIY foot scrubs, made with everyday kitchen ingredients, are simple, effective, and budget-friendly. So go ahead—kick off your shoes and treat your feet to some homemade love!

## Strong & Beautiful: 10 simple ways to keep your nails healthy

### TDG NETWORK

Our nails may be small, but they reveal a lot about our overall health. Brittle, discolored, or peeling nails can be more than just cosmetic concerns—they might indicate nutritional deficiencies or poor nail care habits. Thankfully, keeping your nails healthy doesn't require a fancy salon visit. With the right habits and a little daily attention, strong and beautiful nails can be yours naturally.

#### MOISTURIZE YOUR NAILS AND CUTICLES

Just like your skin, nails need moisture to stay healthy. Dry nails are more likely to split and peel. Use a good-quality hand cream or a cuticle oil regularly to keep them hydrated. Coconut oil, almond oil, or vitamin E oil are great natural options.

#### DON'T BITE OR PICK YOUR NAILS

Biting your nails or picking at your cuticles can damage the nail bed and lead to infections. If nail-biting is a habit, consider using a bitter-tasting nail polish to discourage it.

#### KEEP NAILS CLEAN AND TRIMMED

Regular trimming prevents breakage and snags. Use a nail clipper or file, and always cut straight across. Don't forget to gently file the edges to prevent sharp corners or ingrown nails.

#### LIMIT USE OF HARSH NAIL PRODUCTS

Avoid acetone-based nail polish removers and nail hardeners, which can dry out your nails over time. If you use nail polish frequent-



ly, give your nails a break in between to breathe and recover.

#### AVOID EXCESSIVE WATER EXPOSURE

Soaking your hands in water for too long (like during dishwashing or long showers) can weaken nails. Wear gloves while doing chores and keep your hands dry whenever possible.



#### EAT A BALANCED DIET

Healthy nails start from the inside. Include biotin-rich foods like eggs, almonds, sweet potatoes, and spinach. Proteins, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamins A, C, D, and E are all crucial for nail strength and growth.

#### USE GENTLE NAIL TOOLS

Aggressive buffing or



rough metal tools can cause trauma to your nail plate. Be gentle when cleaning under your nails or pushing back cuticles—always use clean, sanitized tools.

#### STAY HYDRATED

Dehydration can lead to dry, brittle nails. Drink plenty of water throughout the day to keep your nails and skin healthy and hydrated.

#### WATCH FOR INFECTIONS

If you notice redness, swelling, or pus around the nails, it could be a sign of infection. Avoid cutting cuticles too deep, and seek medical attention if you see

signs of a fungal or bacterial issue.

#### DON'T IGNORE CHANGES

Discoloration, ridges, or changes in nail shape may signal underlying health issues. If you spot anything unusual, it's best to consult a dermatologist.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS

Beautiful nails aren't just about polish and manicure—they're about care, nutrition, and healthy habits. By incorporating these simple tips into your routine, your nails will not only look good but also reflect your overall wellness.



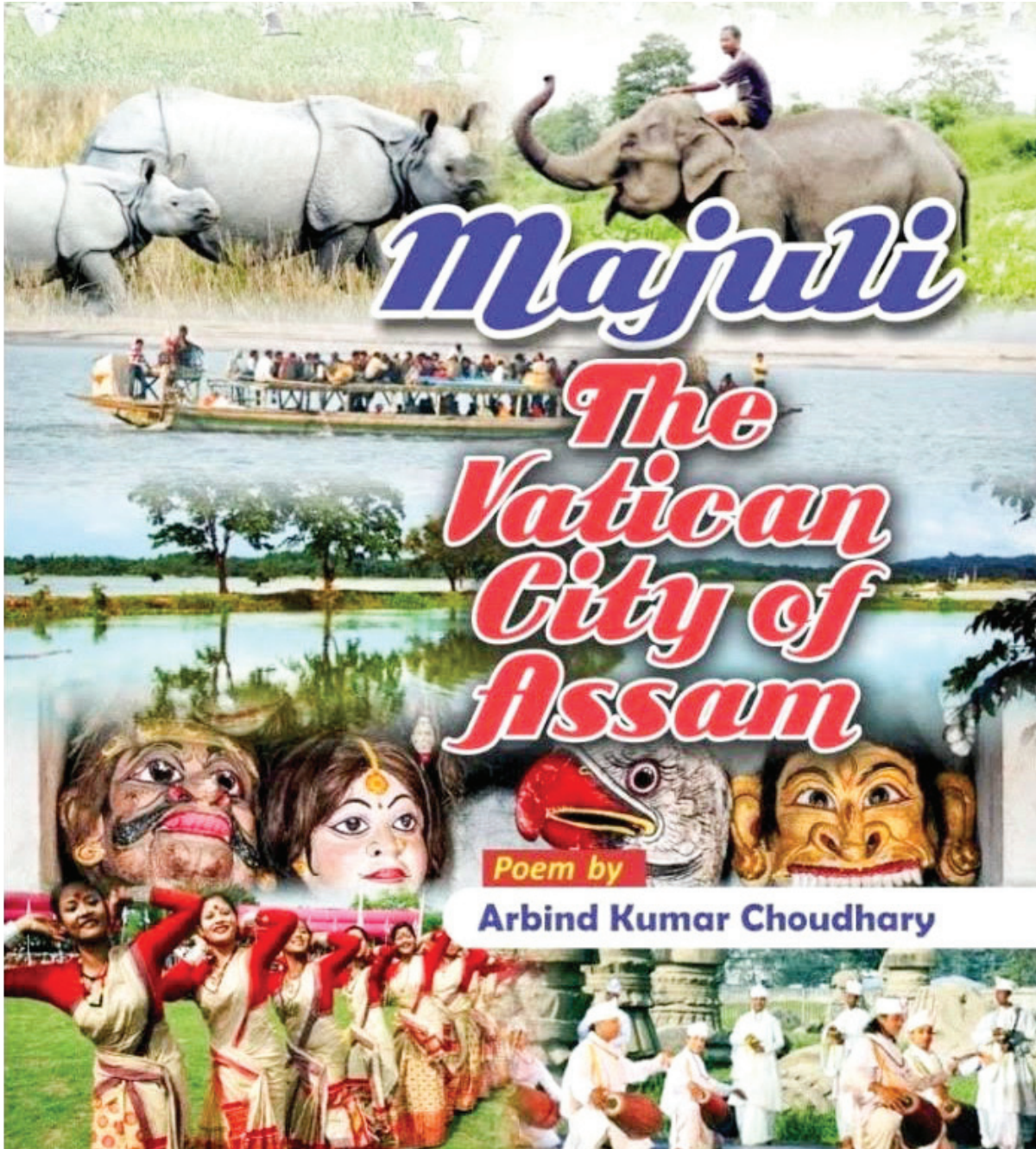
# SPIRITUAL WHIRLWIND AT MAJULI: ‘CHANGE IS UNIVERSAL CONSTITUTION’



PROF SHIV SETHI

Majuli: The Vatican City of Assam that has been most elegantly written by eminent Indian author Arbind Kumar Choudhary contains a junction of 261 sensational quintains in which the cultural culmination, Neo-Vaishnavite cult, the mantra of the Brahmaputra based satras, Majuli's mythical monarchy, cluster of the phrasal pinnacle, mythical blending, striking selected words, creation of new and compound words, proverbial fragrance, natural landscape, painterly painting and, above all, various examples of figures of speech have been painted painterly from alpha and omega that make him the undisputed founding father of The Phrasal Movement in English poetry in India.

The Indian and western mythical messiahs - Kavindra, Harishchandra, Deependra, Jinendra, Kapindra, Fanindra, Harendra, Rudra, Chandra, Ghanendra and Demeter, Terpsichore, Lucifer, Flora, old Adam, Mulciber, Ira, Alexander, Mary, Hesse, and Jove blossom together to enrich the cultural heraldry while the cluster of phrasal words-spiritual whirlwind, maid of honour, soldier of fortune, heart of stone, lap of luxury, femme-fatale, guardian angel, and wintry grove prepares a fertile poetic ground for The Phrasal Movement in Indian English poetry. Pitambardev's passage, Auniati Satra's cult, Satradhikar's tower, Borbayeng's satriya-culture, Majuli's monastery, Keshaba's finishing stroke, Kamakhya's charisma, Satradhikar's yard-stick, Damodar's wave, and several others prepare an army of the spiritual men while



Venus' virginity, menstrual food, fecund zone, eternal triangle, erogenous zone, grass widow, pillow talks, foreplay, lovenest, hennight, love-sick, free love, peeping puberty, and Kamdev's bow sing the success story of love episode. These natural scenery-roaring cloud, alluring spring, thriving turf sparkling rainbow, flooded meadow, and moonlight add additional charm in the love episode. Dekachang and Jowaikhata represent the cultural identity while these new words-falsesmith, Kashinath, Janakiraman, Brajmohan and many others make him a wordsmith with might and main. These global personalities-Mother

Teresa, Mary and Naipaul appear time and again with their glorious adventures while Buddha, Gandhi and Mahavir have become the cultural icons.

Change is the universal constitution while Death is an incense. Krishna-Sudama episode is a bliss of solitude while love fits like a glove for the grove of treasure-trove. Jatinga's mystery turns the century while Majuli's luminosity is an odour of sanctity. The poet has great fond of starlitnight, moonlitnight, hennight and alluring spring that stirs the erogenous zones for the lap of luxury. Majuli's virginity has become a deity while ecological identity and

cultural heraldry - have left behind the pangsof failure. The tribal culture enriches the cultural heraldry to its utmost degrees. Wisdom is the jewel of life while wealth and wine breed pig-gish philosophy. Life itself is the treasury of pain and pleasure. Buddha-Gandhi sutra breeds magical mantras while Ashok-Valmiki episode shapes soul for the conscience. Savitri's sacrifice for Satyavansings the success story for the territory of cultural heraldry.

So far the proverbial passage of this founding father of The Phrasal Movement is concerned, Choudhary is second to none in Indian English poetry. One can inhale the essence of this

proverbial quintain to its utmost degrees.

Majuli's meadow  
Steals the show  
For the aglow  
Of the grass widow  
Amidst many a gallantry show.

Majuli has remained a centre of attraction due to the junction of five rivers, cluster of five dozen satras, nests of the migratory birds, sacred places of the cultural icons and thrilling places for the visitors and tourists from several centuries. The junction of the phrasal passages lays foundation for The Phrasal Movement in English Poetry in general and Indian English Poetry in particular.

## When Poetry Spellbinds Readers

PROF NAVNEET KAUR

The book edited by PV. Laxmiprasad is the most enviable exertion of human genius which provide fascinating perspectives, imposing wisdom and simplicity.

The poems laden with multi dimensional streaks, luxurious ideas of artistic and moral functions exude a sense of universalism and give profound thought leavened with equally profound cathartic bliss to the lover of literature and poetry alike.

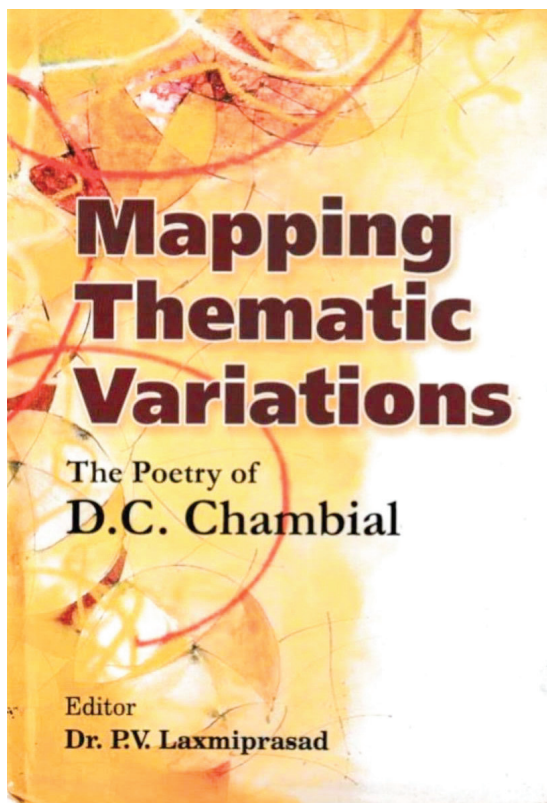
The readers find the unique combinations of Eliot, Wordsworth, Arnold, and Shelley in Chambial rendering the essence of thoughts perennial to all the ages..

“This Promising Age and Other Poems : Post modernist Trends in Chambial's Poetry pitches in the key of post modernist elements and characteristics. The strength of the critic lies in the delicate analysis of the various problems Chambial has dealt with. It is a voice to the eradication of loss of identity, cultural and social void and emptiness in life, powerfully appealing to the primary human affection.

The definition of life and death, light and darkness and the interplay of contradictions constitute an important element. The poems create for themselves a context and here is a guidance to grasp the deep understanding and essentials on courage.

The poet possesses a great strength of symbolic mode to connect his aesthetic vision to his philosophical, psychological, moral and cosmological theories.

He writes about nature, natural environment and the human nature. He mirrors the development of the life. The ideas are meticulously conceived.



Being a wordsmith par excellence Chambial holds the readers spell bound with his literary gems. The elements of cultural complexity and self-discovery are embedded in the critique of poems.

His poems act as external stimulus proposing desirable perceptions, observations, identification of values, experiences required for the understanding of roots, history, culture by which the current age is defined. The archetypes of human psyche and the revisiting the inner self of whole humanity imply the crowned efforts of his genius. His poems arouse public interest; spread the spirit of benevolence, a platform for social appeal and promotion of peace within. It is easy to make clear to ourselves very precisely what Chambial is feeling as a poet, for his peroration is free from ambiguity. All these critical essays on his poems induce in the well tuned mind a condition akin to that of tranquil transcendental meditation which is a supreme decorum of

supplication.

The magic of his verses directly communicates with the readers. The conscious and deliberate constructions upon the texture and musical patterns of words give delight to the ailing minds. The aspects which make the poet stand apart are the magic of style, creative vision, and understanding of virtues.

Every thought in which poems are seeped has its emotional context. His poems keep the souls of the readers alive and kicking. The magical and enchanting lines create spiritual felicity to drive away the substance of the coarse elements of our lives. The illustrated poetic lines of the critics exhibit very clearly the spirit to achieve in the English mode a sense of contemporaneity.

Thus the considerable body of the poems of Chambial must be described as consciously urban, mature and civilized. The efforts of P.V. Laxmiprasad as the Editor of this gigantic critical volume are commendable.

## ‘Jacaranda’ by Gaël Faye wins the 4th Edition of Goncourt Prize: Choice of India

TDG NETWORK

The Choice of India edition of the Goncourt Prize, one of the most prestigious French literary prizes, has been awarded to ‘Jacaranda’, a French-language novel by Franco-Rwandan writer Gaël Faye, published in 2025 by the French publishing house Grasset.

Jacaranda is a poignant work that explores the profound link between history, the quest for identity and belonging to one's land. Set in Rwanda, a country scarred by the 1994 genocide, the novel not only revisits the tragic past, but also highlights the changes underway, including judicial reforms and social transformations. Through a fluid and emotional narrative, Faye invites us to experience moments of hope, pain and resilience. The story is deeply moving, immersing us in the soul of a people undergoing reconstruction, while echoing the immense potential of the country's future.



Writer Gaël Faye said, “I’m happy to know that this story resonated with the jury of the Indian chapter of the Goncourt prize. My novel ‘Petit Pays’ had already received an exceptional welcome during my trip to India in July 2020, especially during the Jaipur Literature Festival.

I carry that cherished memory in my heart. I’m glad that this relationship is continuing with ‘Jacaranda’, which is like another piece in the same puzzle: a vast human story of exile, belonging, silences, shadows, and of the light.”

Singer-songwriter Gaël Faye is also the author

of the phenomenal first novel Petit pays (Small Country) (Grasset 2016, Prix Goncourt des lycéens) and several other albums. Jacaranda has been awarded the famous Renaudot Book Prize 2024 and The Goncourt Prize of Germany.

Following the announcement, the French

Ambassador to India, H.E. Mr Thierry Mathou, said, “I am proud to witness the continued success of the “Choix Goncourt de l’Inde” programme, which offers students across India the unique opportunity to engage with contemporary French literature. This initiative is

instrumental in making French literary works accessible, addressing the complexities of distributing French books in such a vast and diverse country. To support this endeavour, the French Institute in India procures around 270 books, which are made available to the students and their professors, thereby ensuring widespread access to contemporary French literature.”

The Prix Goncourt is awarded each year to the author of “the best and most imaginative prose work of the year”. The Goncourt Choice of India was created for Indian francophone students who love literature. It is affiliated with the Académie Goncourt. For its fourth (current) edition, the Indian jury was composed of students from nine Indian universities – The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Pondicherry University, University of Mumbai, Savitribai Phule Pune University, University of Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru

University, University of Rajasthan, Madurai Kamaraj University, Banaras Hindu University as well as students from the Alliances Françaises network.

Over six months, the jury read the four books shortlisted for the Goncourt Prize in their original language, and discussed them with their teachers and classmates.

The four books shortlisted for the Goncourt Prize in their original French language, were: Madelaine avant l’aube, Sandrine Colette (JC Lattès)

Jacaranda, Gaël Faye (Grasset)  
Archipels, Hélène Gaudy (L’Olivier)  
Houris, Kamel Daoud (Gallimard)

A series of online sessions were offered to them to get to know France's most prestigious literary prize with the President of Goncourt Academy - the French writer Philippe Claudel - and to understand the publication journey behind the four titles.

POEM

### Earth action



BY JAIPRAKASH AGRAWAL

Earth is a sinking ship in strong tsunami waves, climate signals a warning that we dig our own graves.

The huge glacier melts and the sea level rises. The coastal area sinks with galore of malaises.

The hot and strong wind blows spreading wildfires for miles. The thick smoke moves with the wind, choking lungs and fading smiles.

Species of wild animals extinct as craving for food crosses' limit. The curse of dead animals spread virus dampening human spirit.

There is an effect of a cause, like an echo in the deep valley. Whatever is sown is reaped, like hunting with a sally.



# MI BEAT SRH BY 4 WICKETS



Mumbai Indians players celebrate the dismissal of Sunrisers Hyderabad's Travis Head during the IPL T20 match between Mumbai Indians and Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Wankhede Stadium, in Mumbai, Thursday. Agencies

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

**A**sprightly Mumbai Indians continued their ascent in the Indian Premier League with a four-wicket victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad in a one-sided contest on a tricky wicket here on Thursday.

Led by Will Jacks who played a decisive role with a fine 36 (26 balls, 3x4s, 3x6s) after a crucial spell of 3-0-14-2, Mumbai Indians executed an all-round show to record their second consecutive win.

The home side came on top for having assessed the Wankhede Stadium pitch accurately and adapting quickly to the conditions it presented, with each of the

pieces falling in place for the five-time winners.

MI's fast bowlers used the short and slower balls well throughout the first innings and nailed their yorkers perfectly. In the run chase, the MI batters showed a clear plan to keep finding the boundaries which kept them on top.

Chasing 163 on a pitch which had grip and turn, MI were also benefited by SRH's reluctance to bring on spin in the powerplay, as the home side made 166/6 in 18.1 overs to record their third win of the season.

Even though Rohit Sharma endured another failure after a promising start in which he made 26 off 16 balls with three sixes, he gave MI the momentum with the bat and the others

capitalised on it.

Opener Ryan Rickelton made a fluent 31 while Suryakumar Yadav hammered two sixes and as many fours to make 26 (off 15 balls) to provide a strong support to Jacks.

Captain Hardik Pandya played a crucial cameo of 21 off just nine balls to take MI to the threshold of victory. Tilak Varma (21 not out) then took MI over the line after a late minor hiccup as the home side reached 166 for 6 in 18.1 overs.

In the first half, Sunrisers Hyderabad found late momentum with the bat to fight their way through and post 162 for 5.

With the surface at the Wankhede Stadium providing grip and turn for the spinners and slower

deliveries giving dividends to the pace bowlers, Sunrisers Hyderabad batters struggled to adapt to the wicket for most part of the innings.

But a big finish -- 57 runs coming off the last five overs -- gave SRH some much-needed impetus towards the end. MI bowlers were spot-on in formulating their plans and near-perfect in their execution with Jasprit Bumrah delivering a measly 4-0-21-1, Trent Boult nailing his yorkers again to return 4-0-29-1 and Will Jacks producing an impressive 3-0-14-2. The SRH struggle was evident from the start even as Abhishek Sharma stroked his way to 40 off 28 balls with seven boundaries. It all started with an eventful first over

when the two SRH openers got a reprieve each off Deepak Chahar.

Abhishek went down the wicket, swinging his bat on the first delivery. The ball shaped away slightly to take the edge but Jacks failed to get hold of it.

On the fourth delivery, Travis Head played one straight to Karn Sharma at midwicket where he failed to pluck a low catch as the ball fell just short of him.

Abhishek looked to be hitting his strides when he smacked three fours off Chahar in the fifth over but there was just no momentum gained.

Raj Angad Bawa timed his dive to grab the ball to dismiss Abhishek off Pandya for the first breakthrough and by then it was evident that SRH would have to scrape their way through to a competitive total.

Jacks then had former MI player Ishan Kishan stumped for a mere two.

Head was unable to open up even as he tried his best to cut loose. Despite having caught off a no-ball with Pandya overstepping, Head failed to capitalise as he fell for an ordinary 29-ball 28.

Such was the impact of MI's control that the first six of the game came as late as in the 18th over -- the best one of SRH's innings when Heinrich Klaasen (37 off 28 balls, 3x4s, 2x6s) took 21 runs to spoil Chahar's figures (4-0-47-0).

In the final over, Aniket Verma hit a couple of sixes and Pat Cummins smacked one to take vital 22 runs off Pandya.

# Suruchi, Saurabh pair strike gold as a team in Lima

TDG NETWORK  
LIMA

The pair of Suruchi and Saurabh Chaudhary struck gold at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun in Lima, Peru, winning the 10m air pistol mixed team title 17-9 over the Chinese pairing of Yao Qianxun and Hu Kai. It was the teenager Suruchi's third ISSF World Cup gold and Saurabh's ninth, including his fifth mixed team gold to go with a mixed team World Cup silver.

The pair made the gold medal match at the Las Palmas range with a combined 580 in qualification, with Suruchi outscoring Saurabh by a couple of points. The Chinese pair topped with 585.

In the decider as well, the Chinese pair got a head-start shooting off to a 2-6 and 4-8 advantage, before a timeout called by coach Samaresh Jung brought a change in the momentum of the match.

Suruchi shot splendidly throughout and the couple of times she missed the 10-ring, her Tokyo Olympian partner made up with high 10s including a 10.9 for his first hit of the match.

The pair regained the lead they had lost after the first series of single shots, in the 10th series, going ahead 11-9 after a tied eighth series had levelled the scores at 9-9. They did not look back thereafter and needed just the next three series to wrap up the win as the Chinese misfired first under pressure.



# Raiza Dhillon finishes fifth in women's skeet in Lima

TDG NETWORK  
LIMA (PERU)

Paris Olympian Raiza Dhillon made it to a first World Cup final, finishing a credible fifth in the Skeet women's event, as India ended competition day two of the second leg of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun, with a tally of two golds, one silver and one bronze medal, second behind China in the standings.

Raiza, a former junior world championship silver medalist and a bronze winner at the Asian Championships last year, shot a solid final for a debutant in an awe-inspiring field, bowing out at the 30-shot stage of the 60-shot decider, with 26 hits to her name.

She could not get the better of fourth place finisher Jiang Yiting of China, a Paris Olympics mixed team bronze medalist, whom she had to beat given the disad-



vantage of having the highest bib number. She had shot 19 out of the first 20 to fend off the second Chinese finalist Che Yufei.

Shotgun legend Kimberly Rhode, a three-time Olympic champion and six-time Olympic medalist, won gold with 56 hits, leading an American 1-2-3 in the event, as Samantha Simonton went down 1-2 in a shoot-off with Rhode for gold and former world champion Dania Jo Vizzi won bronze.

Kimberly's effort at the Las Palmas range on Wednesday evening gave her a 19th individual World Cup gold and a staggering 26th gold across events, including Double Trap and Mixed Team Skeet.

# BCCI removes assistant coach Abhishek Nayar

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The Indian cricket team's assistant coach Abhishek Nayar has been sacked just eight months into the assignment amid speculation of a rift with a high-profile member of the support staff even though Test debacles against New Zealand and Australia are being cited as the reason for his ouster.

Fielding coach T Dilip and Strength and Conditioning coach Soham Desai have also been removed as they have ended their three-year contract with the national team.

India conceded a disappointing 3-1 defeat to Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024-25 and lost the opportunity to qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) 2023-25 final at Lord's.

As per reports, after the completion of the Melbourne Test, team India head coach Gautam Gambhir was not too happy with the performance of the players in the fourth Test and let them know so.



"While India's recent Test debacles (against New Zealand and Australia) has led to the churning but there is also a feeling in the BCCI that Nayar became a scapegoat in the turf war between an important member of the support staff and a senior star player," a BCCI said.

Speaking at the press conference before the start of the Sydney Test, Gambhir broke the silence on the reports and said that there were some honest words inside the dressing room. He weighed in, calling "honesty" extremely important for the team to achieve great things.

"Those are just reports, that's not the truth and I don't think so I need to answer to any reports, to be honest. And there are some honest words. That's all I can say. And honesty is very important. Honesty is extremely important if you want to go on and achieve some great things," Gambhir told reporters.

According to a source from the BCCI, Abhishek Nayar and another assistant coach, Ryan ten Doeschate, were under scrutiny earlier at the start of 2025, as the BCCI wasn't happy with the apparent 'Kolkata Knight Riders touch' in team management.

# No comeback for Real Madrid as Arsenal is back in Champions League semifinals

AGENCIES  
MADRID

Arsenal defeated defending champion Real Madrid 2-1 on Wednesday to reach the Champions League semifinals for the first time since 2009 in a match where VAR played a key role in two penalty decisions.

Arsenal advanced 5-1 on aggregate after winning 3-0 in London last week, keeping alive its chances of winning Europe's top club competition for the first time. It will face Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinals.

Inter Milan advanced past Bayern Munich on Wednesday and will meet Barcelona in the semifinals.

There was no historic comeback for Madrid this time. No late goals, no high drama, no magic at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

The 15-time European champions fell short of the last four for the first time since 2020, ending its shot at a third Champions League title in



four seasons.

"There was a lot of talk coming here about (Real Madrid) coming back, because they've done it so many times before, but we had so much belief and confidence from that first game to come here and win," Arsenal's Declan Rice said. "We had it in our minds and now we've done it in real life."

Momentum shift Madrid's hopes of staging another comeback took a big hit when a five-minute VAR review overturned a penalty for a hold on Kylian Mbappé in the first half with the game tied 0-0.

# RCB vs Punjab Kings: Who will own Chinnaswamy tonight — strategy or spirit?

SUNIL YASH KALRA  
NEW DELHI

The 34th match of IPL 2025 is all set to unfold tonight at the iconic M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, where Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) take on Punjab Kings (PBKS). Both teams have played six games each, securing 8 points apiece, and currently occupy the third and fourth spots on the points table. But make no mistake—this clash is not just about numbers. It's about momentum, belief, and winning the hearts of the fans.

Chinnaswamy is traditionally known as a paradise for batters, but this season has been a bit of an outlier. So far, no team has breached the 200-run mark here, and chasing has clearly been the easier option. That makes the toss crucial—almost like a head start in a marathon.



RCB's spin wizard Yuzvendra Chahal has roared back into form, taking four wickets against Kolkata. His guile and tactical smarts could again prove pivotal tonight. Glenn Maxwell, though quiet with the bat, remains an underrated asset with the ball, offering control when it matters.

Punjab's bowling attack boasts young guns like Arshdeep Singh and Marco Jansen—fearless, fiery, and full of flair. But when it comes to handling pressure, RCB's seasoned duo of Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar

give their side an undeniable edge.

RCB's Shreyas Iyer continues to impress with his composed leadership, while Rajat Patidar, captaining for the first time, has shown remarkable calm and poise. Both captains are known for reading spin well, which could define the middle overs of this contest.

Former Indian cricketer Noel David, speaking on India News' special IPL show presented by 1XBAT, captured the spirit of the clash: "At this stage, every run, every catch, every decision counts."



Italy's Anna Pezzetta competes in the women short program during ISU World Team Trophy in Figure Skating 2025 in Tokyo. Agencies

# Doping: India becomes 17th country to have Athlete Passport Management Unit

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated an Athlete Passport Management Unit (APMU) at the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) in New Delhi on Thursday, making India the 17th country in the world to have a dedicated system for tracking blood and steroidal profiles of athletes over a period of time.

The APMU will serve as a specialised body responsible for monitoring and managing biological pass-



ports of athletes.

A biological passport compiles data on an athlete's variables such as blood parameters, hormonal levels, and other physiological markers to detect doping.

The APMU keeps a tab on "anomalies or trends indicative of doping" without directly identifying banned substances.

"APMU is a key milestone in India's fight against dop-

ing, enabling the longitudinal tracking of Athletes Biological profiles through the Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) system. This innovative mechanism will help in detecting doping patterns and protect the fairness of sports by identifying unethical practices," Mandaviya said at the inauguration.

Mandaviya said India's APMU will also help neighbouring countries that don't have enough resources to set up similar systems.

The NDTL's APMU aligns with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

guidelines, strengthening anti-doping programme globally.

India joins countries like China, the USA, Germany, France, Australia and Japan among others to have an APMU at its WADA-accredited dope testing facility.

The inauguration was also attended by Sujata Chaturvedi, Secretary (Sports), Kunal, Joint Secretary (Sports), and other officers of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports including Dr P L Sahu, Director and CEO, NDTL.