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WILL RESIGN IF REPORT RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL: JAGDAMBIKA PAL



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US AND UKRAINE INK PACT ON RECONSTRUCTION, CRITICAL MINERALS



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PUNJAB KINGS THRASH RCB BY 5 WICKETS

FASTag not coming to end: Centre

NEW DELHI: The Central government has clarified that the satellite-based tolling system will not be launched from May 1, 2025, in replacement of the existing FASTag-based toll collection system. The clarification comes after reports emerged stating satellite-based toll systems will replace FASTag toll collection starting in May.

DETAILS ■ P7

Govt clears the air on GST on UPI

NEW DELHI: The claims that the government is considering levying Goods and Services Tax (GST) on UPI transactions over Rs 2,000 are completely false, misleading, and without any basis, said the Ministry of Finance in a statement Friday.

Currently, there is no such proposal before the government, the Finance Ministry clarified.

DETAILS ■ P7

GANGSTER-TERRORIST OF PUNJAB HELD IN US

Happy Passia had links with ISI and Babbar Khalsa

AGENCIES
NEW YORK/CHANDIGARH

Gangster-turned-terrorist Harpreet Singh alias Happy Passia, wanted in connection with multiple terror attacks across Punjab and who is alleged to have collaborated with Pakistan's ISI and Khalistani group BKI, has been arrested in the US, officials said Friday.

Passia alias Jora, who had illegally entered the US, was arrested by the FBI and US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Enforcement and Removal Operations in Sacramento, the US federal law enforcement agency said.

Punjab Police chief Gaurav Yadav said the arrest is a "major milestone in the success of war against terror", adding the matter has been

■ P3

PASSIA'S TERROR HISTORY

■ **GANGSTER-TURNED-TERRORIST:** Harpreet Singh, alias Happy Passia, transitioned from a life of crime as a gangster to alleged involvement in terrorism.

■ **LINKED TO 14 TERROR ATTACKS:** He is accused of orchestrating a significant number of terrorist attacks, specifically 14, in the state of Punjab, India.

■ **APPREHENDED BY FBI IN US:** After fleeing India, Passia was arrested in Sacramento, California, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Enforcement

and Removal Operations.

■ **ILLEGAL ENTRY AND EVASION:** The FBI reported that Passia had illegally entered the United States and was actively using burner phones in an attempt to evade capture by au-

thorities.

■ **LINKS WITH GLOBAL TERROR GROUPS:** According to the FBI, Happy Passia has established links with at least two international terrorist organizations.

■ P3

India dismisses with disdain Dhaka's remark on Bengal violence

Guv meets riot-hit people in Malda

India on Friday rejected remarks by Bangladeshi officials on violence in West Bengal and asked Dhaka to focus on protecting the rights of its minorities instead of indulging in "virtue signalling".

The Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the rhetoric was a disingenuous attempt at drawing parallels between Bangladesh and India, where the perpetrators of criminal acts roam free.

"We reject the remarks made by the Bangladesh side with regard to the incidents in West Bengal. This is a barely disguised and disingenuous attempt to draw a parallel with India's concerns over the ongoing persecution of minorities in Bangladesh, where the

■ P3

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose meets the families affected by the Murshidabad violence, in Malda on Friday. ANI

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

Ignoring West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's request, Governor C V Ananda Bose on Friday reached Malda to meet the riot-affected people who fled their homes following the riots in Murshidabad during

anti-Waqf Bill protests. A team of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) also met the victims of the violence. Hundreds of people from Murshidabad are housed in makeshift relief camps, including the Par Lalpur High School camp in Baishnabnagar in Malda.

■ P3

PM Modi, Musk discuss tech tie-up

PM Modi and Elon Musk share a candid moment at Blair House, in Washington. File photo

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Elon Musk, world's richest person with a strong influence in the US administration, on Friday as they discussed the immense potential for collaboration in areas of technology and innovation.

Modi said on X after speaking to Musk, whose business empire includes Tesla and SpaceX, that they discussed various issues.

PM Modi expressed India's commitment to advancing India's partnership with the US in these domains. PM Modi said that

they held talks on various issues, including the topics they covered during their meeting in the US in February this year.

In a post on X, PM Modi stated, "Spoke to @elonmusk and talked about various issues, including the topics we covered during our meeting in Washington DC earlier this year. We discussed the immense potential for collaboration in the areas of technology and innovation. India remains committed to advancing our partnerships with the US in these domains."

Earlier in February, Elon Musk called on PM Modi at

■ P3

Vaishnav showcases AI server completely designed by India

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav showcased India's first fully designed AI server, developed by VVDN Technologies.

"India's AI server... 'Adipoli' at VVDN Technologies," the Minister posted on X. Vaishnav highlighted that the AI server is equipped with 8 GPUs and was completely designed in India, underlining the country's growing strength in advanced electronics and artificial intelligence.

He praised the efforts of VVDN Technologies and called the launch a major step forward for the "Make in India" initiative.

The minister also noted that Indian-made electronic products are becoming

increasingly reliable and globally competitive. He emphasised that India's focus on protecting intellectual property rights is gaining recognition in international markets, boosting investor confidence and encouraging innovation in the country.

Speaking at VVDN Technologies' Global Innovation Park in Manesar, where he inaugurated a new SMT (Surface Mount Technology) Line, the Minister highlighted the rapid strides made under the government's 'Make in India' initiative.

Saini strikes a chord with Kilo, Hooda's fortress

Over 100 women collect milk from households and offer the same to the CM

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

During his visit to former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda's stronghold in Kilo of Rohtak, the Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini pledged to pay off the debts of the people of the state for electing the BJP for the third consecutive term.

Addressing a gathering of 101 women who offered him milk, the chief minister said the state government will take the responsibility of repaying the debts of the people of Haryana.

"Today, in Kilo village, the mothers collected milk from several households and fed it to their son—that is, me. I wholeheartedly thank the

Over 100 women collected milk from households and offered the same to the CM Saini for drinking.

mothers for their love and blessings. I will repay the debt of this milk; I will dedicate my entire life to serving you," the chief minister shared a post with a photo of the women offering him a bucket of milk on his account X.

"This is our culture," the chief minister said, emphasizing the nurturing and selfless role of mothers in society.

Striking a chord with the people of Rohtak, the chief

minister also shared another picture with elderly people with a caption, "Pictures become truly priceless when a mother is by your side. When the elders' blessings rest upon your head and your companions stand firmly with you. Every single moment spent in Kilo village of Rohtak was truly special moments I will always cherish and remember".

During his visit Saini also

■ P3

Stalin's vitriolic attack on Shah

AGENCIES
TIRUVALLUR (TN)

Chief Minister M K Stalin on Friday slammed Union Home Minister Amit Shah for accusing the DMK regime of using issues such as NEET and delimitation as diversionary tactic and challenged him to give "clear answers" to prove his point.

He also said: "Do you believe you can win by intimidating a few here and by forming alliances? Bring all your allies, we are ready for a fight...Not Amit Shah — no other "Shah" can rule here. This is Tamil Nadu. As long as Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin is here, your plans will not succeed," the CM said.

Stalin, addressing a government event at Ponneri near here, detailed a string of welfare schemes of the state government includ-

■ P3

Devotees re-enact the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ to commemorate his death on the annual Good Friday, at St. Joseph Cathedral Church in Lucknow on Friday. ANI

Gita inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of World Register

Bharat Muni's Natyashastra also included

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Manuscripts of Bhagavad Gita and Bharat Muni's Natyashastra are among 74 new documentary heritage collections that have been added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

Entries on scientific revolution, women's contribution to history and major milestones of multilateral-

ism from 72 countries and four international organisations are included in the register, according to UNESCO.

The register consists of books, manuscripts, maps, photographs, sound or video recordings as a documentary heritage of humanity.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday expressed his pride as the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and Bharat Muni's Natyashastra were inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

■ P3

Heavy rains batter Haryana, disrupts lifting of wheat

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Heavy rain along with strong winds hit many parts of Haryana on Friday evening, disrupting wheat procurement work in several mandis and purchase centres across the state.

Due to the rain and slow lifting of wheat, lakhs of quintals of already procured grain got wet in the mandis. This has caused major concern for ahrityas (commission agents) and government officials in-

volved in the procurement process.

Districts like Panchkula, Yamunanagar, Ambala, Kaithal, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Rohtak, Jind, and Fatehabad received heavy

■ P3

WILL RESIGN IF WAQF JPC REPORT RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL: JAGDAMBIKA PAL

BJP leader and JPC panel chief Bill slams the Opposition for misleading people

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

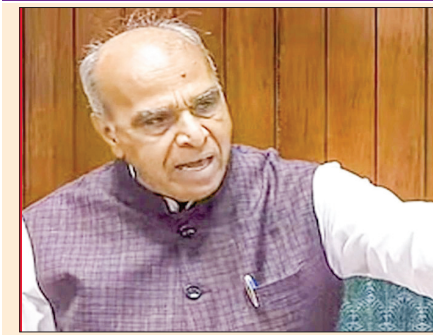
Bharatiya Janata Party leader and Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Waqf Bill, Jagdambika Pal said on Friday that he would resign from his post if it is found out that the report made by the Joint Parliamentary Committee is unconstitutional.

“I have said before too that if the report made by us is unconstitutional or interferes with religious freedom then I will resign,” Jagdambika Pal said.

He further attacked the Opposition parties and specifically Congress for “misleading” people by claiming that the amendments are an attack on religious freedoms, saying that the law actually helps poor and Pasmanda Muslims.

“The parliament has passed the law after more than 12 hours of debate, and after the assent of the President it has become law of the land. The Supreme Court has the right to interpret it, and there have been some petitions calling the law as unconstitutional, or an attack on religious freedom,

‘SC HAS RIGHT TO INTERPRET IT’



■ “The Parliament has passed the law after more than 12 hours of debate, and after the assent of the President it has become law of the land,” he said.
■ The Supreme Court has the right to interpret it, and there have been some petitions calling the law as unconstitutional, or an attack on religious freedom, or that the land will be taken away.

or that the land will be taken away. They say outside that it is unconstitutional an attack on religious freedom, but in the court they just raise these issues (of Waqf by users, non-Muslim members). The Supreme Court heard them, they did not stop the implementation but just gave the government 7 days to reply to that. There are 73 petitions, and the Supreme Court has asked both sides to appoint five lawyers,” the BJP MP said.

He also said that it has been established in law that Waqf boards across the country are not a religious body, but rather a statutory body which is meant to just take care of Waqf properties.

“All the decisions till now have said that it is a not a religious body, but an executive body, a statutory body which just takes care of properties. On the dispute over properties, above the District Magistrate, the decision on cases will be taken by Secretary or Commissioner rank but the same question has been raised by Sibal and others,” Pal added.

He said that the objections raised by petitioners against the Waqf mainly raise the issue of provisions regarding ‘Waqf by user’ and the inclusion of non-Muslim members have already been addressed by the Joint Parliamentary Committee which was formed to review

the bill.

Notably, the Centre had assured the Supreme Court during the hearing held on April 17 that they will not be denotifying any ‘Waqf-by-user’ provision and not include any non-Muslim members in the Board. The assurance comes a day after the top court said they will consider staying those parts of the law. “The Parliamentary Committee has addressed the issues of what will be the role of the DM, why non-Muslim members should be allowed, this is because Waqf Board is not a religious body, it is for taking care of Waqf properties in the country, under the Waqf Act, this decision that this is a statutory body not a

religion body has been taken in Rajasthan and otherwise too. There was a decision by Supreme Court in 2010, and then in Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu similar things have happened,” Jagdambika Pal said.

Speaking on the provision of Waqf-by-user, he assured the people that the intent of the law is not to take away properties and that any properties which is being used for its purposes, and namaz is being read on will not be removed as Waqf.

“On the Waqf by user, the amendment has been made prospective, ending the retrospective. If namaz is being read in masjid, kabristan or other places then that place will remain Waqf. The opposition is political, Congress is misleading the people... It is the law of the land and it is in favour of poor Pasmanda Muslims,” he said. Several petitions were filed in the apex court challenging the Act, contending that it was discriminatory towards the Muslim community and violated their fundamental rights.

However, certain petitions have been filed defending the act too.

Six-member SIT to probe Varanasi gang-rape

TDG NETWORK
VARANASI

A six-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed headed by a Deputy Commissioner of Police rank officer to probe the alleged Varanasi gang rape case, a police officer said.

Varanasi Commissioner of Police, Mohit Agrawal said, “On 6th April, an FIR was registered in which a 19-year-old woman alleged that a number of her friends raped her at separate locations on separate dates. The woman had accused a total of 23 people. In this case, 14 people were arrested.

‘Saddened, surprised’: Sibal on VP’s remarks on judiciary

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Senior advocate and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Friday criticised Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar’s recent statement, expressing sadness and surprise over Dhankhar’s comments on the judiciary.

Sibal emphasised the judiciary’s trusted position in the country and accused the government of criticising the judiciary when it doesn’t favour them.

“I was saddened and surprised to see Jagdeep Dhankhar’s statement. If any institution is trusted throughout the country in today’s time, it is the judiciary. When some government people do not like the decisions of the judiciary, they start accusing it of crossing its limits. And when they like the decisions, they tell the opposition: ‘This was the decision of the Supreme Court, no one should question it on Article 370.’ Similarly, when there are questions on the Ram Jan-



mabhooni judgment, they say, ‘This was the decision of the Supreme Court,’ said Sibal.

He added, “And if recently a judgment came from Justice Jamshed Burjor Pardiwala related to a party, they say, ‘How can the Supreme Court do this?’ They say that if you don’t like a judgment, if it’s not in line with your thinking, then it’s wrong, and if it aligns with your thinking, it’s right.”

Sibal highlighted the Supreme Court’s power under Article 142 to provide complete justice, questioning whether Dhankhar is aware

of this constitutional provision. “I believe it’s inappropriate to say such a thing regarding a constitutional functionary. I have great respect for them, but when you say that Article 142 is ‘nuclear missile material,’ how can you say that? Does he know that the Constitution has given the right of Article 142 to the Supreme Court to give complete justice?” said Sibal. Sibal clarified that the President acts on the advice of the Cabinet and has no personal authority, describing the President as a “titular head.”

“The President of India is a titular head. When the President performs their functions, they do so according to the advice of the Cabinet. The President acts on aid and the advice of the Council of Ministers, and similarly, the Governor of the State acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers in the State,” said Sibal.

He added, “If a bill is passed, it goes to the Governor.

VHP chief demands NIA probe into Murshidabad violence

ABHINANDAN MISHRA
NEW DELHI

The International President of the Vishva Hindu Parishad and Senior Advocate Alok Kumar has expressed concern today over murders, riots, arson, violence, looting, and large-scale migration incidents that took place in Murshidabad, West Bengal.

He stated that while protests occur nationwide, why are violence and attacks on Hindus happening on such a large scale only in Bengal?

While demanding a probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) into the entire incident in Murshidabad, Kumar said that organisation was being prevented from coming forward to assist the Hindu community forced to live in relief camps in Malda.

Addressing a press conference at Bhasha Bhavan in Alipur, Kolkata, the VHP president claimed that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, had chosen to remain silent on these attacks which he alleged targeted one specific community.

“She claims that these attacks were premeditated with the involvement of foreign Bangladeshis and that this issue is international, but still, why does she not demand an investigation by the NIA into the incident? We believe that justice should be provided to the victimised Hindus and severe punishment to the attacking jihadists.

Those whose property has been looted, burned, or vandalized should be compensated immediately, and Hindus in the state, should be ensured safety and security,” Kumar said while

alleging that killings in the name of these protests have become a trend in Bengal in recent years.

“This cannot happen without the government’s indifference and the direct or indirect support of the ruling party to such extremist and anti-social elements. Therefore, there should also be an investigation into why protestors, regardless of the issue, specifically target Hindus”, he said.

He said that many such victims’ families are being forcibly sent back to Murshidabad by the state Government, to hide its own shortcomings. While the families are saying that their lives are in danger unless there is a strong security arrangement by the central security forces there, they will not go there.

Cong to connect with deprived sections ahead of Bihar polls

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Ahead of Bihar Assembly elections slated later this year, the Congress on Friday launched the ‘Samvidhan Leadership Programme’, with party leader Rahul Gandhi urging people to unite and participate in it to ensure social justice and equal participation of the deprived sections.

Gandhi said justice will remain incomplete unless the real share and participation of the deprived classes is ensured. “If you are a woman, Dalit,

Mahadalit, OBC, EWS, Pasmanda, Minority community, or lead any of these communities, join our ‘Samvidhan Leadership Programme’,” he said in a post on X.

“Come together to strengthen your fight to protect your rights, social justice through caste census, and your participation.

“It is time to unite and raise our voice strongly,” Gandhi said while using the hashtag “#WhiteTshirtMovement”.

According to the programme’s website, individuals will work as community or-

ganisers and mobilisers in their respective areas and districts of Bihar. “They will proudly wear white T-shirts and be at the forefront — organising, educating and leading the movement. They will ensure that the dignity, rights and voices of the oppressed communities are not just heard — they are voiced loud and clear,” the programme says.

This program is a platform to organize and develop leadership capacity of people committed to social justice and constitutional values, according to the party.

Kharge to chair crucial meet to discuss future action amid ED chargesheet against Sonia, Rahul

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

With the Enforcement Directorate (ED) naming Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in alleged National Herald money laundering case, the grand old party is all set to hold a crucial meeting on Saturday to discuss the future course of action against the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.

The Congress had held nationwide protest at the financial probe agency offices across the country, a day after the ED announced that Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi



has been named as accused number one and two in the alleged money laundering case.

Besides them, the ED has also named Indian Overseas Congress chairman Sam Pitorda, Suman Dubey and two other companies among others in the case. The prosecution complaint, which is equivalent to the chargesheet

was filed on April 9 before the Rouse Avenue Court here.

The action comes days after the ED also announced that it has attached properties worth more than Rs 660 crore of National Herald in Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow.

According to Congress sources, party chief Mallikarjun Kharge has called the meeting of all the general secretaries, state in-charges and the frontal organisation head at new party headquarters Indira Bhawan here on Saturday at 4 pm.

The sources indicated that during the meeting chaired by Kharge, party will condemn the action of the central financial probe agency and also discuss the party’s

future course of action.

The party will also highlight the role of National Herald during the independence movement as well as its association with the party since then. The source also indicated that the party will highlight that how Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi were questioned by the ED, which is a clear political vendetta by the NDA led central government. The source also said that with Rahul Gandhi already left for his US visit, the party will discuss how to hold protest across the country and highlight how the BJP was targeting the Gandhi family.

The party on April 16, had held nationwide protest at ED offices against the ED action.

House panel on Income-Tax Bill seeks expert suggestions

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha Select Committee which is reviewing the Income-Tax Bill, 2025, on Thursday called for suggestions and views from experts, industry associations, organisations, and other stakeholders on the proposed legislation. The committee, chaired by BJP Lok Sabha MP Baijayant Panda, has requested interested parties to submit their memoranda or suggestions on the proposed bill.

According to the release, sug-

gestions should be submitted in English or Hindi, with two copies sent to the Director (CF&S/CITB) at the Lok Sabha Secretariat, Room No. 133A. The committee has also set a two-week deadline for the receipt of the suggestions.

In the July 2024 Budget, the government proposed a comprehensive review of the Income-tax Act of 1961. The purpose was to make the Act concise and lucid and reduce disputes and litigation. Earlier on March 18, the government encouraged the stakeholders to submit their



suggestions on the newly introduced Income Tax Bill 2025. The Bill is currently under examination by the Select

Committee for detailed consideration. Meanwhile, on March 25, Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the new Income Tax Bill will be taken up for discussion in the monsoon session of Parliament.

Finance Minister Sitharaman spoke extensively about the Finance Bill in the Parliament, adding that the Finance Bill 2025 gives unprecedented tax relief to honour taxpayers. This new Income Tax Bill, tabled in Lok Sabha by Union Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman on February 13 this year, seeks to replace the existing Income Tax Act, 1961 and introduce changes that affect different categories of taxpayers, including individuals, businesses, and non-profit organisations.

Replying to the questions on Finance Bill 2025 in the Parliament, Sitharaman underscored the Union government’s commitment to providing tax certainty and streamlining business regulations as part of the broader vision to build a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Lay down arms, join mainstream as soon as possible: Shah to Naxals

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday asked Naxals to surrender as soon as possible and join the mainstream, saying the government is determined to end Naxalism before March 31, 2026.

“Cobra Commandos and Chhattisgarh Police have arrested 22 Naxalites with modern weapons and explosive materials in various operations in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh. Also, 11 Naxalites have sur-



rendered in Badesetti Panchayat of Sukma, due to which this Panchayat has become completely Naxal-free,” Amit Shah posted on

X.

“I appeal to the Naxalites to lay down their arms as soon as possible and join the mainstream by adopting the surrender policy of the Modi government. We are determined to free the country from the scourge of Naxalism before March 31, 2026,” he added.

Meanwhile, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said that every possible effort will be made as per rules for the rehabilitation of the surrendered Naxalites.

Four decades after Rakesh Sharma’s flight, another Indian set for space odyssey next month

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla is set to travel to the International Space Station next month as part of an Axiom-4 mission, four decades after Rakesh Sharma’s iconic spaceflight onboard Russia’s Soyuz spacecraft, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Friday.

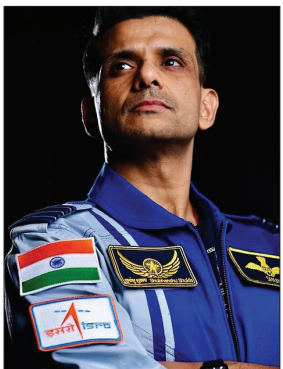
Singh made the remarks after reviewing the work of the Department of Space and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

here.

“Group Captain Shukla’s journey is more than just a flight – it’s a signal that India is stepping boldly into a new era of space exploration,” Singh said.

ISRO Chairman V Narayanan made a presentation on various upcoming space missions.

ISRO is set to launch the NISAR satellite – developed jointly with NASA – in June on board the GSLV-Mark 2 rocket, Singh said, adding that in July the space agency will put in orbit BlueBird Block-2 satellites



of US-based AST SpaceMobile Inc. using the heavy-lift LVM-3 rocket.

Singh said Group Captain Shukla’s mission, scheduled for May, marks a milestone

in India’s expanding international space collaborations.

A decorated test pilot with the Indian Air Force, Group Captain Shukla was shortlisted under ISRO’s Human Spaceflight Program and is among the top contenders for the Gagan-yaan mission.

His journey aboard the Axiom-4 mission is expected to provide critical hands-on experience in spaceflight operations, launch protocols, microgravity adaptation, and emergency preparedness – all essential for

India’s crewed space ambitions, an official statement said. “What sets Shukla’s mission apart is its strategic importance. Unlike the symbolic undertones of India’s first human spaceflight, this time the focus is on operational readiness and global integration,” it said. The statement said Shukla’s participation underscores India’s growing engagement with public-private international partnerships in space and its resolve to emerge as a serious contender in human space exploration.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BENGAL CM, GOVERNOR CLASH

64% believe Banerjee is afraid of President's Rule being imposed in Bengal

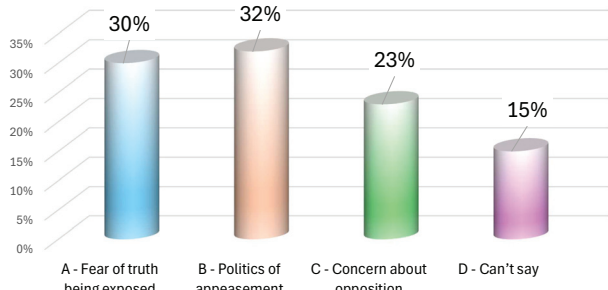
West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee urged Governor C.V. Ananda Bose to postpone his visit to riot-hit Murshidabad, where three died in

communal clashes over the Waqf Amendment Act. Citing ongoing confidence-building efforts and a stabilising situation, she requested

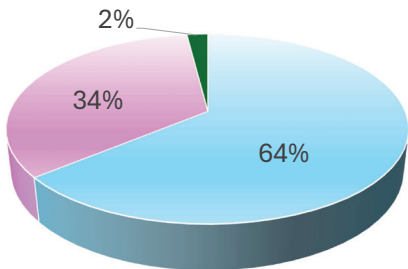
non-locals to stay away. Banerjee said she's avoiding a visit to prevent political one-upmanship amid the unrest.

Q1.▶

Why is Mamata Banerjee stopping the Governor from going to violence-affected areas in Bengal?



A - Yes
B - No
C - Cannot say

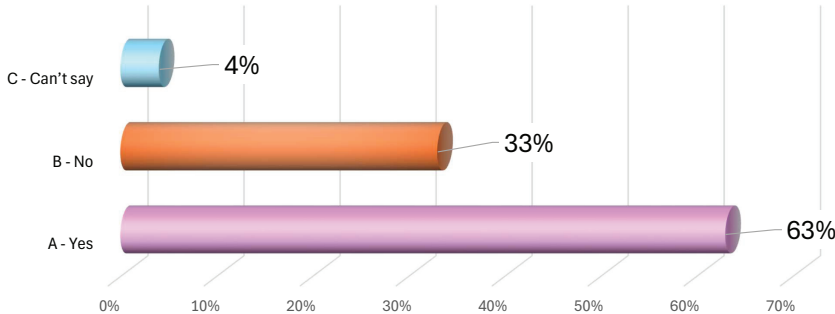
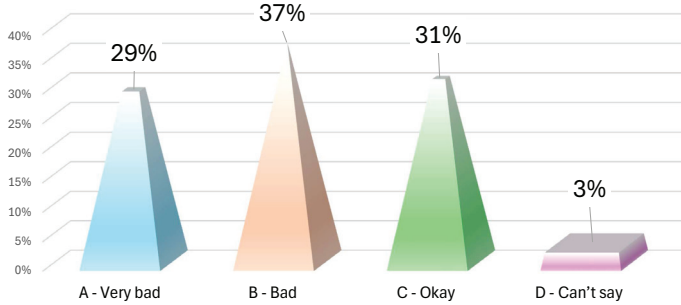


Q2.◀

Is Mamata Banerjee afraid that President's Rule might be imposed in West Bengal?

Q3.▶

What is your opinion on the condition of Hindu women in Bengal?



Q4.◀

Is the ongoing violence in Bengal a failure of Mamata's government, and should she resign?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON MIGRATION OF HINDUS IN SEELAMPUR

67% believe Hindus are facing targeted attacks from Bengal to Delhi

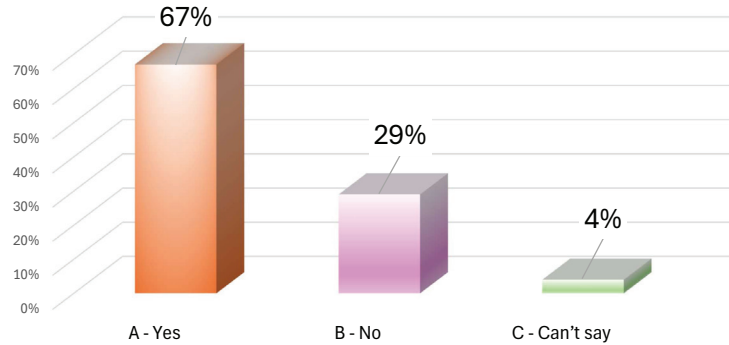
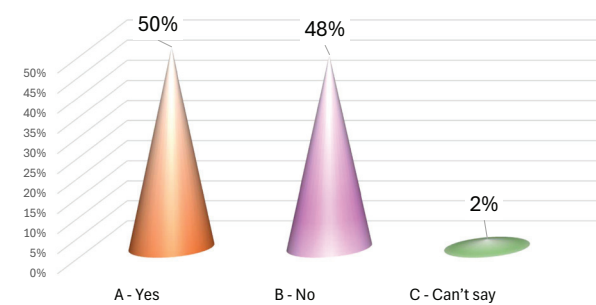
A 17-year-old boy named Kunal was fatally stabbed in Delhi's Seelampur on Thursday evening. He was taken to JPC Hospital but

died during treatment. The incident sparked protests by locals and the victim's family, who blocked a road demanding

justice. Police have registered a case and increased deployment in the area to maintain law and order.

Q1.▶

Are Hindus scared in Delhi after posters of Hindu families migrating following a minor's murder in Seelampur?

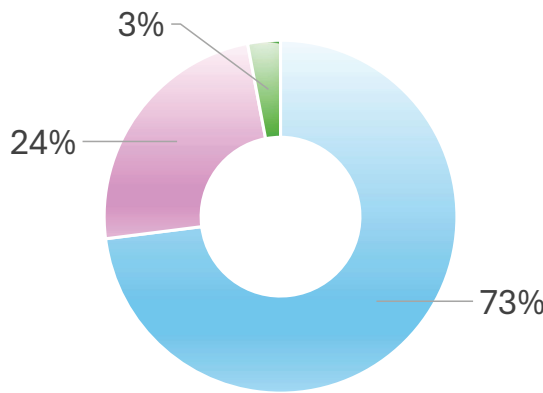


Q2.◀

Are Hindus being targeted and attacked from Bengal to Delhi?

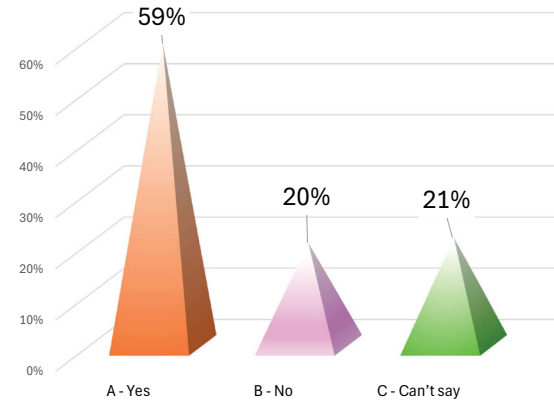
Q3.▶

Should the Yogi model be adopted to curb the spread of this violence in the country?



Q4.◀

Are political parties' Muslim appeasement policies responsible for the rise in attacks on Hindus?



India dismisses Dhaka's remarks

CONTINUED FROM P1

criminal perpetrators of such acts continue to roam free," Jaiswal said.

"Instead of making unwarranted comments and indulging in virtue signalling, Bangladesh would do better to focus on protecting the rights of its own minorities," MEA stated in a post on X.

Earlier, Bangladesh's interim government vehemently denied any involvement in the communal violence that recently erupted in Murshidabad, Bangladesh-

based Daily Observer stated on Thursday.

In a statement on Thursday, Shafiqul Alam, the press secretary to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, expressed condemnation over the attacks on Muslims, which resulted in significant loss of life and property, urging the Indian government and West Bengal authorities to take necessary steps to ensure the safety and protection of the minority Muslim population.

The controversy erupted after reports surfaced sug-

gesting that an initial investigation into the Murshidabad violence by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had pointed to the involvement of alleged Bangladeshi miscreants.

Meanwhile, a team of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) arrived in West Bengal's Malda on Friday. The team is scheduled to visit the violence-hit areas of Murshidabad and Malda following protests over the Waqf Amendment Act in the state earlier in the month.

CONTINUED FROM P1

taken up with the central government and efforts are on to extradite Passia.

He said between 2023-2025, Passia played a "central role in orchestrating targeted killings, grenade attacks on police establishments, and extortion across Punjab and other states".

"Today, Harpreet Singh, an alleged terrorist responsible for terror attacks in Punjab, India, was arrested by the #FBI & #ERO in Sacramento. Linked to two international terrorist groups, he entered the US illegally and used burner phones to evade capture," FBI Sacramento said in a statement on X.

Agents from the FBI's Legal Attache office in New Delhi informed Sacramento that Passi was wanted in connection with multiple terror attacks across Punjab, FBI Sacramento said.

"He had been evading capture by using untraceable burner phones and encrypted applications. This case reinforces the importance of international co-operation in apprehending those who threaten global security," it said.

Official sources in Punjab said Passia is wanted for orchestrating 16 terror attacks, including 14 grenade strikes in the state and is also suspected to have collaborated with Khalistani terrorist group Babbar Khalsa International (BKI).

In January, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) had announced a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh on Passia in connection with a hand grenade attack on a house in Chandigarh in September last year.

Passia and Pakistan-based designated BKI terrorist Harwinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda were among the four

accused named in a charge sheet in the case by the NIA.

Punjab Police investigation had found that Passia provided the accused with explosives, weapons and logistical support through his local associates.

The September 2024 attack was intended to target a retired Punjab Police officer, who the assailants believed to be the occupant of the house in Sector 10, Chandigarh.

A total of 33 FIRs have been registered at different police stations and 10 look out circulars have been issued against Passia, according to a dossier prepared by Punjab Police.

Hailing from village Pashia in Amritsar district, Passia had left for Dubai in April 2018 and returned to India in February 2019. He went to London in October in 2020 and thereafter moved to the US.

Gangster-terrorist of Punjab held in US

Guv meets riot-hit people in Malda

CONTINUED FROM P1

The victims who crossed the Hooghly in boats to take shelter in the neighbouring district.

In Baishnabnagar, where the Governor was scheduled to meet the people who had taken refuge in a relief camp run in a local school, the police put up barricades to prevent the media and the victims from interacting with the Governor and also with the NHRC team, leading to protests and mild lathicharges.

The victims alleged that the police wanted to prevent them from speaking freely to the NHRC team and the Governor. They added that the police was exerting pressure on them to return to their homes in Murshidabad so that the relief camp could be dismantled expeditiously.

Faced with a huge police force wield-

ing lathis and putting up barricades, local women led the protests.

Earlier in the day, in a surprise move, the Governor boarded a passenger train from Sealdah to reach Malda Town. Raj Bhavan sources said that the decision was taken following inputs that the Governor's convoy could be obstructed in different spots if it proceeded by road. Yesterday, Mamata Banerjee asking the Governor not to visit the riot-affected people of Murshidabad who have taken shelter in adjoining Malda district.

After reaching Malda, the Governor went to the Circuit House. From there, he visited the locations where people impacted by the violence had taken refuge. Following his inspection in Malda, Governor Bose will be travelling to Murshidabad to assess the situation in that district as well.

UNESCO honour for Gita

CONTINUED FROM P1

Gita and Natyashastra in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register is a global recognition of our timeless wisdom and rich culture. The Gita and Natyashastra have nurtured civilisation and consciousness for centuries. Their insights continue to inspire the world," PM Modi said.

According to UNESCO, among the newly inscribed collections, 14 pertain to scientific documentary heritage, in addition to

collections related to the memory of slavery and archives concerning prominent historical women.

Several collections document key moments in international cooperation, including the Geneva Conventions (1864-1949) and their protocols (1977-2005) in Switzerland, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations), and the 1991 Windhoek Declaration in Namibia, a global reference for press freedom.

Meanwhile, following the

announcement by UNESCO for the 74 new entries, Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General, said, "Documentary heritage is an essential yet fragile element of the memory of the world. This is why UNESCO invests in safeguarding, such as the libraries of Chinguetti in Mauritania or the archives of Amadou Hampate Ba in Cote d'Ivoire, shares best practices, and maintains this register that records the broadest threads of human history."

Saini strikes a chord with Kiloi

CONTINUED FROM P1

inaugurated the 3rd All India Shiv Kumar Memorial Basketball Tournament, where he interacted with players and local residents. "I was overwhelmed by the warm welcome extended by the organizers and the Gram-Ram family. Spend-

ing time with the players on the ground was an unforgettable experience," he told the media persons.

The CM's visit to Hooda's turf is being seen as a strong political message to the Congress veteran, who has dominated the Rohtak political landscape for decades.

Rain batters Haryana

CONTINUED FROM P1

rainfall. In some areas like Sirsa and Kaithal, strong winds also caused short circuits that led to fire, damaging standing crops.

At present, wheat procurement is at its peak, with lakhs of tonnes arriving in mandis daily. However, ahriyas claim that the lifting (transporting the wheat to storage) is not happening fast enough. They also complained that there were no proper arrangements to protect wheat from rain, especially at temporary purchase centers.

According to Haryana's Food and Supplies Department, 37.72 lakh metric tonnes of wheat have been procured so far, but only 11 lakh metric tonnes have been lifted from the

Stalin's vitriolic attack on Amit Shah

CONTINUED FROM P1

ing the Rs 1,000 monthly assistance for women. He referred to the introduction of two Bills by him days ago in the state assembly to nominate persons with disabilities as members in all local bodies. He said the voices of more than 15,000 differently-abled persons would soon echo in the civic bodies across Tamil Nadu.

In view of many such initiatives, the chief minister said, under the DMK regime, self-confidence has grown and the state has also got developed. "Some are unable to tolerate this. They could not find any fault with the government and hence, they are spreading defamatory allegations," he said adding, be it law and order, governance or any

other indices, the state is a top performer. However, some opposition parties, rather than functioning as responsible opposition, behaved like parties opposed to Tamil Nadu state itself.

"What is their idea? They intend mortgaging Tamil Nadu by associating with a crowd that betrays Tamil Nadu and the Tamil people and this is the only thought of those opportunists," the chief minister said apparently targeting the BJP and AIADMK, without naming them.

Be it opposition to the NEET, 3-language policy, the Waqf amendment and mobilising states over de-limitation, it is the DMK that continued to be staunch at the national level and his party is the "all India face of championing states' rights."

PM Modi, Musk discuss tech tie-up

CONTINUED FROM P1

Blair House in Washington, DC. During the meeting, PM Modi and Musk discussed strengthening collaboration between entities of India and the US in innovation, space exploration, artificial intelligence, and sustainable development.

PM Modi and Elon Musk also spoke about opportunities to deepen cooperation in emerging technologies, entrepreneurship and good governance. Musk, who heads the US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), was accompanied by three of his children.

In a statement, the MEA said PM and Musk discussed strengthening collaboration between Indian and US entities.

Passia's terror history

■ **WANTED BY INDIAN AUTHORITIES:** India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Punjab Police had been actively searching for him for months, culminating in a lookout notice being issued.

■ **MULTIPLE CRIMINAL CHARGES IN INDIA:** Passia is wanted in India for a substantial 17 criminal cases, facing charges under stringent laws like UAPA, the Narcotics Act, and the Arms Act.

■ **ASSOCIATION WITH PAKISTAN-BASED TERROR ELEMENTS:** He is a known close associate of Harvinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda, a Pakistan-based gangster who also became involved in terrorism, with suspected ties to Pakistan's ISI and BKI.

■ **INVOLVEMENT IN CHANDIGARH GRENADE ATTACK:** The NIA had placed a bounty on Passia for his alleged involvement in a hand grenade attack in Chandigarh, and he was even chargesheeted in this specific case.

■ **EXTRADITION POSSIBLE:** With his arrest in the US, there is a possibility that Indian authorities will seek his extradition to face trial for the numerous serious charges against him.

KARNATAKA FIRM ON ENACTING ROHITH VEMULA ACT, SAYS SIDDARAMAIAH

The CM this will be a step towards realising Dr BR Ambedkar's India


TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

After Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's requested to enact the Rohith Vemula Act in Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that the state government stands firm in its resolve to enact the Act in the state and will bring the legislation at the earliest.

"I thank Rahul Gandhi for his heartfelt letter and unwavering commitment to social justice. Our Government stands firm in its resolve to enact the Rohith Vemula Act in Karnataka -- to ensure no student faces discrimination based on caste, class, or religion. We will bring this legislation at the earliest to honour the dreams of Rohith, Payal, Darshan, and countless others who deserved dignity, not exclusion," the

RAHUL WRITES TO CM

- Earlier today, Rahul Gandhi wrote to Siddaramaiah, urging the state government to enact the Rohith Vemula Act to ensure that no one faces caste-based discrimination in the education system.
- We will bring this legislation at the earliest to honour the dreams of Rohith, Payal, Darshan, and countless others who deserved dignity, not exclusion," the Karnataka CM posted on X.
- Rohith Vemula died by suicide in January 2016, allegedly upset over disciplinary actions taken against him by Hyderabad Central University, where he was pursuing a PhD.



Karnataka CM posted on X.

"This will be a step towards realising Dr BR Ambedkar's vision of an equal, compassionate India," he added.

Earlier today, Rahul Gandhi wrote to Siddaramaiah, urging the state government to enact the Rohith Vemula Act to ensure that no one faces caste-based discrimina-

tion in the education system.

"Recently, I met students and teachers from Dalit, Adivasi and OBC communities in Parliament. During the conversation, they told me how they face caste-based discrimination in colleges and universities. Babasaheb Ambedkar demonstrated that education is the prima-

ry means by which even the most deprived can become empowered and break the caste system. But it is very unfortunate that even after decades, lakhs of students are facing caste discrimination in our education system. This discrimination has taken the lives of promising students like Rohith Vemula,

Payal Tadvi and Darshan Solanki," Rahul Gandhi wrote in a post on X on Friday.

"Such horrific incidents cannot be tolerated at any cost. Now is the time to put a complete stop to this injustice. I have written a letter to Siddaramaiah ji requesting him to implement the Rohith Vemula Act in Karnataka. No child of India should have to face the casteism that Babasaheb Ambedkar, Rohith Vemula and crores of people have faced," he added.

In a letter dated April 16, Rahul Gandhi said, "Here he describes an incident during a long bullock cart journey. There was plenty of food with us. There was hunger burning within us; with all this, we were to sleep without food; that was because we could get no water, and we could get no water because we were untouchables."

This election is 'dharma yuddh': BJP ahead of local body polls in Telangana

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

Union Minister and BJP leader G Kishan Reddy on Friday launched a sharp attack on Congress, BRS, and AIMIM ahead of the Hyderabad Local Authorities Constituency (LAC) election, calling their alliance an attempt to defeat the BJP and branding AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi as the "super boss" of both Congress and BRS.

He described the election as a "dharma yuddh" and expressed confidence that BJP would win.

"All three parties are making efforts to defeat the BJP's candidate. This is a dharma yuddh (righteous war), and the BJP will definitely win this war. We will go among the people of Telangana," he said.

"Election to the Hyderabad Local Authorities Constitu-



ency (LAC) seat of the Legislative Council will be held on 23rd April. BJP has filed a nomination for this election, and AIMIM has also filed a nomination," Reddy said.

He noted that while BRS had submitted a nomination, the Congress party, currently the ruling party in the state, had not.

"However, the ruling party, Congress, which is currently the opposition party in the Assembly and has ruled for ten years in the past, has not submitted a nomination. The BRS (Bharat Rashtra Samithi) party has also filed a nomination," he said.

"Both of these parties (Congress and BRS) support the MIM party in ensuring its victory and defeating the BJP," he alleged, adding, "These three parties, under the leadership of Asaduddin Owaisi, are essentially acting in concert, acting like puppets."

Reddy further claimed that Owaisi wields more influence over these parties than their official leaders.

"For Congress, Asaduddin Owaisi is the real boss, not Rahul Gandhi. For BRS, not KCR (K. Chandrashekar Rao) but Owaisi is the boss. In reality, Owaisi is the 'super boss' of both these parties in Telangana," he said.

"These parties dance to his tune. They act on Owaisi's signals. Their politics follows Owaisi's commands," Reddy added.

Reddy also linked the alliance to historical events.

SC seeks report from HC on non-listing of plea for stay on Nashik Dargah demolition

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI/NASHIK

The Supreme Court has put an interim stay on the Nashik Municipal Corporation's April 1 demolition notice to the Hazrat Saatpeer Sayed Baba dargah in the city, and sought an explanation from the Bombay High Court Registrar General as to why a plea challenging a demolition notice was not listed for hearing urgently.

A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi noted that there was urgency in the matter as the religious structure could be demolished.

The apex court, in its April 16 order, noted that, according to the senior lawyer representing the Dargah, the plea was filed before the High Court on April 7 and had been sought for listing since April 8.

"We are unable to understand what



transpired from April 9 till today (April 16). Counsel submits that they have been attempting to list the matter every day.

As per the reports, the structure was razed by a civic squad hours before the apex court hearing amid violence.

The bench stated that it has taken "extraordinary measures" in light of the specific statement made by senior advocate Navin Pahwa, who was representing the Dargah management, that efforts were made every day to get the matter listed in the High

Court.

Thus, it directed the Registrar General of the High Court to send a report about the listing of the petition and posted the matter for hearing before it on April 21.

"We are unsure of the statement made and that the High Court would not have listed the case despite repeated requests. This is a serious statement and the counsel shall take and feel responsibility for the consequences of such a statement," the bench stated in its order.

While staying the demolition of the Dargah, the bench said, "In the meanwhile, there shall be a stay of notice dated April 1, 2025, issued by the respondent number 1 - Nashik Municipal Corporation as prayed for."

It also sought a response from the Nashik Municipal Corporation on the issue.

Karnataka BJP chief slams govt over 'unscientific' caste census

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka BJP President BY Vijayendra on Friday lambasted the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government over the controversial caste census, terming it "unscientific" and questioning its legitimacy.

Vijayendra alleged a lack of clarity from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah regarding the census and criticised the government for proceeding without a clear mandate. He also accused the government of wasting over Rs 150 crore on the exercise, which he deemed flawed and unreliable.

"First of all, there is no



clarity with the CM regarding the caste census. When the state government did not have a mandate to do a caste census, how did they come to a conclusion?... Many communities, including the Jain community and the backwards classes, are contradicting the numbers shown in the report. BJP has been repeatedly stating

that this census has not been carried out properly... More than Rs 150 crore has been spent. However, when we discussed this with many community leaders, they said that nobody had come to their houses."

Demanding the rejection of the report, Vijayendra suggested that the Siddaramaiah government might be attempting to "divide communities" rather than deliver justice to backwards classes. "The Siddaramaiah government has to reject this unscientific report... Maybe the CM is more interested in dividing the community... I doubt if the CM is actually serious about giving justice to the backwards

class community."

The special cabinet meeting on the Socio-Economic Survey 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.

Karnataka Minister N. Chaluvarayana 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 Cabinet meeting," he Minister said.

KTR welcomes PM's remarks against tree-felling in Gachibowli

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi's working president KT Rama Rao on Friday welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking out against the tree felling under the land of Hyderabad University in Kancha Gachibowli, Telangana.

He said that while the remarks are welcomed, this is also the time to prove that the BJP is not colluding with the Congress in Telangana, and hopes that the PM isn't just paying lip service.

"I was heartened to hear your speech about the destruction of Kancha Gachibowli Forest by Telangana CM Revanth Reddy. However, I hope it's not just lip service. The devastation in Kancha Gachibowli is not just a grave environmental catastrophe, destroying biodiversity across over 100 acres, but also a massive financial fraud perpetrated by Congress Govt," KTR wrote in a



post on X.

He further alleged that he has alerted various investigative agencies about alleged financial fraud of about Rs 10,000 crore involving the land sale of the land.

"We have already alerted by writing to investigating agencies CVC, CBI, SFIO, SEBI and RBI about the Rs 10,000 crore financial fraud involving the mortgage of Kancha Gachibowli land," his post read. He further cited the report by the Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee, which confirmed the existence of financial impropriety. "The Supreme Court's Central Empowered

Committee has confirmed the existence of a financial impropriety and emphasised the need for a thorough investigation with central agencies. As our cities choke, environmental protection is paramount. Also equally important is exposing politicians like Revanth Reddy, who brazenly and shamelessly bulldoze the systems," KTR said. He added, "I urge the central government to take this matter seriously and expedite the investigation. It's time to prove that in Telangana, BJP and Congress aren't colluding, and you, Mr. Prime Minister, truly care about environmental protection and accountability."

Earlier, on April 14, during a rally in Haryana, PM Modi accused the Congress of destroying jungles with bulldozers and endangering animals, in reference to the recent tree felling that was stopped by the Supreme Court.

Maharashtra govt not taking climate change seriously: UBT Sena

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena UBT leader Aditya Thackeray on Friday slammed the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, accusing them of "not dealing" with the issue of climate change seriously and further "destroying jungles and environment", which was crucial for the arrival of monsoon season. He said that they were not against development, but "destruction."

"The government is not taking climate change seriously. We are not opposed to development, but we are committed to protecting the climate. We are against the Vinash (destruction), not against Vikas (development)," Thackeray, former Environment Minister of Maharashtra, said while addressing a press conference. He criticised the decisions taken by Maharashtra Chief



Minister Devendra Fadnavis to clear projects, which would result in the felling of thousands of trees. Accusing the state government of "playing with the future", Thackeray said that the approval of the Gargai dam project in Palghar would result in the felling of nearly five lakh trees.

"Yesterday, during a meeting of the State Wildlife Board, the Chief Minister decided on many things, which would result in the felling of trees in lakhs. Nearly 5 lakh trees would be cut to build a dam that will provide Mumbai with 450 MLD of water.

22 Naxals surrender in Sukma

TDG NETWORK
SUKMA

Twenty-two Naxals, including nine women, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Sukma on Friday in the presence of Superintendent of Police (SP) Kiran Gangaram Chavan.

Following the surrender, speaking to the media, Sukma SP Kiran Gangaram Chavan said that the surrendered Naxalites would receive all benefits under the government's surrender policy.

"The surrendered Naxalites hail from Maad (Chhattisgarh) and Nupada (Odisha) divisions. The Naxalites will be given all the benefits provided by the government. "There are Naxalites of different ranks who have surrendered. Some Naxalites have a bounty of Rs5 lakhs, while others have a bounty of Rs8 lakhs," Sukma SP said.

SC rejects plea for CBI probe into death of Kerala's ADM Babu

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has declined the plea filed by Manjusha, wife of Naveen Babu, who was an Additional District Magistrate in Kerala, seeking a CBI probe into his death.

A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and K Vinod Chandran refused to interfere with the Kerala High Court order, which had declined to order a CBI investigation into his death.

A division bench of the High Court had on March 3 dismissed her plea seeking a CBI probe, observing that investigations cannot be transferred to CBI based on personal feelings of the victim and there must be reasonable apprehension based on concrete facts.

Babu's wife then approached the Supreme Court, which on Thursday dismissed her plea.

On October 15, 2024, Naveen

Babu was found hanging in his official quarters. PP Divya, a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which currently forms the government in Kerala, was accused of abetting his suicide by levelling public allegations of corruption at his farewell.

His wife alleged a homicidal angle to the incident and claimed that due to Divya's political influence, the investigation must be carried out by an impartial and independent agency like the CBI or Crime Branch.

She alleged that Babu was disturbed before his death by Divya's remarks at the public event.

During the hearing in the apex court, senior advocate Sunil Fernandes, appearing for Manjusha contended that Babu had an impeccable service record of 30 years and was at the fag end of his career.

After Kuno in MP, cheetahs set to be introduced at Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary

TDG NETWORK
BHOPAL

After Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district, Cheetahs are planned to be introduced at Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary situated on the border of Mandsaur and Neemuch districts in the state, Union Minister Bhupender Yadav said.

According to the information, the work plan about the shifting of the Cheetahs has almost been finalised, and it is likely to be shifted on April 20.

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav, along with Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, attended a two-day national workshop on forest conservation and climate-

friendly livelihood being held in Bhopal starting on Friday. After that, he interacted with the reporters and said that a discussion was held about the shifting to Cheetahs during a meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) held on Friday morning.

"The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)'s meeting was



held this morning. During the meeting, the NTCA decided to hold a discussion

on a comprehensive plan regarding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision

made during the National Wildlife Board meeting. Also, a discussion was held to think on the work plan about Cheetahs to be introduced in Banni Grasslands of Gujarat, Gandhisagar sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh in future," Union Minister Yadav said.

He further highlighted that a comprehensive review meeting related to the Cheetah project would be

held at CM House, where the shifting of the Cheetah would be discussed.

"Now, our nation has 58 Tiger reserves, and the credit for the 58th Tiger reserve goes to Madhya Pradesh. It is actually a tiger state, and the Madhav Tiger Reserve has been built here. A detailed discussion was held in the NTCA meeting this morning for this purpose. Addi-

tionally, a comprehensive review meeting related to the Cheetah project will be held at CM House. We believe that Madhya Pradesh is a special state in the nation, with a focus on forests, eco-tourism, and cultural heritage. MP CM Mohan Yadav is working for the expansion of tourism, forest and development of tribal people," the Union Minister said.

TEEN’S KILLING SPARKS PROTEST IN SEELAMPUR, POLICE TO PROBE

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police is probing the role of a woman, who worked as a bouncer for jailed gangster Hashim Baba’s wife, after the fatal stabbing of a 17-year-old boy in north-east Delhi’s Seelampur area, an official said on Friday.

Kunal was stabbed on Thursday evening in New Seelampur, and police have identified two suspects -- Sahil and Rehan -- after scanning CCTV camera footage from the area, Joint Commissioner of Police (Eastern Range), Pushpendra Kumar, said.

“It is suspected that Kunal was also involved in the stabbing of Sahil. Although Sahil did not die, he, along with Zikra, hatched a plan to take revenge for the attack,” a family source said.

Parveen, the mother of the deceased, told reporters, “Zikra used to roam around in the area with a pistol. An incident happened with her cousin Sahil but my son was not involved in it. Yet they killed him. They brutally stabbed him multiple times.”

Zikra was previously arrested under the Arms Act



People block a road to protest against the murder of a 17-year-old boy at Seelampur, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

The security has been beefed up in the area with the deployment of local police and Rapid Action Force (RAF) amid protests by the local people.

after posting a video with a pistol on social media. Out on bail, she was living in a rented house near Kunal’s residence. She reportedly led a gang of 10-12 young men, some of whose names are now surfacing in connection with Kunal’s murder.

The deceased’s family members also claimed that

some residents of the area are being forced to flee out of their fear of Zikra.

Meanwhile, security has been beefed up in the area with the deployment of local police and Rapid Action Force (RAF) amid protests by the local people and some Hindu outfits, including the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). Posters with

“Hindus are migrating” and “Please help, Yoji ji” written on them surfaced in the area, which police later removed.

The case has also triggered a war of words between the ruling BJP and the opposition AAP, with both sides blaming each other for the “deteriorating” law and order situation in the capital city.

Meanwhile, northeast Delhi’s Seelampur has triggered a war of words between the ruling BJP and opposition AAP on Friday. Both the sides blamed each other for the “deteriorating” law and order situation in the city.

Senior AAP leader and Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Atishi accused the BJP-led Central government and Delhi Police of failing to ensure the safety of citizens.

“The murder of a 17-year-old youth in Seelampur is another example of the deteriorating law and order situation in Delhi,” Atishi posted on X.

“What is Delhi Police doing? What is Home Minister Amit Shah doing? What is the double-engine government doing?” she asked, referring to the BJP government at the Centre which controls Delhi Police.

WHO IS ZIKRA AKA ‘LADY DON’?



- Locally known as ‘Lady Don’ in Seelampur, north-east Delhi.
- Allegedly feared in the area and believed to lead a small gang of 10-12 young men.
- Former bouncer for Zoya, wife of jailed gangster Hashim Baba.
- Lived with Zoya before her arrest in a drugs case.
- After Zoya’s arrest, Zikra was reportedly trying to form her own gang.

PREVIOUS CRIMINAL RECORD

- Arrested under the Arms Act for posting a video with a pistol on social media.
- Was out on bail and staying in a rented house near the victim Kunal’s residence.

CURRENT SITUATION

- Detained for questioning, but not formally arrested yet.
- Police investigating her possible involvement.
- Security heightened in the area due to tensions and protests.
- Fear of Zikra causing some locals to reportedly flee the area.

FAMILY’S SPECULATION

PAST CONFLICT AS TRIGGER

- Some time ago, members of Kunal’s community allegedly attacked Sahil, Zikra’s cousin brother.
- This led to an attempt to murder case being registered by police.
- The family believes this old rivalry was the motive for Kunal’s murder.



Victim Kunal

REVENGE PLOT THEORY

- The family suspects Sahil and Zikra believed Kunal was involved in Sahil’s stabbing.
- Even though they insist Kunal wasn’t involved, they think he was falsely targeted as part of a revenge plan.

ZIKRA’S ROLE ALLEGED

- They claim Zikra planned the murder alongside Sahil.
- Zikra was reportedly present at the crime scene when Kunal was stabbed.
- Kunal’s mother said, “Zikra used to roam with a pistol... they brutally stabbed him.”

PLANNED EXECUTION

- The attack was not spontaneous; family thinks it was pre-meditated.
- CCTV footage has identified Sahil and Rehan as main suspects; they may have been part of Zikra’s gang.

FEAR & INTIMIDATION

- Family alleges Zikra led a gang that intimidated locals.
- After the murder, some residents are reportedly fleeing the area out of fear.

ED arrests Noida realty company promoter

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has arrested the main promoter of a Noida-based real estate company under the anti-money laundering law in a case linked to the alleged diversion of home buyers’ funds worth Rs 107 crore.

Anil Mithas of the Unnati Group was taken into custody on April 16. A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Uttar Pradesh’s Ghaziabad sent him to the ED’s custody till April 24, the federal probe agency said in a

statement.

The money-laundering case stems from FIRs filed by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Uttar Pradesh government against Unnati Fortune Holdings Limited (UFHL) and its promoters for “cheating and fraud” of Rs 107 crore.

The ED said its probe has found that an amount of Rs 522.9 crore was collected between 2012 and 2019 from home buyers by Unnati Fortune Holdings Limited and IVRCL Infrastructure and Projects Limited for a residential project named ARAN-YA located in Sector 119 in Uttar Pradesh’s Noida.

City govt readies plan to keep 194 spots waterlogging free

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government is making every effort, including deploying automatic pumps and personnel at vulnerable spots, to ensure that the national capital remains free from waterlogging during monsoon, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Friday.

Accompanied by Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Verma, the chief minister inspected the waterlogging-prone Minto Bridge underpass to take stock of the preparations for monsoon.

“Automatic pumps have been deployed here that will flush out water during heavy rain and a 2.5-kilometre-



CM Rekha Gupta, along with Parvesh Verma and LG during the inspection of monsoon preparedness at a waterlogging point at Ring Road near the WHO building. ANI

long pipeline has been laid to carry the accumulated water out. Operators will also be on round-the-clock duty” Gupta said.

Vulnerable spots have been identified and corrective measures are being taken. The Delhi government will take every step in a time-bound manner to ensure there is no waterlogging this

year, she told reporters.

“Last year, 194 waterlogging locations were identified across the city by traffic police. Most of these are on PWD roads. At these points, we are taking several measures such as desilting of drains, installation of more pumps, and deploying pump operators where required,” Verma said.

1, 000 water sprinkler tankers to tackle City's rising pollution

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Friday said the government will roll out a comprehensive framework to tackle the rising pollution levels which will include deploying 1,000 water tankers with sprinklers, installing anti-smog guns in high-rise buildings and setting up CCTV cameras and LED screens at the city borders to prevent the entry of old vehicles.

He said the roadmap will outline the city’s strategy to fight pollution from 2025 to 2026.

Sirsa said one of the key



goals is to bring PM2.5 levels down.

“We are installing water mist systems at various hotspots to clean the air and help particulate matter settle. This initiative has already shown success over a five-kilometre stretch in Dwarka,” he said.

The government is now expanding the project to 13

identified hotspots across the city.

To intensify dust suppression, over 1,000 GPS-enabled water tankers with sprinklers will be deployed. “These tankers will move to areas with high pollution levels. Their routes and performance will be monitored in real time. Wherever AQI (Air Quality Index) rises, tankers will be sent immediately,” he said.

The minister added that monitoring will be enhanced at all entry points to Delhi to curb the entry of end-of-life vehicles.

Cameras and LED screens will be installed at these borders, displaying vehicle details.

'Rain, thunderstorms likely in Delhi on Saturday'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

With a sunny Friday, the national capital recorded a maximum temperature of 41 degrees Celsius, 4.2 notches above normal, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting rain and thunderstorms in the evening.

The minimum temperature was recorded at 25.6 degrees Celsius, 4 notches above normal, the MeT office said.

Humidity levels fluctuated between 57 per cent and 35 per cent during the day.

According to IMD’s forecast for Saturday, the sky will be ‘partly cloudy’ and become ‘generally cloudy’ towards the evening.

Very light rain or drizzle

is likely, accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and dust storms, with winds with speeds of 40-50 kilometre per hour gusting up to 60 kilometre per hour during the evening.

The maximum and minimum temperatures on Saturday are expected to be around 38 degrees Celsius and 26 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Meanwhile, the air quality at 4 pm on Friday was in the ‘poor’ category, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 219. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered ‘good’, 51 and 100 ‘satisfactory’, 101 and 200 ‘moderate’, 201 and 300 ‘poor’, 301 and 400 ‘very poor’, and 401 and 500 ‘severe’, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.

Delhi Airport issues advisory for potential flight delays

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi International Airport issued a passenger advisory on Friday, citing potential flight delays due to shifting wind patterns in the airport’s vicinity.

The advisory, issued at 0926 hrs today, states that air traffic flow management measures for flight arrivals will be implemented from 1230 IST to 1630 IST to ensure safe operations, in line with international and regulatory protocols.

According to the advisory, Air Traffic Control (ATC) authorities will prioritise passenger safety during this

period. While flight arrivals may be affected, all other operations across the airport’s terminals and three runways will continue normally.

Passengers are advised to contact their respective airlines for the most up-to-date information on flight schedules.

The airport authorities expressed regret for any inconvenience caused and thanked passengers for their understanding.

The passenger advisory issued by Delhi Airport on X, reads, “Due to shifting wind pattern in the vicinity of the airport, certain airline operations may experience delays.

Sirsa orders crackdown on illegal dhabas

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Friday ordered a crackdown on illegal meat shops and dhabas operating in residential areas, directing officials to demolish such establishments and disconnect their water and power supply.

During an inspection in West Delhi’s Rajouri Garden assembly constituency, Sirsa highlighted widespread civic violations and pollution concerns, stressing that unauthorised commercial activities in residential localities would not be tolerated.

“In a single lane, there are over 40-50 illegal dhabas and meat shops running without permission. These



pose a serious threat to public health and cause inconvenience to residents,” Sirsa told PTI.

“I have instructed the district commissioner and the additional commissioner to take immediate action. Such units will be sealed and their utilities disconnected,” he said.

He also said tandoors, dyeing units, denim factories and other polluting indus-

trial activities were operating illegally in the residential colonies, contributing to environmental degradation and affecting the quality of life.

“Thousands of illegal meat shops and dhabas have come up in the residential areas. They not only cause pollution but also lead to congestion and safety concerns, especially for women and senior citizens. This sit-

uation will not be allowed to continue,” he said.

Sirsa emphasised that meat shops must be licensed, hygienic and confined to designated commercial zones.

“Polluting and illegal establishments cannot function within residential colonies.

This endangers public health and the well-being of citizens,” he added.

He also directed the officials to address waterlogging issues urgently and ensure cleaner roads to prevent the spread of disease.

Besides, Sirsa flagged noise pollution and illegal parking as concerns and reiterated the importance of adhering to Supreme Court guidelines on loudspeakers.

Govt asks hospitals to implement Ayushman Bharat Yojana

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Health Department has directed more than 100 hospitals to implement the Ayushman Bharat Yojana at the earliest, an official source said.

The previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government did not implement the BJP-led NDA government’s flagship healthcare scheme in the national capital.

The source said the department has issued an advisory for the imple-



mentation of the Ayushman Bharat Yojana in 110 hospitals.

As part of the initiative, a copy of the contract letter has been sent to these hospitals to enter into an

agreement with the Delhi government.

Along with this, the guidelines for implementation have also been shared with all the associated hospitals.

The source said the hospitals have been asked to sign the agreement as soon as possible so that the beneficiaries of Ayushman Yojana do not face any problems in availing healthcare services.

The BJP-led Delhi government inked an MoU with the Centre on April 5 to implement the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) in the city.

With this, Delhi has become the 35th state/Union Territory to implement the

health insurance scheme.

The Ayushman Bharat scheme provides free and cashless treatment for 1,961 medical procedures across 27 specialties, covering the costs of medicines, diagnostic services, hospitalisation, ICU care, surgeries and more.

Under the scheme, eligible families in Delhi will receive annual health coverage of up to Rs 10 lakh -- Rs 5 lakh from the Centre and an additional Rs 5 lakh as a top-up from the Delhi government.

Hospital technician held in flight attendant sexual assault case

TDG NETWORK
GURUGRAM

A technician allegedly working at Medanta Hospital here was arrested on Friday in connection with the sexual assault on a flight attendant who was on a ventilator in the hospital, police said.

The accused has been identified as Deepak (25), a native of Bihar’s Muzaffarpur, who had been living in Gurugram for some time, they said.

A senior police officer said that during the interrogation, the accused revealed that he joined Medanta five months ago after completing his bachelor’s in Operation Theatre

Technology at a private university here.

Police said they identified the accused after examining CCTV footage, interrogating the hospital staff and investigating various facts.

“Over 50 employees of the hospital and some doctors were questioned, and footage from 800 CCTV cameras was examined. After multiple analyses, we finally identified the accused and arrested him today. He has confessed to the crime,” said Dr Arpit Jain, DCP (headquarters), who led the special investigation team in the case.

The accused will be produced before the court on Saturday for further proceedings, and the probe is still underway, police added.

DELHI GOVT DIRECTS SCHOOLS TO FRAME SMARTPHONE USAGE POLICY AFTER HC RULING

HC allowed students to carry smartphones but emphasized the need for regulated use to avoid disruption.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Following a recent Delhi High Court judgment, the Delhi Government has directed schools to formulate policies regarding students' use of smartphones.

The Delhi High Court has outlined guiding principles to strike a balance between the advantages and potential drawbacks of allowing students to use smartphones while in school.

Accordingly, the Education Department of the Delhi Government has instructed all heads of government, government-aided, and unaided recognised private schools in Delhi to develop and implement a school-level policy on this matter.

The Directorate of Education, in its circular dated April 17, 2025, states, "The Hon'ble court has drawn up guiding principles to balance the beneficial and deleterious effect of permit-



ting the use of smartphones in the hands of students while attending the school. Accordingly, all the Heads of Govt., Govt. Aided & Unaided Recognised Private Schools of Delhi are hereby directed to develop a policy on the above said matter on school level and implement the same."

Recently, the Delhi High Court, in a significant ruling, has refused to ban children from bringing smartphones to school. The court clarified in its decision that the use of smartphones does not have a negative impact

on teaching, discipline, or the overall educational environment in the classroom.

The judgment passed by Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani came during the hearing of a petition filed by a student, which sought the issuance of guidelines regarding the use of mobile phones in schools. A minor student represented by Advocate Ashu Bidhuri stated that during the hearing, the parties involved, particularly the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), requested the court to establish guidelines for the use of smart-

phones in schools.

The court noted that its intent was to establish guiding principles to balance the positive and negative effects of allowing students to use smartphones while attending school. As a policy, students should not be barred from carrying smartphones to school, but the use of smartphones must be regulated and monitored, it said.

Where possible, arrangements should be made for the safekeeping of smartphones. Students should be required to deposit their smartphones when they en-

ter school and retrieve them when returning home, the court said.

Smartphones should not disrupt classroom teaching, discipline, or the overall educational atmosphere. Thus, the use of smartphones in class must be prohibited. Additionally, the use of cameras and recording facilities on smartphones should be barred in common areas of the school as well as in school vehicles.

Schools must educate students on responsible online behaviour, digital manners, and the ethical use of smartphones. Students should be counselled that high levels of screen time and social media engagement can lead to anxiety, diminished attention spans, and cyberbullying.

The policy should permit the use of smartphones for connectivity for purposes of safety and co-ordination but disallow the use of smartphones for entertainment/recreational use.

Delhi to include 'third gender' option in welfare schemes forms

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Application forms of all Delhi government welfare schemes will now include a "third gender" option, Social Welfare Minister Ravindra Indraj Singh said on Friday during a meeting with a delegation of trans persons.

Under the directive of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the social welfare department has made this option mandatory to ensure that trans persons with disabilities can fully access the benefits of government schemes, according to a statement.

Singh informed the delegation about the various welfare programmes aimed at helping transgender individuals live with dignity and become self-reliant.

The minister said the gov-



ernment would take steps to raise public awareness about trans rights, promote social inclusion and spread information about the schemes available.

He also mentioned that a notification regarding the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules would be issued shortly.

Expressing their appreciation, the delegation members said it was the first time a government had shown genuine concern for their rights and self-reliance while also directly engaging with them to share important information, according to the statement.

'Unfortunate': HC laments ordeal of rape survivors seeking abortion

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court was recently displeased with its directions not being complied with by the doctors in the national capital for constituting a panel to determine the cases of sexual assault survivors seeking abortion without any delay.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma's verdict on April 17 outlined the "unfortunate" state of affairs over the compliance of its directions passed on January 25, 2023 and November 3, 2023 through which hospitals were ordered to constitute medical boards to examine sexual assault survivors seeking medical termination of their pregnancy.

The high court underlined the intent of its 2023 directions saying the medical examination of a sexual assault survivor, having a pregnancy beyond 24 weeks, was ordered to be conducted immediately under the law and related report was to be kept ready when either the girl or anyone on her behalf moved court seeking abortion.

Finding the situation on the ground level remained



largely unchanged, the judge said, "The intent to expedite and streamline the process for termination of a pregnancy conceived as a result of sexual assault has, regrettably, not translated into effective and time-sensitive action."

The matter before it surrounded a 15-year-old minor survivor's ordeal of wanting to abort her over 27-week pregnancy-beyond the 24-week permissible timeframe. The issue stemmed from the condition set out by the Delhi government's LNJP Hospital when the parents of the minor survivor went there to get her pregnancy terminated.

They parents were asked to obtain a court order as the gestational age of the foetus had crossed the permissible duration under the Medical Termination

of Pregnancy Act. The high court lamented the non-compliance of its directions and said the permanent medical boards constituted in eight government and five private hospitals in the capital were expected to not wait for a court order before examining the survivor and prepare the report.

Despite the fact that two years had passed since the directions, the court expressed regret and questioned how a survivor, pregnant owing to the assault, was left for days altogether awaiting a court's order and the same was of no solace to her.

The court, as a result, passed a new set of guidelines to provide prompt and appropriate legal guidance aside from medical support to minor rape survivors seeking the medical termination of pregnancy.

AAP seeks transparency in audit of Delhi private schools

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Friday accused the BJP-led Delhi government of misleading public over the auditing of private school accounts.

Alleging that the government's claim of auditing over 650 schools was a "blatant lie", AAP's Delhi unit chief Saurabh Bharadwaj demanded that the audit reports be made public.

"Delhi ministers are constantly misleading," Bharadwaj said at a press conference. "Education Minister Ashish Sood claimed on Thursday that he had got more than 650 schools audited. This is a blatant lie. I say with full confidence that the government has not even



appointed an auditor yet."

Challenging the veracity of the government's claims, Bharadwaj asked, "If the government has conducted an audit, then it should keep its promise and make the audit report public. The education minister is claiming that he has got 650 schools audited, so at least one school must have been found to be wrong? Has the government taken any action against this school?"

"Children were exploited in many private schools un-

der the protection of the BJP government. Even after the district magistrate's visit, the situation did not change in a private school and children continued to be made to sit in the library," Bharadwaj said, referring to one such case.

"Upset over this, the parents went to Delhi High Court. When the court asked the government, the government informed that a notice has been issued to the school. The court made a strict comment on this reply and asked why did you not take action on time?" Bharadwaj said.

The AAP leader's remarks come a day after Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood announced that with the help of sub-divisional magistrates, the Rekha Gupta-led administration had audited the accounts of 650 schools.

City rolls out big tourism push with food, fests & heritage vibes

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

From placing food trucks and installing shades around monuments to organising film festivals and digital campaigns -- the Delhi government is rolling out a host of initiatives to boost tourist footfall at the city's many heritage sites.

With an eye on transforming visitor experience and boosting tourist footfall, these efforts aim to reimagine Delhi as a more inviting and tourist-friendly destination, Kapil Mishra, the minister in charge of art, culture, language and tourism, said.



"We are planning to install shaded areas around the monuments and historical sites so that tourists can take a break from the sun. Currently, there aren't many places for them to sit and relax," Mishra said.

Emphasising that enhanc-

ing on-site amenities is key to improving tourist satisfaction, the minister said, "Tourists are more likely to stay longer if they have options for food and beverages. Food trucks will soon be placed at several monument sites to offer a diverse

culinary experience."

In addition to these on-ground efforts, the government will also launch a digital promotion campaign to highlight Delhi's various tourist hotspots.

Citing the popular 'Khushboo Gujarat Ki' campaign as an example, Mishra said a similar branding effort is expected to rolled out in Delhi in the coming months.

To complement the marketing push, a series of events such as concerts and film festivals are being planned as part of a broader cultural engagement initiative, the minister said.

Wanted criminal with 13 cases injured in police encounter

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A notorious criminal was injured in a police encounter in Delhi's Dwarka area on Friday morning, according to Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police-I Dwarka Nishant Gupta.

The accused, Akshay alias Golu, was shot in the foot during a brief exchange of fire with the police.

"On April 17, we received a PCR call at 1.45 am in which the complainant said that someone beat him and snatched his motorcycle," said ADCP Gupta.

Police examined CCTV

footage from the area, where the complainant identified the accused. Gupta said the man was recognised by officers as a known Bad Character (BC) of the Najafgarh area.

"Our team recognised him as a BC (Bad Character) of the Najafgarh area, Akshay alias Golu. We registered a case and formed various teams to catch him," he said.

However, Akshay was not found at his residence. Based on further inputs, police suspected he would appear on Nala Road in the early hours. "We got information that he may come to the Nala

road during the night. We saw him at 5 am on the same bike which he had snatched. When stopped by the police, he started firing at the police team," Gupta added.

In response, police returned fire, injuring Akshay in the left foot. "He was shot in the left foot during retaliatory fire by the police. He is admitted to the hospital for treatment," Gupta said.

According to police records, the accused has 13 cases registered against him.

Meanwhile, according to an official statement, Rohini District Police registered multiple cases and made

over 300 arrests from April 1 to April 15, 2025, as part of a 15-day special drive against organised crime and street criminals.

During the period, police registered 48 cases under the Excise Act, 54 under the Gambling Act, and seven under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

A total of 52 persons were arrested in Excise Act cases, 126 in Gambling Act cases, and nine in NDPS Act cases.

The operation led to the seizure of Rs 102,580 in cash, 11,144 quarters of illicit liquor, and 227 bottles of beer.



Dirt is seen everywhere, the tracks are in poor condition and there is a gathering of homeless people," Goyal said.

The CTI also raised concerns about the impact on tourism and the neglect of heritage sites in the area.

Several historical sites such as the Lal Qila, Jain Temple, Gaurishankar Temple, Gurudwara Sheeshganj Sahib, Fatehpuri, Jama Masjid, Church and Wholesale Bazaar are situated in Chandni

Chowk and people from all over the country and the world visit here, he said.

"The Municipal Corporation of Delhi and police are also not active," claimed CTI general secretary Gurmeet Arora and senior vice-president Deepak Garg.

The CTI urged in its letter the chief minister to form a high-level committee to visit and assess the historical Mughal market and restructure the Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation.

Froth returns to Yamuna, highlighting persistent pollution issue in the river

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A layer of froth was seen covering the Yamuna River surface near Kalindi Kunj on Friday, bringing back the focus on heavy pollution in the river. Experts said that the froth on the river surface was a recurring issue due to the toxic chemicals present in the sewage and industrial wastewater flowing unchecked into it.

The frothing happens due to pollutants in the water getting accumulated with the dissolved organic matter

like water hyacinth, leaves and other such wild grass, a Delhi Jal Board (DJB) official in the quality control wing, informed.

"Currently, we do not have any direction to carry out anti-frothing measures at Kalindi Kunj,"

At many places including Kalindi Kunj and ITO, water hyacinths have appeared in the Yamuna water.

Experts stated that the cause of the white foam over the river stretch is a combination of several factors and more concrete efforts towards stopping waste

from entering the river and cleaning it have to be taken.

"The frothing problem in the Yamuna appears to have become a perennial issue, largely due to the deficit monsoon in the river's upper basin last year and the lack of rainfall during the winter and pre-monsoon seasons this year," said an environmental activist Bhim Singh Rawat.

"Untreated effluents continue to enter the Yamuna, not just from drains in Delhi but also from major discharge points in Haryana like the Dhanaura escape



in Karnal, Drain No. 2 in Panipat, and the Najafgarh drain," he said.

Rekha Gupta government in Delhi Thursday sanctioned over Rs 3,000 crore for the laying of sewer lines and construction of 27 decentralised sewage treatment plants (STPs) under the ongoing efforts to rejuvenate the Yamuna.

The problem of froth in the river is more aggravated during the winters when the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) uses defoaming agents to remove it.

"The reason behind foam

formation in the river is surfactants like phosphates in the effluents flowing into the river. When the surfactant-mixed water produces foam, which accumulates and floats on the water surface," said Sanjay Sharma, a member Indian Water Quality Association.

Last year to tackle the problem more efficiently, large nets were tied underneath the Kalindi Kunj bridge to arrest the foam before it reaches further down the river length, where scores of devotees gather to offer prayers.

GOVT RULES OUT LEVYING GST ON UPI PAYMENT OF ABOVE RS 2,000

To support and sustain the growth of UPI, an Incentive Scheme has been operational from 2021-22.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The claims that the government is considering levying Goods and Services Tax (GST) on UPI transactions over Rs 2,000 are completely false, misleading, and without any basis, said the Ministry of Finance in a statement Friday.

Currently, there is no such proposal before the government, the Finance Ministry clarified.

GST is levied on charges, such as the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR), relating to payments made using certain instruments.

Effective January 2020, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) removed the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on Person-to-Merchant (P2M) UPI transactions through a Gazette Notification dated December 30, 2019.

Since no MDR is currently charged on UPI transactions, there is consequently no GST applicable.

The Finance Ministry said the government remains committed to pro-

The total incentive payouts under this scheme over the years reflect the Government's sustained commitment to promoting UPI-based digital payments.

Allocation under the scheme over the years has been:
■ FY2021-22: Rs 1,389 crore;
■ FY2022-23: Rs 2,210 crore;
■ FY2023-24: Rs 3,631 crore.



moting digital payments via UPI.

To support and sustain the growth of UPI, an Incentive Scheme has been operational from 2021-22.

This scheme specifically targets low-value UPI (P2M) transactions, benefiting small merchants by alleviating transaction costs and promoting wider participation and innovation in digital payments.

"These measures have significantly contributed to India's robust digital payments ecosystem," the ministry said.

According to the ACI Worldwide Report 2024, India accounted for 49 per cent of global real-time

transactions in 2023, reaffirming its position as a global leader in digital payments innovation.

UPI transaction values have seen an exponential increase, growing from Rs 21.3 lakh crore in 2019-20 to Rs 260.56 lakh crore by March 2025. Specifically, P2M transactions have reached Rs 59.3 lakh crore, reflecting growing merchant adoption and consumer confidence in digital payment methods.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has issued instructions to the officers to reduce compliance burden while processing GST registration applications, after it received grievances that

people were facing difficulties during the GST registration process, mainly on account of queries raised by officers on the grounds of seeking additional documents, an official statement issued by the Ministry of Finance said on Friday.

Several grievances have been received by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

Officers have been instructed to strictly adhere to the prescribed list of documents provided in registration application form.

Requisite documents in specific cases to be uploaded with the registration application form have also

been delineated in the instructions.

Officers have been directed not to issue notices based on presumptive grounds, minor discrepancies, or for additional documents that are not essential for processing applications.

Officers have also been directed to seek approval of the concerned Deputy/Assistant Commissioner in cases where a document apart than the listed documents is required to be sought.

The Zonal Principal Chief Commissioner/Chief Commissioners have been advised to devise a mechanism to closely monitor and issue suitable trade notices, wherever required.

It has also been advised that strict action should be taken against the officers who deviate from these instructions.

This will further facilitate the process of getting GST registration, ease compliance burden, and promote ease of doing business.

The Goods and Services Tax was introduced in the country with effect from July 1, 2017.

FASTag-based road toll collection system to remain, Govt clarifies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The central government has clarified that the satellite-based tolling system will not be launched from May 1, 2025, in replacement of the existing FASTag-based toll collection system.

The clarification comes after reports emerged stating satellite-based toll systems will replace FASTag toll collection starting in May.

"This is to clarify that no such decision has been taken by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways or National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) regarding the nationwide implementation of satellite-based tolling from 1st May 2025," said the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in a statement.

To enable seamless, barrier-free movement of vehicles through toll plazas and reduce travel time, an ANPR-FASTag-based Barrier-Less Tolling System will be implemented at selected toll plazas, the ministry has supplemented.

The advanced tolling system will combine 'Automatic Number Plate Recognition' (ANPR) technology, which identifies vehicles by reading their number plates, with the existing 'FASTag system' that utilises Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) for toll deduction.

Under this system, vehi-



To enable seamless, barrier-free movement of vehicles through toll plazas and reduce travel time, an ANPR-FASTag-based Barrier-Less Tolling System will be implemented at selected toll plazas, the ministry has supplemented.

cles will be charged based on their identification through high-performance ANPR cameras and FASTag Readers, eliminating the need to stop at toll plazas.

In the event of non-compliance, E-Notices will be served to the violators, and non-payment may result in the suspension of FASTag and other VAHAN-related penalties. The ministry stated that NHAI has invited bids for the implementation of the 'ANPR-FASTag-based Barrier-Less Tolling System,' which will be installed at selected toll plazas.

Based on the system's performance, efficiency, and user response, a decision

will be made regarding its implementation nationwide, the ministry said.

All National Highway Toll Plazas operate on ICD 2.5 protocol, which gives real-time tag status, hence, the FASTag customers can recharge anytime before crossing the Toll Plaza.

The FASTag customers are encouraged to link their FASTag wallet to UPI/Current/Saving Accounts under auto-recharge settings to eliminate the need for manual recharges. Customers can continue to recharge their FASTag any time before reaching the toll, using a variety of payment channels such as UPI, net banking, and more.

Adani Realty crowned Visionary Real Estate Brand

TDG NETWORK
AHMEDABAD

Adani Realty, the real estate arm of the diversified Adani Group, has been honoured with the prestigious Grohe Hurun India Visionary Real Estate Brand of the Year Award at the Real Estate Leaders' Conclave 2025, held here in the national capital, a company statement said Friday.

The award recognises Adani Realty's exceptional growth, forward-thinking approach, and commitment to shaping the future of Indian real estate through innovation, sustainability, quality, and customer-centric development.

"This recognition is a reflection of our unwavering focus on building world-class developments and our belief in transformative



growth led by purpose and precision," said a spokesperson from Adani Realty.

Adani Realty's journey began in 2010 with the launch of Shantigram -- a 600-acre integrated township in Ahmedabad. Since then, the company has steadily expanded across asset classes including residential, commercial, and social infrastructure, with a presence in high-growth urban centres such as Mumbai, Pune, Gurugram, and Ahmedabad. Today, the company boasts 24 million square feet of completed development, with over 7,000 families residing across projects delivered by Adani Realty.

In 2024, it was valued at Rs 56,500 crore, topping the Grohe-Hurun India Real Estate 100 list as the highest-valued unlisted real estate firm in the country.

NITI Aayog flags R&D gaps stalling auto innovation

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's growth in the global automobile sector is held back due to a lack of innovation, primarily driven by inadequate Research and Development (R&D) infrastructure, says a report by NITI Aayog.

The report stated that India's spending on R&D remains among the lowest in the world, especially when compared to leading automotive nations such as Germany, Japan, and the United States.

It said "One of the most critical barriers to India's growth in the global automotive sector is the lack of innovation, largely driven by inadequate Research and Development (R&D) infrastructure."

The report added, "This underinvestment severely limits the country's ability to compete in emerging technologies such as EVs, autonomous driving, and smart mobility solutions".

While Indian manufac-

The report specifically points out that India is lagging in critical areas such as battery technology, Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), and AI-driven manufacturing.

turers have built a strong reputation for producing low-cost, high-volume vehicles, the report noted that the absence of a strong innovation culture has prevented the development of advanced and differentiated products. This lack of innovation makes it difficult for India to stand out in the highly competitive global automobile market.

One of the major challenges cited in the report is the minimal collaboration between the industry, academic institutions, and research organisations. This limited interaction restricts the exchange of ideas and technological breakthroughs that are crucial for developing next-generation automotive solutions.

As a result of these gaps, Indian companies often depend on foreign technologies, which increases manufacturing costs and reduces the potential to build cutting-edge vehicles locally.

The report specifically points out that India is lagging in critical areas such as battery technology, Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), and AI-driven manufacturing. These technologies are seen as essential for the future of the global automotive industry.

To overcome these challenges and achieve long-term growth, NITI Aayog has emphasized the need for a substantial increase in R&D investment.

Himachal allocates Rs 194 cr for healthcare infra

TDG NETWORK
SHIMLA

To strengthen the healthcare infrastructure and improve access to quality and affordable healthcare to the people of the State, the Himachal Pradesh government has allocated Rs 193.75 crore for establishing two Critical Care Blocks (CCBS) and five District Integrated Public Health Laboratories (DIPHLs).

In a recent cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, the government approved the setting up of a 50-bedded Critical Care Block (CCB) at Primary Health Centre Swahan (Regional Hospital Bilaspur) and another 50-bedded CCB at Civil Hospital Rohru, Shimla district.

These facilities will be equipped with advanced medical infrastructure in-

Every DIPHL will have a team of experts comprising one Pathologist, one Microbiologist, one Biochemist, eleven Lab Technicians, one Data Entry Operator, and two Sanitation workers.

cluding Emergency Services, Intensive Care Units (ICUS), High Dependency Units (HDUS), Isolation Beds, Dialysis Units, Labour Rooms, Operation Theatres and Point-of-Care Laboratories, an official release said.

Each CCB will be integrated with the existing district hospital and will function as a regular facility under normal conditions. However, during health emergencies or outbreaks such as COVID-19, they can be physically isolated to ensure strict infection control. Each block

will be constructed at a cost of Rs 16.63 crore and equipment cost of Rs 27.12 crore.

In addition, the cabinet has also approved the establishment of District Integrated Public Health Laboratories (DIPHLs) at Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru Government Medical College, Chamba, and the District Hospital Hamirpur are attached with Dr Radha Krishnan Government Medical College Hamirpur. These DIPHLs are aimed at improving diagnostic capabilities, enabling rapid testing and supporting effective

outbreak management, the release said. Each laboratory will be fully equipped with Clinical Pathology, Haematology, Cytology, Biochemistry, and Microbiology facilities under one roof to enhance efficiency and avoid resource duplication.

Every DIPHL will have a team of experts comprising one Pathologist, one Microbiologist, one Biochemist, eleven Lab Technicians, one Data Entry Operator, and two Sanitation workers.

The capital cost per DIPHL will be Rs 21.25 crore with an annual recurring cost of Rs 49.05 lakh per unit. Furthermore, the cabinet has also approved the procurement of equipment for the under-construction Mother and Child Hospital wings of Kamla Nehru Hospital Shimla, Regional Hospital Una and Civil Hospital Sundernagar of Mandi district.

TDG NETWORK
MANESAR

Minister for Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Friday that guidelines for the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme are almost ready and will be released in a few days. Addressing a press conference in Manesar, he said a portal will also be launched soon for applications to be made under the components manufacturing scheme.

The Union Cabinet approved the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) in March this year, with a funding of Rs 22,919 crore, to make India self-reliant in the electronics supply chain.

With various government initiatives, the electronics manufacturing sector has experienced remarkable growth over the last decade.

India's electronics manufacturing capability has increased since the launch of the Make in India initia-



tive, the minister said at the press conference. India's electronics production has increased fivefold over the past decade to exceed Rs 11 lakh crore.

Exports worth Rs 3.25 crore of electronics have been realised over the past decade, rising sixfold.

The electronics manufacturing ecosystem has employed 25 lakh individuals, the minister said.

The minister said that a large talent pool and respect for intellectual property rights are working in India's favour.

"The happiest part about the electronics manufac-

turing is that this ecosystem is gradually becoming mature. Design capabilities are improving," Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

Regarding the AI server manufacturing capabilities of India, the minister pointed out that VVDN Technologies has shipped out 6,000 such servers so far.

"Make in India initiative has taken a real shape now," he supplemented, talking from VVDN Technologies' facility in Manesar.

He added that India is not only manufacturing electronics but also the tools the engineers need to produce those items.

Asian markets see gains

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Indian stock markets are shut on Friday due to the Good Friday holiday. However, other major Asian markets continued their upward trend, with key indices posting gains.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index rose by 0.66 per cent, Taiwan's weighted index gained 0.58 per cent, and South Korea's KOSPI was also up by 0.27 per cent at the time of this report. Apart from these, other Asian markets were closed due to holidays.

Back home, several companies are scheduled to announce their fourth quarter earnings today. These include Just Dial, Mastek, Network 18 Media & Investments, Laxmi Goldorna House, Amal, Yaari Digital Integrated Services, Teamo Productions, and Jay Kailash Namkeen.

On Thursday, Indian mar-

kets experienced significant activity from foreign investors. According to data for April 17, 2025, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIS) or Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) were net buyers in the cash segment. They bought shares worth Rs 18,210.41 crore and sold shares worth Rs 13,542.47 crore, resulting in a net inflow of Rs 4,667.94 crore. In contrast, Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIS) were net sellers. They purchased shares worth Rs 13,773.79 crore and sold shares worth Rs 15,779.94 crore, resulting in a net outflow of Rs 2,006.15 crore.

Meanwhile, global market cues remain mixed. U.S. stock futures presented a mixed picture. Dow Jones futures dropped sharply by 521.0 points or 1.32 per cent to 39148. However, Nasdaq futures edged higher by 30.0 points or 0.17 per cent to 18287.

AGENCIES
CUPERTINO [CALIFORNIA] [US]

Apple is reportedly making significant strides in reducing the weight of its much-anticipated Vision Pro 2, aiming to address one of the biggest criticisms of its predecessor.

While the original Vision Pro was lauded for its cutting-edge features, its weight became a significant drawback, particularly for users requiring extended wear.

To counter this, Apple is reportedly set to integrate titanium into the construction of the second-generation augmented reality (AR) headset, according to GSM Arena.

According to reports obtained by GSM Arena, the company is opting for titanium primarily in the internal structure of the headset. This move will help shave off some of the bulk without compromising the device's performance and durability.

The external casing of the headset, however, will still retain an aluminium body, albeit painted in a sleek black shade.

This exterior, according to the reports, will bear a colour reminiscent of "dark graphite blue," a nod to the signature hues Apple used in earlier products like the iPhone 5.

The use of titanium is a bold choice for Apple, considering the material's high cost.

However, it aligns with the company's focus on creating a lighter and more comfortable user experience for the Vision Pro 2, without sacrificing the device's premium feel.

As the device's weight is reduced, it is expected that Apple will also work on addressing the headset's price, which has been a significant barrier for potential customers.

Additionally, rumours suggest that the next-generation AR headset may not carry the "Vision Pro 2" moniker, as some had anticipated.

FUTURE DEPENDS ON RESPONSIBILITY, NOT ENTITLEMENT

OPINION

DR NISHAKANT OJHA



A NATION BUILT, YET UNDERMINED

India today is not suffering from a lack of vision or resources. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the government has delivered sweeping reforms, built world-class infrastructure, enabled digital inclusion at scale, and positioned India as a formidable global power. Whether it's defense, manufacturing, health tech, or financial inclusion, the architecture for a modern India has been decisively laid down.

Yet, despite this momentum, every market correction, job loss, or industrial underperformance is met with the same tired reflex: blame the government. This knee-jerk response is not only intellectually dishonest—it is actively sabotaging the nation's progress. The

real drag on India's growth is not policy paralysis, but execution paralysis. The problem lies not in governance, but in a widespread culture of dependency, complacency, and entitlement.

This analysis aims to shift the spotlight where it belongs: on the institutions, industries, and actors that continue to underperform despite unprecedented support. PM Modi Has Delivered – It's Time for India to Break Free from Entitlement and Embrace True Governance!

DEFENSE SECTOR: WHEN FUNDING ISN'T THE PROBLEM, BUT VISION IS

India's defense allocation for FY 2024-25 stands at 6.2 lakh crore, ranking it among the top three military spenders in the world. Out of this, 1.72 lakh crore is earmarked specifically for capital acquisitions—marking an unambiguous commitment to self-reliance and modernization.

The policy intent is crystal clear: 500+ items have been embargoed from import to boost domestic production. Aatmanirbharta in defense is no longer a slogan—it is national policy backed by

serious investment.

And yet, results remain underwhelming. DPSUs miss delivery timelines, field outdated platforms, and struggle with systemic inefficiencies. The private sector, rather than building indigenous capabilities in critical domains like AI warfare, drone swarms, or hypersonics, seems more interested in lobbying for contracts than investing in R&D.

Whenever goals aren't met, the blame is passed on to bureaucracy or regulation. But innovation cannot be outsourced to the government—it must be led by technocrats, scientists, and entrepreneurs willing to take risks and think long-term.

Strategically, India's military posture is no longer about merely holding the line—it's about shaping the regional order. The Indian Army, with over 1.2 million active personnel, is not only the second-largest standing force globally but also one of the most combat-experienced, with decades of operational engagement from high-altitude warfare in Siachen to counterinsurgency in Kashmir. When compared to superpowers, the U.S. military projects power globally through advanced technology and expeditionary capabilities, while China focuses on rapid modernization and regional dominance through asymmetric tools like cyber and missile systems. India, under Modi's leadership,

is carving its own strategic path—investing in indigenous defense manufacturing, advancing integrated theatre commands, and embracing next-generation warfare in AI, quantum, and space. With a nuclear triad in place, a blue-water navy emerging, and robust ties with QUAD partners, India is positioned as a pivot state in the Indo-Pacific. The strategic scaffolding is ready. What remains is for the rest of the Indian system—bureaucracy, industry, academia, and citizens—to shed inertia, match the tempo, and convert this potential into undeniable power

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM: OBSESSING OVER VALUATIONS, IGNORING REAL VALUE

India now hosts over 114,000 recognized startups, making it the world's third-largest startup ecosystem. With initiatives like Digital India, Startup India, and 14,000 crore mobilized under the Fund of Funds, the government has gone all in to nurture innovation. Platforms like UPI—which handled over 12 billion transactions in March 2024 alone—have revolutionized the way India transacts, all built and maintained by the state.

Despite this extraordinary foundation, India's startup ecosystem remains shallow. The obsession with unicorn status, flashy IPOs, and VC valuations has eclipsed focus on hard-tech, deep-

science, and core infrastructure innovation.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the semiconductor sector. With 76,000 crore pledged to create a chip ecosystem, the government offered global giants a golden opportunity. Yet, firms backed out citing "commercial unviability"—code for "we want high returns without high risk." This isn't entrepreneurship. It's opportunism. India doesn't lack policy support. It lacks private sector courage.

PLI SCHEMES: FROM STRATEGIC LEVER TO SOFT TARGET

The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, with an outlay of 1.97 lakh crore across 14 sectors, is arguably the most aggressive industrial stimulus India has ever seen. And the results are beginning to show: mobile phone exports have crossed \$15 billion, and India now ranks second in global smartphone production.

But in several sectors, the scheme is being gamed. Many firms entered merely to claim incentives without investing in end-to-end value chains or building globally competitive capacity. When profits didn't come easy, they exited, citing "policy confusion."

The issue isn't with the scheme. The issue is with those treating it like a subsidy program rather than a performance-linked opportunity.

The state opened the

doors. It's the players who chose shortcuts over scale.

ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH: A DISCONNECT FROM NATIONAL PURPOSE

It's a common trope that India lags behind in innovation because of low public R&D spending. This is a myth. The Indian government accounts for nearly 57% of the nation's total R&D outlay—a far cry from countries like the US and China, where private enterprise contributes over 70%.

Despite generous funding, Top India's premier institutions produces low translational output. Research often remains academic rather than application-oriented. Commercial patents, tech transfers, and private partnerships are far too rare.

Meanwhile, the private sector contributes little to national R&D, choosing to ride global IP or depend on the state for technological hand-holding.

If India's innovation engine feels stalled, it's because academia and industry remain siloed, not because the government failed to provide capital or capacity.

THE CASH COW SYNDROME: WHEN THE STATE BEARS ALL THE RISK

Across sectors, the same pattern recurs: profits are privatized, but losses are nationalized.

In the power sector, state discoms make populist promises, default on dues,

and expect central bailouts.

In banking, bad loans from reckless corporate lending forced the Centre to recapitalize PSU banks to the tune of 3.1 lakh crore.

In agriculture, reform resistance persists—yet there's a constant demand for MSP hikes and waivers, which cost the exchequer 2.17 lakh crore.

This is not governance failure. It's elite welfareism disguised as crisis management. India is being drained not by a negligent state—but by an entitled ecosystem.

A LEADER WHO BUILDS, NOT JUST SPEAKS

In a political landscape crowded with rhetoric, Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains singular: a doer. His leadership is not just transformative—it is relentless.

CONSIDER THE FACTS:

Make in India has revitalized domestic manufacturing, from defense to railways.

Digital India and the JAM trinity (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) have brought financial and digital inclusion to the last mile.

PM Gati Shakti is transforming infrastructure planning through real-time geospatial coordination.

Swachh Bharat and the world's largest vaccination campaign were executed with speed and scale unmatched globally.

Whether it was abrogat-

ing Article 370, executing the Balakot airstrikes, or crafting India's rising diplomatic stature through over 100 international engagements, Modi has shown clarity, conviction, and consistency. This isn't headline governance. This is legacy-making.

SHARP TAKEAWAY: FROM BLAME TO RESPONSIBILITY

India today stands at the threshold of becoming a global superpower. The government has put in place the frameworks, infrastructure, and vision needed to unlock its full potential.

But the burden of nation-building cannot fall on the state alone. The private sector must invest—not just in factories, but in ideas. Academia must shift from publishing papers to producing patents. Citizens must move from entitlement to engagement.

The narrative of blaming the government for every shortfall is not only lazy—it's corrosive. If India is to truly rise, it will be because all its stakeholders decide to build, not just benefit.

Prime Minister Modi has done more than govern. He has delivered. Now it's the nation's turn to respond—with action, ambition, and accountability. India doesn't need more handouts. It needs more hands that build.

Dr Nishakant Ojha is an Internationally renowned expert in foreign affairs and strategic national security issues .

The lesser man and a slave new world



DR. JERNAIL S. ANAND

Let us remain human, error prone, we do not need perfection. So long as we keep on making mistakes, we shall remain human. Let us love our mistakes. - Anand

The 20th century author Aldous Huxley writes a dystopian novel Brave New World based on the promises of science and technology. The world that has come up now may be new, but hardly 'brave'. We are undergoing a resistless change, rather a transformation, leaving the past behind, and embracing the future at a breakneck speed, so that nothing is completely visible, and we are having only hazy images of reality. When we stop somewhere, earth below our feet starts running, and the sky comes into motion. Where are we headed for? If the march is only up to the grave, why are we dreaming of things which will make us slaves, or create slaves for us?

CREATOR VERSUS CREATOR

I do not contend man's wish to be a creator. But the first world that God created is so beautiful, so satisfying. He has not created slaves. He has given brain and a little free will to every object. Yet He wields great power over his creation. But does He interfere? He intervenes rarely, but sometimes violently too, when we do not listen to his voiceless commands.

We want to create robots. A robot has a plastic mind, whereas a man has a living mind. A robot cannot grow in its perceptions, a man grows up from a child to an adolescent and then to an adult. A robot does not need a woman to procreate, but a man does. And most of all, a robot is a remote controlled slave, which a man is not. Man is a proud being, cast in the mould of God himself, and by sacrifice, he can rise to the level of God. Sacrifice, love, affection – these words have no meaning for a robot. Moreover, God specialized in giving different faces and different minds to his created beings. I don't think we can perform this feat? Our creations are featureless and thus faceless too.

Finally, while God wanted us to become supermen, we are after creating a LESSER MAN. Freedom is the most lovable word after life, and slavery, the most detestable after death. But we want to create slaves, and then turn their slaves ourselves. Shall we ever have mighty figures like Ravana or even Bhishma? Can we think of a world of human beings which witnesses great wars like Ramayana, Mahabharata or even Troy? We have at the most Terminators who appear like men, but are machine-monsters. We should be afraid of those creations which do not die. Because, life has only one distinguishing mark. And it is that it can die. Machines are immortal, hence figures of fear if they replace us.

Science and technology should remain subordinate to the wellbeing of mankind. We cannot allow any activity in our home which will finally obliterate us. If we allow the technological advances to go on unchecked,

and undirected, it will put into danger everything we have created. So, the greatest issue before us, and the gravest threat is that we should remain human, error prone, we do not need perfection. So long as we keep on making mistakes, we shall remain human. Let us love our mistakes.

THE 'PERFECT' TRAGEDY

Efficiency is good, but perfection is a dangerous idea. Our machines are perfect. Our aeroplanes, our trains, our computers, our mobiles – all are nearly faultless. This is a Universe of Perfection which we have created around us. But the tragic aspect of it is that we are ourselves Imperfect. This perfection can wipe us out. Killer life systems have destroyed our time. We are hopping from operation to operation. Take food, rush to laptop. Have a power nap, rush to laptop. Here is a message on mobile. Here is a link for a meeting. Sometimes I think our ceaseless work will lead us out of existence.

AI: THE ORACLE

However, there is another aspect to the emerging AI world. We are scared of its devastating reach into human thought systems as it can replace man very easily. It is a danger far greater than any Ramayana or Mahabharata war. We need technology neither as a slave, nor as a master. We do not want to create robots to take our commands without protest. We do not want men to become so dependent on machine, that they cannot get up from their bed, and move on their own feet. That would be the worst day for mankind.

We can appreciate the

perfectionist part of technology, at least machines do not lie, if they have no emotions, they also have no enmities, nor any biases, nor any personal likes and dislikes. Unless twisted, they speak the truth. In medical science, how we depend on machines. There was a time when people who held on to truth were killed by the rulers. Machines cannot be stopped from telling the truth. Grok is the highest in artificial intelligence, and it surprises us with its fast paced performances, and its perfection too. If they speak the truth, they are like Oracles of the Postmodern Age, who are not afraid of anybody and say what they perceive.

At the same time, they spell fear for us. Too much dependence on them weakens our hold on life systems. So, the right course for mankind would be to remain close to God, nature, and use technology only as an assistance, not as complete replacement. The decision should remain with man, however faulty is his perceptions. Electricity is no less dangerous. But how many people die of electric shock? On the other hand, it runs every gadget, including charging our mobiles and laptops. AI too should be looked upon like electricity. And its further research directed towards the welfare of mankind, not towards creating A LESSER MAN, AND A SLAVE NEW WORLD.

Dr. Jernail Singh Anand, [The Seneca, Charter of Morava, Franz Kafka and Maxim Gorky awards Laureate, with an opus of 180 books, whose name adorns the Poets' Rock in Serbia]] is a towering literary figure whose work embodies a rare fusion of creativity, intellect, and moral vision.

A combat with the rising inflation – is India ready?



YASH KALRA

The economic impact of inflation across the globe is building a furious roller coaster, and India may be next in line. Mitigating the adverse effects of inflation and ensuring sustainable economic development is a priority for good governance. Given India's diverse social and economic landscape, the country is particularly vulnerable to the turbulence caused by economic unrest.

While moderate inflation is considered healthy and indicative of decent economic growth, it is the unchecked rise in inflation that poses serious challenges. It disrupts the economy and has far-reaching consequences for businesses, MSMEs, individuals, and households. Continuous efforts to maintain and enhance structural reforms across industries and supply chains is the key to economic stability. A balanced mix of fiscal and monetary measures is essential to maintain equilibrium between demand and supply.

India is currently experiencing the profound economic and social implications of inflation. Purchasing power is gradually declining, household savings are shrinking, social inequality is widening,

and businesses are facing cutthroat competition. Inflation control has become a critical concern. Despite the government's proactive approach to building a trillion-dollar economy, several additional measures are essential for achieving sustained and inclusive growth.

One crucial step is protecting the vulnerable segments of society. Policies like Direct Benefit Transfers must be implemented efficiently to avoid leakages. Streamlining the Public Distribution System will help elevate lower-income households and foster economic equality.

Addressing inflation in the long run will require an integrated approach involving fiscal, monetary, structural, and logistical reforms. Promoting artificial intelligence and renewable energy independence are also pivotal in protecting vulnerable populations and managing inflation effectively.

Fiscal policy measures such as reducing indirect taxes on essential goods can lower prices, boost household savings, and reduce inflation. Offering extended subsidies on fuel can temporarily ease the financial burden on the public, leading to increased liquidity in the market.

Policies supporting renewable energy independence could transform the economic landscape. This sector is labor-intensive and promises employment opportunities in the long term. As these industries expand, they will contribute to sustainable eco-

nomie growth and reduce reliance on imports, making the economy more resilient to global price fluctuations. Investing in solar, wind, and hydropower can help India achieve self-reliance in energy and stabilize prices across industries.

Revamping monetary policy is another essential strategy. The Reserve Bank of India can utilize its monetary tools to control inflation. Lowering the repo rate would make borrowing easier, thereby empowering individuals and businesses. Tools like Open Market Operations and Security Liquidations can help stabilize markets in the short term. Adjusting the cash reserve ratio could enhance overall liquidity and provide further control over inflation.

Long-term reforms must be consistent and focused on increasing productivity among the youth through skill development and educational investments. Though revamping education is a long-term endeavor, it promises lasting benefits and helps ensure a brighter future for India.

Simplifying business policies can attract industries to India. The country's unique geography and cultural appeal can draw international sectors such as the movie industry, provided business policies are favorable. Easing land investment regulations can also streamline the flow of investments across various verticals.

Boosting and investing in supply chains is crucial for tackling inflationary

pressures. Investments in irrigation, soil improvement, agricultural technology, and better seeds will gradually help eliminate food inflation. Removing bottlenecks in food supply chains will reduce freight charges and ensure steady supplies.

Strengthening trade policies remains a vital economic driver. Increasing exports, attracting investments, and retaining foreign direct investments (FDIs) are necessary for trade stability. The government's steps to simplify Free Trade Agreements and Bilateral Trade Agreements are proving beneficial and are expected to be even more impactful in the future.

Encouraging household savings and investments can also serve as a buffer against inflation. Higher interest rates on deposits and the promotion of inflation-indexed bonds can help middle-income households hedge against inflation.

A balanced approach with seamless coordination between the government and the private sector is slowly but steadily pushing the country forward. While India faces significant challenges, the opportunities in this evolving economic powerhouse generate a strong wave of positive sentiment. India is indeed marching forward with excellence.

Yash Kalra is businessman based in Jaipur, known for his expertise in economics, financial management, strategic planning, travel and tourism, and event management.

ARANMULA KANNADI: A REFLECTION OF ANCIENT INDIAN SCIENCE

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Nestled in the tranquil temple town of Aranmula in Kerala, a mysterious mirror has silently reflected the brilliance of Indian metallurgy, spiritual symbolism, and artisanal heritage for over five centuries. Known as the Aranmula Kannadi, or Aranmula Mirror, this rare artefact is no ordinary mirror — it is a masterpiece of ancient science and sacred tradition, and its making remains one of India's best-kept artisanal secrets.

The Aranmula Kannadi is a front-surface reflective mirror, a rarity even by today's industrial standards. While modern mirrors rely on a glass base coated with metallic films, the Aranmula mirror eliminates the glass. It is crafted entirely from a special high-tin bronze alloy, resulting in a unique, distortion-free reflection that doesn't suffer from the secondary images seen in typical back-coated glass mirrors.

Scientific studies have confirmed that this mirror is made of a delta phase bronze — an intermetallic compound of copper and tin ($\text{Cu}_{31}\text{Sn}_{38}$) — with a tin composition of about 32.6%. This precision alloy, referred to as high-tin 'delta' bronze, is metallurgically complex to reproduce, even with modern technology. What's astounding is that the exact formulation and process remain guarded within a single lineage of artisans in Aranmula, passed down from generation to generation as an oral family secret.

BORN OF LEGEND, ROOTED IN RITUAL

The origins of the Aranmula Kannadi are woven into the mythos of the Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna. Legend tells of skilled artisans summoned from Tamil Nadu for temple

construction who offered a gleaming crown fitted with a metal mirror to the deity. Impressed, the king asked them to settle in Aranmula, where the mirror-making legacy took root.

Locals believe a woman from one of these families received the secret formula in a divine dream. Since then, the tradition has stayed within the Vishwakarma community — a testament to both spiritual calling and metallurgical mastery.

More than a decorative object, the mirror holds ceremonial weight. It is an essential element of the Ashtamangalyam — the eight auspicious items used in Hindu rituals and weddings in Kerala. It symbolises purity, clarity, and good fortune. During Vishu, the Kerala New Year, the mirror takes center stage in the Vishukkani — a visual offering that believers view upon waking to ensure prosperity.

A LABOUR OF LOVE AND PRECISION

Creating the Aranmula mirror is a labor-intensive process involving two primary stages — alloy casting and extensive polishing. The mirrors come in three basic forms: hand-held (valkanadi), backstand, and fixed-stand models. Each begins with a mould, often made from local clay mixed with flax to achieve just the right adhesion and strength. Artisans historically sourced this mud from specific paddy fields near the Pampa River — until the 2018 Kerala floods disrupted availability and forced sourcing from nearby villages like Mannar.

Once the alloy is poured and cooled, the surface is polished for several weeks using a paste made of fine abrasives and oils, until the metal takes on a flawless, glass-like sheen. The polishing alone can take up to two months. The process is so intricate that a single er-



ror can render the mirror unusable.

Each mirror is then framed in ornately hand-crafted metal casings — traditionally in brass or bronze — transforming it from a scientific marvel into a symbol of grace and reverence.

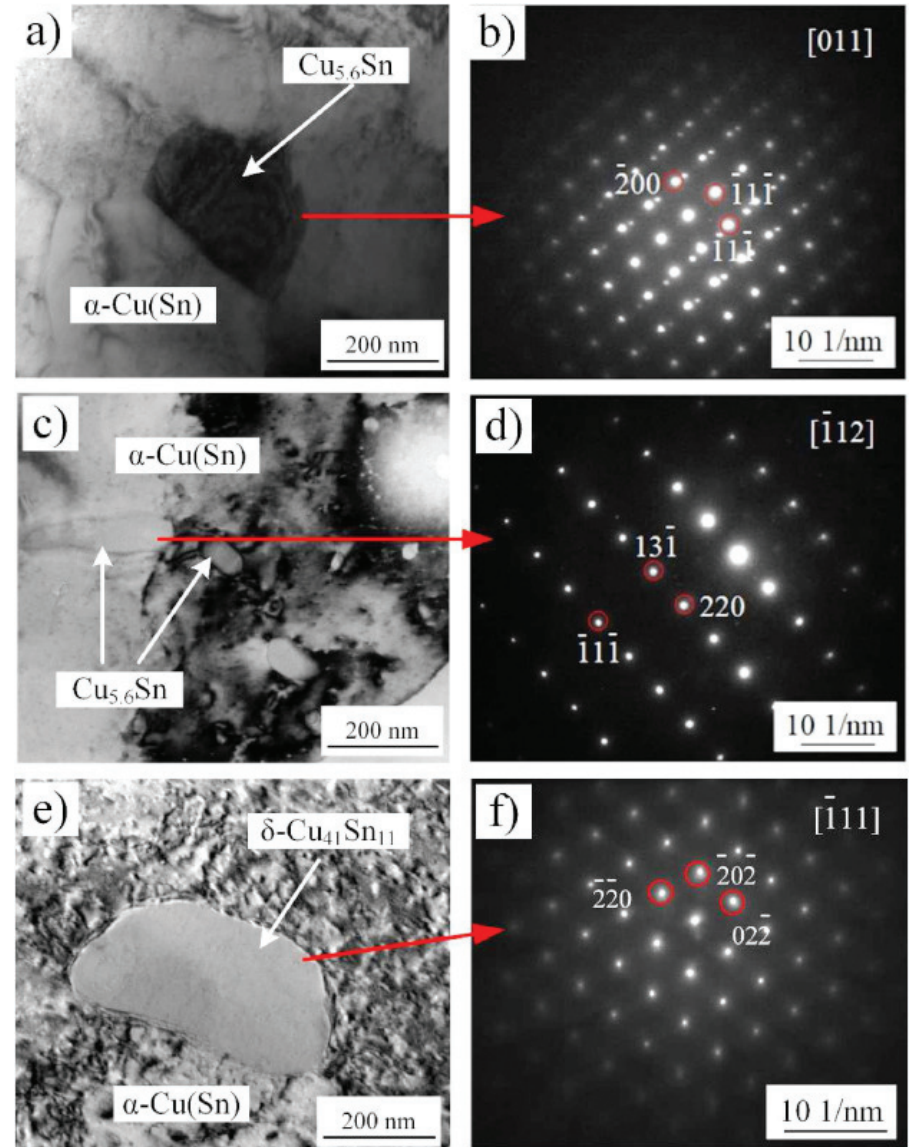
WHEN FLOODWATERS ROSE, SO DID THE MIRROR MAKERS

In August 2018, devastating floods submerged most of Aranmula and brought production of the mirror to a standstill. Fourteen of the 25 known mirror-making units (alas) around the Parthasarathy Temple were underwater for days. Hundreds of moulds were destroyed, copper and tin supplies washed away, and countless finished mirrors scratched beyond redemption.

"The industry came to a complete halt for nearly two months," recalled K. P. Ashokan, president of the Vishwabrahmana Aranmula Metal Mirror Nirman Society. The loss was not merely financial — estimated at Rs.10–15 lakh per unit — but spiritual and cultural. The flood had hit just before Onam, the festival season that brings in the largest orders.

Yet, like the metal they mould, the artisans proved resilient. Aid came from across the world, spurred by media coverage. Volunteers helped clean out the mud-clogged alas, donations poured in, and the global demand for authentic mirrors surged. Within six months, production resumed — a phoenix-like revival from the mud and waters.

The origins of the Aranmula Kannadi are woven into the mythos of the Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna.



TEM images of SLMed Cu-Sn alloy specimens: a, b) Cu-5Sn; c, d) Cu-10Sn; e, f) Cu-15Sn. PICTURE SOURCE: Sahapedia

tin composition — suggests not only technical prowess but scientific intuition far ahead of its time.

The process mirrors techniques similar to the lost-wax method found in Chola bronzes. But here, the end product is reflective, both literally and metaphorically, of a civilisation that could merge aesthetic sensibility with scientific inquiry.

METALLURGY IN THE VEDIC ERA

Though the mirror's documented history dates back to at least the 18th century, the metallurgical knowledge it embodies echoes practices from the Vedic period. The Vedas and ancient texts like Rasa Ratna Samuccaya and Samarangana Sutradhara reveal an intricate understanding of metals, alloys, and casting techniques. The precision required to form a delta-phase alloy — stable only in a narrow range of copper-

lured by urban opportunities and disinterested in long hours of painstaking labour, are reluctant to carry the legacy forward. To counter this, the Nirman Society now runs training programs every two years and has launched e-commerce initiatives to broaden its market.

Despite the efforts, demand fluctuates. Many artisans still rely on pilgrimage seasons and festival sales. "The value of the mirror lies in understanding what it represents," says Rajeev, a third-generation craftsman. "It is not just about reflection; it's about preserving history, tradition, and science."

For those seeking to bring this heritage home, authentic Aranmula Kannadis can be purchased in the village itself or from certified vendors online, such as the official website (www.aranmulakannadi.net). Each mirror comes with a certificate of

authenticity. Prices range from Rs.1,000 for small models to over Rs.1 lakh for large, ornamental pieces.

At home, the mirror is often placed near a puja altar, in the living room, or as part of a ceremonial ashtamangalya set. It should be kept at room temperature, cleaned delicately in one direction, and never stored in kitchens or bathrooms — reflecting not just faces but auspicious intent.

A PILGRIMAGE OF CULTURE

The town of Aranmula, located about 120 km from Thiruvananthapuram, is a spiritual destination in its own right. Visitors can reach it via the nearest airport in Kochi or railway stations at Kollam or Chengannur. The best time to visit is between October and February, or during Onam, when the temple town erupts in celebration. Snake boat races on the Pampa, temple feasts (vallasadya), and mirror markets offer a cultural immersion like no other.

Kerala Tourism has declared Aranmula a "heritage village," urging travelers to explore not just its temple and boat races but its enduring tradition of crafting reflections in metal.

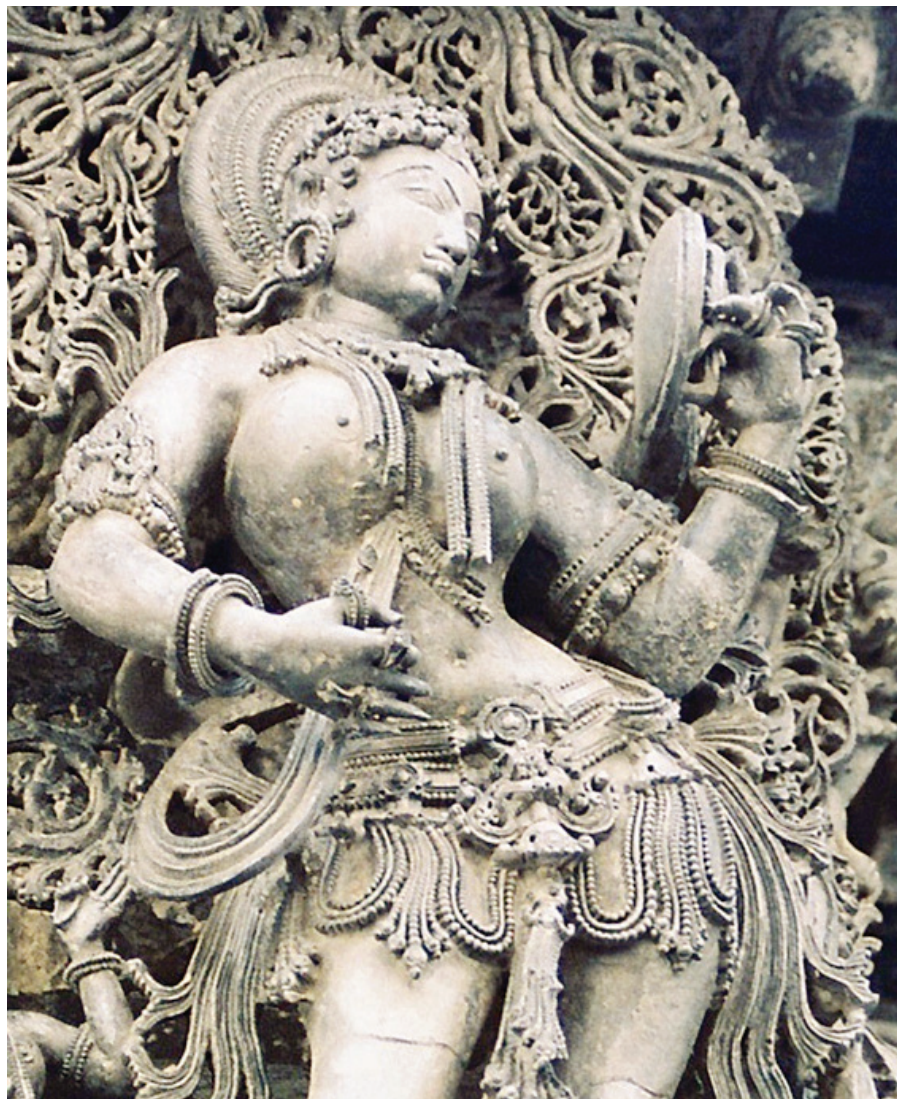
REFLECTING A LOST WORLD

In an age of instant selfies and mass-produced goods, the Aranmula Kannadi stands apart as a quiet embodiment of India's ancient wisdom — an object that requires weeks of patience, secret recipes, and spiritual grounding to create. It is a mirror that doesn't just show your face but invites you to reflect on heritage, craftsmanship, and what it means to truly "see" something.

In the hands of its artisans, this mirror becomes more than a product. It is a portal into a legacy that deserves not just admiration, but preservation. For to understand the Aranmula Kannadi is to glimpse the brilliance of a civilization that saw no boundaries between science and soul.



Sharada Srinivasan holding a polished mirror blank at the workshop of Gopukumar Achary. PICTURE SOURCE: Sahapedia



Madanika with mirror, thirteenth-century Hoysala sculpture, temple at Belur, Karnataka. PICTURE SOURCE: Sahapedia

TRAINS, TALES, AND TIME: 172 YEARS OF INDIAN RAILWAYS



DR. SUDHANSHU MANI

Even as we congratulate Indian Railways (IR) on completing 172 years, I reflected on recent news. And although one is aware that IR is increasingly caught in the gravitational pull of grandstanding, the experience bordered on the surreal.

In a brisk 10-minute scan, one came across news gems like the Mumbai-Pune and Delhi-Jaipur Hyperloop projects that would allegedly slash travel time to 25 minutes and better still, a Chennai-Bengaluru corridor was under consideration to bring the cities just 15 minutes apart. Never mind that the all that is on ground is a student level scaled down experimental model at IIT Madras. Another report claimed that a Delhi-Varanasi high-speed rail would complete the journey in 3.5 hours with a 15-km tunnel under construction. Reality check: no such project has even been sanctioned.

Laudatory headlines celebrated record earnings in FY 25 but the annual growth in revenue is a paltry 1.7%, salvaged largely by increased carriage of polluting coal. On the passenger front, IR announced the rollout of 50 Amrit Bharat trains with ergonomic seats and fancy pantry designs but completely silent on the plight of General Class passengers who still travel standing in appalling conditions.

One might argue that these are media exaggerations. Yet, most reports quote official railway

sources, and we have seen no clarifications or retractions.

Take the recent Fevicol advertisement featuring passengers clinging to the door of a Mumbai local. IR took umbrage and had it pulled down. But while the ad may have nudged the boundaries of taste, the image it portrayed is sadly all too familiar.

A LEGACY THAT ECHOES ON THE TRACKS

But first, a toast to the birthday. At 172, IR remains India's most ambitious social experiment on wheels. It's far more than a transportation network—it's an emotional map, a mobile tapestry of the nation's lives. To call it an organisation is like calling the Himalayas a hill station. It's a parallel universe, connecting dusty hamlets to megacities, carrying not just freight and passengers but livelihood, memories, frustrations, and dreams.

The romance of Indian Railways lies not merely in nostalgia but in its living, breathing poetry. Ask any Indian and they'll have a train story: the thrill of the window seat, the lullaby of wheels on track, the intrigue of foil-packed meals, or the chaos and charm of a packed compartment. For more than a century and a half, IR has been a great leveller. From pilgrims to politicians, schoolchildren to soldiers, everyone has ridden in its belly, sharing benches and stories. There is no parallel to the shared humanity of a train journey—raw, unfiltered India, crawling mostly below 100 kmph, occasionally sprinting at 160.

The imagery is iconic: Gandhi riding lower class to connect with the people for awakening of its people to aspire for freedom; red-shirted porters defying physics with a tower of luggage on their heads; vendors chanting "chai-



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chai" with the cadence of a hymn; and the grand old stations—VT, Howrah, Charbagh—standing tall, noble but weary.

Even bridges tell stories.

The Chenab Bridge, soaring 359 metres above the riverbed, is more than a marvel—it's a symbol of ambition with reality. And then there is Train

18/Vande Bharat, a home-grown symbol of modernity and speed, evoking a fresh chapter in the railway romance.

TRANSFORMATIONAL MILESTONES

But romance alone does not move a nation. IR has evolved—though at times at the Hindu rate of change. Still, there have been epochs of genuine reform.

Among post-Independence milestones, the Assam Rail Link Project of 1949 under Karnail Singh speedily reconnected re-

gions split by Partition. The launch of the Rajdhani Express in 1969 brought cities closer, in spirit and in time. In 1982, MS Gujral's introduction of unit rake freight transformed freight logistics with increased revenues. The late 1980s saw Madhavrao Scindia usher in Shatabdi Express, catering upgrades, and computerized reservations.

E. Sreedharan's execution of the Konkan Railway remains a gold standard for infrastructure delivery, laying the groundwork for urban metros. As India went digital, serpentine queues gave way to online bookings. Freight reforms under Lalu Prasad Yadav—controversial but effective—boosted revenue significantly. The 2013-18 green shift introduced bio-toilets, and 2019 saw the long-overdue removal of unmanned level crossings. Today, the USBRL project connecting Kashmir to the national grid stands as both a civil engineering triumph and a statement of true national integration.

Major changes like complete gauge conversion, 100% electrification, LHB

coaches with CBC couplers, and powerful locomotives, though impactful, unfolded too gradually to mark true tipping points. The Vande Bharat story, however, deserves a separate mention. It sparked rare engineering pride and demonstrated the power of leadership and conviction. But what began as a movement risks devolving into tokenism.

THE HYPE

Which brings us to the present. There's no doubt IR enjoys massive capital support. Over the past decade, it has received 17 lakh crore—seven times the previous decade. This should have translated into a quantum leap in performance. Yet, freight growth this year barely reached 1.9%. The Operating Ratio, stubbornly hovering around 98-99, is propped up more by accounting acrobatics than efficiency. The Dedicated Freight Corridors—once touted as transformative—are physically complete but commercially underwhelming. Freight speeds linger at 25 kmph, undercutting the potential.

Worse is the culture of announcements. No waiting list by 2027—without a roadmap. Kavach safety system coverage remains static despite loud promises. "400 Vande Bharats by 2025"—but we have not seen even 100. Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train by 2022? Now drifting to 2030. Hydrogen trains—bizarrely proposed on already electrified routes. And the Vande Bharat sleeper version remains a prototype in purgatory.

The PR engine hums smoothly. But is storytelling replacing story-making? Grand declarations far outpace delivery. The IR Amendment Bill of 2024, merging two acts, was hyped as "historic," but does little to address autonomy, innovation, staffing,

or safety. The continuing saga of the botched Indian Railway Management Service adds to the confusion rather than resolving it.

Even the climate narrative feels hollow. Electrification is cited as a green triumph, but it is mostly powered by coal-based electricity and even, ironically, freight loading is being sustained by transporting more coal. The Fevicol fiasco was perhaps the clearest sign of misplaced priorities—an overreaction that betrayed a fragile ego rather than introspection. Great institutions can laugh at themselves. Mediocre ones censor the mirror.

THE RAIL AHEAD

Let this not be mistaken for cynicism. Indian Railways has achieved tremendous, often thankless feats—rare but some of them world-class. But we must acknowledge the dissonance: between investment and outcome, promise and performance, volume and value.

IR is the nation's lifeline, ferrying hopes, dreams, and necessities across a billion lives. To thrive, it needs empathy, purpose, innovation, and passion to deliver - virtues that go beyond budgets. Patronage may come from necessity, lack of choice or even novelty politics may fund initiatives. But sustainable progress comes only through meaningful execution, integrity, and accountability.

It is time to move beyond applause-driven hype. Less noise, more nuance. Fewer declarations, more delivery. Let genuine reforms, thoughtful innovations, and a culture of responsibility be the locomotive that pulls Indian Railways into its next century, with soul and substance.

The author is Retd. General Manager/Indian Railways, Leader of Train 18/Vande Bharat project and Indepen-

ANALOG ELEGANCE: A SIX-DECADE VISUAL JOURNEY THROUGH RAJASTHAN

TDG NETWORK

Picture truly speaks a thousand words—something clearly reflected in the powerful visuals showcased at the analog photography exhibition 'The Song of Light - An Analog Odyssey through Rajasthan', which opened today at the Rajasthan International Centre (RIC), Jaipur, as part of its Foundation Day celebrations. This unique exhibition offers a compelling visual narrative of Rajasthan's rich culture and daily life, captured over the past 60 years by acclaimed Jaipur-based jeweller and photographer Sudhir Kasliwal, whose work brings to life the timeless spirit and stories of the desert state.

Analog photography, often referred to as film photography, is the original form of image-making that has captivated generations of artists, storytellers, and enthusiasts. Unlike digital photography, which uses electronic sensors to capture and process images, analog photography relies on light-sensitive film to record scenes through a chemical process. This technique, which dates back to the 19th century, is celebrated not just for its historical significance, but also for its unique aesthetic, tactile process, and emotional depth.

At the heart of analog

photography is a sense of intentionality and patience. Each shot must be carefully composed and exposed, as film rolls offer a limited number of frames—typically 24 or 36. This constraint encourages photographers to slow down, observe more deeply, and truly connect with their subject. The process doesn't end with the click of a shutter; developing the film in a darkroom and printing the image by hand are integral parts of the creative journey. These steps require skill, precision, and a deep understanding of chemical processes, adding to the photographer's craftsmanship.

The visual output of analog photography is equally compelling. Film captures light in a way that feels organic and rich, offering subtle color tones, soft contrasts, and grain textures that are difficult to replicate digitally. The imperfections and unpredictability of film—light leaks, grain, and minor flaws—add character and emotion to the photographs, making each image one of a kind. Moreover, different types of film stocks can produce vastly different looks, giving photographers a broader palette to express their vision.

In a world dominated by instant digital gratification, analog photography



has seen a renaissance in recent years. Many contemporary photographers are returning to film to rediscover its authenticity and artistic value. Exhibitions like "The Song of Light - An Analog Odyssey through Rajasthan" by Sudhir Kasliwal are perfect examples of how analog photography continues to be a powerful medium for storytelling. Through his lens, the spirit and soul of Rajasthan are preserved not just as visuals, but as living memories.

Analog photography is more than a technique; it's an experience—a meditative and immersive form of visual art that continues to inspire and enchant, connecting the past with the present in every carefully crafted frame.

The exhibition was in-



augurated by an esteemed panel of diplomats: Ambassador Gurjit Singh (Former Envoy to Germany, Indonesia, and Ethiopia), Ambassador Gaitri I. Kumar (Former Envoy to the UK, Belgium, and the European Union), and Ambassador Satish Mehta (Former Envoy to Kuwait and Former Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations - ICCR). Nihal Chand Goel, Director of RIC, also presided over

the inaugural event.

Running from 17 April to 19 April, the exhibition features over 60 film photographs, including several rare Cibachrome prints, each a window into the lives, traditions, and landscapes of Rajasthan. Unlike modern digital exhibits, this analog showcase invites viewers into an immersive world where light, shadow, and emotion blend seamlessly on film.



Sudhir Kasliwal, a self-taught photographer with a passion for analog techniques, has long been hailed as one of the most profound visual storytellers of Rajasthan. In his photographs, Rajasthan isn't just a backdrop of forts and palaces—it's a living, breathing land inhabited by people whose lives are steeped in centuries-old traditions. From village fairs and local rituals to women preparing their daily meals or herders walking their livestock at sunset, each frame tells a story of simplicity, resili-

ence, and dignity. "There's no nostalgia, no excessive melancholy," says Kasliwal. "I aim to capture things as they are—maybe with a touch of positivity. Happiness is an attitude of mind. People in our country are happy, and I want the outside world to see that joy."

This people-first approach sets Sudhir apart from other photographers drawn to Rajasthan's grand architecture and royal history. While many focus on the state's majestic palaces and desert vistas, Kasliwal's lens turns toward

ordinary moments and everyday people, celebrating their joy, dignity, and humanity without romanticizing poverty or overemphasizing grandeur.

The exhibition offers more than just visuals—it's an experiential journey through a Rajasthan that often escapes the spotlight. Each photograph reveals a slice of life suspended in time, evoking both a sense of place and a sense of purpose.

Significantly, the exhibition follows closely on the heels of the inauguration of Darkroom 2.0, a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to analog photography founded by Sudhir Kasliwal. Launched by legendary photographer Steve McCurry, Darkroom 2.0 is designed as a hub for workshops, exhibitions, and education in traditional photographic techniques. It aims to rekindle interest in film photography, offering hands-on experiences to new generations of photographers and enthusiasts.

Through 'The Song of Light', Sudhir Kasliwal extends an invitation to experience the timeless spirit of Rajasthan—one frame at a time. His analog images serve not just as artistic artifacts but as powerful cultural documents that preserve the heart and soul of rural India in a rapidly digitalizing world.

US AND UKRAINE INK PACT ON RECONSTRUCTION, CRITICAL MINERALS

US and Ukraine sign a Memorandum of Intent, forging a partnership focused on Ukraine's reconstruction funded by its natural resources, including critical minerals vital for US industries.

TDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON

The recently unveiled Memorandum of Intent (MoI) between the United States and Ukraine marks a pivotal moment, establishing the foundational principles for a long-term economic and strategic partnership. Forged against the backdrop of ongoing geopolitical complexities and the urgent need for Ukraine's post-conflict reconstruction, this agreement lays the groundwork for extensive collaboration. The primary focus is on the development of Ukraine's significant natural resource sector and the creation of a robust framework for its economic recovery. While the MoI itself is not a final, legally binding treaty, it serves as a crucial roadmap, outlining key provisions and strategic implications that will undoubtedly shape the future of the bilateral relationship.

SHARED VISION

At its core, the MoI articulates a vision of shared economic prosperity and strategic alignment. It acknowledges the critical need for substantial investment in Ukraine's reconstruction following the devastating impacts of the ongoing conflict. The agreement also recognizes the significant potential of Ukraine's vast natural resource wealth to fuel this recovery and contribute to global supply chains. Furthermore, the document underscores the United States' commitment to supporting Ukraine's long-term security and its integration into the broader



international community.

KEY PROVISION

One of the most significant provisions of the MoI is the establishment of a joint Reconstruction Investment Fund. This fund is envisioned as a collaborative financial mechanism, co-managed by the governments of the United States and Ukraine. A key feature of this fund is Ukraine's commitment to allocate 50% of its future revenues generated from state-owned natural resources towards its capitalization. This includes a wide array of strategically important resources such as minerals, hydrocarbons (oil and natural gas), and associated infrastructure, including liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals and port facilities. This commitment by Ukraine signifies a bold step towards leveraging its natural wealth for its own recovery and long-term economic development. By dedicating a substantial portion of future resource revenues to the Reconstruction Investment Fund, Ukraine



aims to create a sustainable financial stream that can be directed towards critical infrastructure projects, economic diversification initiatives, and social programs essential for rebuilding the nation. The collaborative management structure of the fund ensures a degree of transparency and joint oversight in the allocation and utilization of these resources, fostering trust and accountability between the two partner nations. The inclusion of hydrocarbons and related infrastructure in the revenue-sharing agreement highlights the potential for Ukraine to play a more significant role in the global energy landscape in the future. While the current conflict has severely disrupted Ukraine's energy sector, the long-term vision outlined in the MoI suggests a commitment to revitalizing and further develop-

ing its energy resources, potentially contributing to European energy security and generating substantial revenues for reconstruction. Similarly, the focus on mineral resources, as discussed later, underscores the strategic importance of Ukraine's geological wealth beyond the energy sector.

US SUPPORT FOR SECURITY

Another crucial aspect of the MoI pertains to the United States' support for Ukraine's security guarantees. While the document stops short of providing concrete, legally binding security assurances akin to a mutual defense treaty, it explicitly expresses the United States' support for Ukraine's pursuit of such guarantees, recognizing their vital role in establishing lasting peace and stability in the region. The United



Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskiy (Left) and US President Donald Trump. File Photo

States further commits to a long-term financial partnership aimed at fostering a stable and economically prosperous Ukraine. This commitment includes taking concrete steps to bolster Ukraine's economic security resilience, recognizing that a strong and self-sufficient economy is a fundamental pillar of national security. The emphasis on long-term financial partnership and economic security resilience suggests a broader strategy beyond immediate reconstruction needs. It implies a commitment to assisting Ukraine in building a robust and diversified economy that is less vulnerable to external pressures and can sustain long-term growth and development. This could involve support for structural reforms, investment promotion, and integration into global markets. The MoI also formally

acknowledges Ukraine's historic decision to relinquish its nuclear arsenal, recognizing its significant contribution to global peace and security.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In terms of its legal framework, the MoI demonstrates flexibility in its signing process, allowing for signing in multiple counterparts. The MoI anticipates the signing of a final, more detailed agreement shortly after April 26, 2025, contingent upon ongoing technical negotiations and parliamentary ratification in Ukraine. Beyond the specific provisions, the document carries significant strategic implications, particularly concerning economic and strategic interests. The agreement is widely interpreted as a strategic move by the United States to secure enhanced access to Ukraine's sub-

stantial reserves of critical minerals, vital for various industries. Ukraine's mineral wealth positions it as a potentially crucial partner in global supply chains, aligning with the US desire to diversify sources. This access could also have significant implications for the defense industry. The MoI also carries considerable diplomatic weight, emerging after a period of reported strain in bilateral relations, signaling a renewed commitment to a durable partnership.

DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Domestically within Ukraine, the MoI has elicited a range of reactions, with ongoing debates regarding specific terms, particularly the valuation of past US military aid. President Zelenskyy has emphasized that previous aid was grants, not loans. Looking

ahead, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal is scheduled to visit Washington to finalize discussions, with the aim of concluding the agreement by April 26. The final agreement will require ratification by Ukraine's parliament to become fully effective. This ratification process will involve parliamentary debate and a vote, reflecting democratic oversight.

SHAPING FUTURE RELATIONSHIP

In conclusion, the US-Ukraine Memorandum of Intent marks a significant step toward a comprehensive economic partnership focused on mineral development and reconstruction. While the MoI sets the groundwork, the final agreement will be pivotal in shaping the future economic and strategic relationship between the two nations.

Stagflation: Powell's warning and the Fed's dilemma

TDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has raised alarm bells, warning that President Trump's tariff policies could trigger stagflation, a dreaded economic condition characterized by rising prices and slowing economic growth. This scenario, reminiscent of the 1970s, poses a significant challenge for central bankers.

THREAT OF TARIFFS

Powell's concern stems from the potential for tariffs to simultaneously inflate consumer prices and stifle economic activity. He argued that the "significantly larger than anticipated" tariffs are likely to generate at least a temporary rise in inflation, with the potential for prolonged price pressures as costs pass through to consumers. This directly contradicts Trump's pledge to lower prices for Americans.

CENTRAL BANKER'S NIGHTMARE

Stagflation presents a unique policy dilemma. Traditionally, the Fed combats inflation by raising interest rates, which can slow economic growth and increase unemployment. Conversely, lowering rates to stimulate



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell



growth can exacerbate inflation. This catch-22 situation puts the Fed's dual mandate—maximizing employment and maintaining price stability—in direct conflict. Powell acknowledged this, stating, "We may find ourselves in the challenging scenario in which our dual-mandate goals are in tension."

ECHOES OF 1970S

The 1970s serve as a stark reminder of stagflation's devastating impact. The Arab oil embargo triggered a surge in oil prices, leading to high inflation and stag-

nant growth. The Fed's attempts to navigate this crisis through fluctuating interest rates ultimately resulted in a prolonged and painful recession. This historical context underscores the severity of Powell's warning.

CURRENT VS. PAST CRISIS

While Powell's warnings are serious, he emphasized that the U.S. is not currently experiencing stagflation. He contrasted today's economic indicators with the 1970s, which saw double-digit unemployment and high single-digit inflation. However, he cautioned that the current policy path, driven by tariffs, could lead the economy down a dan-

gerous path.

FED'S BALANCING ACT

The core of the issue lies in the Fed's delicate balancing act. Traditionally, low unemployment supports moderate inflation as consumers can absorb price increases. However, stagflation disrupts this dynamic. When inflation rises amidst economic stagnation and job losses, businesses struggle to pass on costs, suppressing profits and deepening the economic malaise. Powell fears that the current tariff-driven policy could create this unfavorable environment, forcing the Fed to make difficult choices between combating inflation and supporting growth.

Mexico: Why the Far-Right falters

TDG NETWORK
MEXICO CITY

Mexico's 2024 election results offer a unique case study for the global left. While far-right politics has gained traction in many parts of the world, Mexico saw the governing left-wing party, Morena, not only retain the presidency but also secure a supermajority in the lower house. This success, built on addressing Mexico's deep-seated inequality, has sparked interest among progressives globally. However, Morena's approach also incorporates elements that might give others pause.

MORENA'S WINNING FORMULA

Morena's triumph, initially seen with Andrés Manuel López Obrador's historic 2018 victory and reinforced by Claudia Sheinbaum's recent win, hinges on a powerful populist narrative. López Obrador effectively framed the nation's problems as a consequence of corrupt elites, encompassing traditional political parties and their business allies. This message resonated deeply in a country where income inequality is stark, with a significant portion of wealth concentrated at the very top. López Obrador's charisma and long political career lent credibility to his promises of change. His extensive outreach through national tours and daily press conferences ("mañaneras") allowed him to directly communicate his government's achievements and critique his opponents, shaping the media landscape. This message was



President Andrés Manuel López Obrador

further amplified through state and social media, fostering a strong personal following.

Crucially, Morena delivered on some key promises. The minimum wage was doubled in real terms, social programs and cash transfers were expanded, and measures were taken to regulate worker outsourcing and democratize union contracts. Infrastructure projects were also prioritized in historically marginalized southern regions. These policies contributed to a notable decrease in the poverty rate between 2018 and 2022.

FAR-RIGHT'S FAILURE TO LAUNCH

In stark contrast to Morena's success, the far right in Mexico failed to gain any significant traction. Eduardo Verástegui, a figure attempting to import a Trumpian brand of politics centered on religious conservatism, gun rights, and individualism, couldn't even gather the necessary signatures to appear on the ballot. This suggests that a direct transplantation of American far-right ideol-

ogy did not resonate within the Mexican context.

CAVEATS FOR GLOBAL LEFT

While Morena's focus on socioeconomic justice offers valuable lessons, progressives elsewhere should approach replicating their model with caution. López Obrador's government, while achieving some progressive goals, also made pragmatic shifts to the right. These included making deals with big business, sidestepping significant tax reform, maintaining fiscal austerity, and adopting a tough stance on US-bound migrants for political leverage. The party also avoided taking clear stances on issues like gay marriage and abortion, seemingly to maintain broader appeal. Furthermore, López Obrador embraced the military, a popular but controversial institution, to implement his agenda, overlooking its history of human rights abuses.

This pragmatism, while contributing to electoral success, has alienated some on the Mexican left, including feminists,



environmentalists, and victims of violence. The influx of politicians with questionable backgrounds into Morena, driven by electoral expediency, has also created internal tensions.

MEXICO'S UNIQUE LANDSCAPE

Ultimately, the extent to which the global left can learn from Mexico is limited by the country's unique historical and social context. Mexico's colonial past, prolonged one-party rule, the significant influence of organized crime, and its deep economic dependence on the United States have shaped a distinct political landscape. The strong sense of injustice stemming from this history serves as a powerful mobilizing force.

A COMPLEX PICTURE

Mexico's political trajectory under Morena is not a simple story of the left triumphing over the right. It is a more nuanced narrative of a left-leaning party achieving significant electoral success by prioritizing socioeconomic justice and effectively mobilizing a populist base. However, this success has been intertwined with pragmatic, and at times right-leaning, compromises. Progressives outside Mexico must carefully consider which aspects of Morena's approach align with their values and contexts, recognizing that electoral victories can sometimes come at the cost of ideological purity.

US STRIKES ON YEMEN FUEL PORT KILL 74, SPARK HOUTHI RETALIATION THREAT

The health ministry spokesperson conveyed the grim figures, emphasizing that the count of “martyrs” and wounded individuals was not yet final

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Airstrikes conducted by the United States military on Yemen's Ras Isa fuel port have resulted in a devastating toll, with at least 74 people, including civilians and rescue workers, reportedly killed. According to the Houthi-run health ministry, an additional 171 individuals sustained injuries in what is being described as the deadliest attack since Washington initiated its campaign against the Iran-backed militants.


Anees al-Asbahi, the health ministry spokesperson, conveyed the grim figures, emphasizing that the count of “martyrs” and wounded individuals was not yet final as search efforts continued at the site.

Some analysts interpret the scale of the US operation and the choice of target – a significant economic hub in Yemen – as a deliberate message directed towards Tehran. This action comes amidst escalating pressure from the Trump administration on Iran concerning its nuclear program.

Despite President Trump's previous threats to “annihilate” Yemen's Houthi rebels, the group has demonstrated resilience, remaining intact despite the ongoing US air

DEADLY STRIKES

- Analysts suggest the large-scale attack on a key economic site aims to send a message to Iran amidst nuclear program tensions.
- Houthis vowed to retaliate, claiming to have targeted US aircraft carriers and a site near Israel's airport.
- US Central Command stated the strike aimed to eliminate a Houthi fuel source and revenue, denying intent to harm the Yemeni people.
- The attack sparked international condemnation from Iran and Hamas, while experts doubt the achievability of US military aims in Yemen.



A fuel tank burns following a U.S. strike on the Ras Isa fuel port, Yemen. File Photo

Anees al-Asbahi, the health ministry spokesperson, conveyed the grim figures, emphasizing that the count of “martyrs” and wounded individuals was not yet final as search efforts continued at the site.

campaign. Experts have expressed considerable skepticism regarding the long-term achievability of Trump's military policy in the region.

In the immediate aftermath of the US strikes, a Houthi official issued a strong vow of retaliation. The group announced that it had targeted two US aircraft carriers and a military installation in proximity to Israel's primary airport.

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree,

addressing a rebel-organized protest in the capital, Sana'a, asserted that “The American military buildup and continued aggression against our country will only lead to more counterattack and attack operations, clashes and confrontations.”

The US strikes reportedly impacted several areas, with the main concentration around the Ras Isa port facility. Among the deceased were truck drivers and emergency responders who were

present at the site.

Video footage purportedly from the port, disseminated by the Houthi-affiliated al-Masirah TV via social media in the early hours of Friday, depicted massive explosions and numerous bodies scattered across the area.

The TV station later broadcast interviews with survivors receiving treatment, including a man with severe burns. One individual who identified himself as a port worker recounted, “We ran away. The strikes came one after the other, then everything was on fire.”

The Ras Isa terminal, with a storage capacity of 3 million barrels, holds historical significance as the first port constructed for oil exports from Ye-

men approximately four decades ago.

Satellite data from a NASA fire monitoring system detected an intense blaze at the port location, situated just off Kamaran Island, early on Friday morning.

In a statement released on social media, US Central Command justified the strikes by stating that “US forces took action to eliminate this source of fuel for the Iran-backed Houthi terrorists and deprive them of illegal revenue that has funded Houthi efforts to terrorise the entire region for over 10 years.”

The statement further asserted, “This strike was not intended to harm the people of Yemen, who rightly want to throw off the yoke of Houthi subjugation and live peacefully.”

The US has declared its intention to continue its attacks on Yemen's Houthis – its most substantial military operation in the Middle East since Trump assumed office in January – unless the group ceases its attacks on Red Sea shipping.

When questioned about the Houthi casualty figures and its own assessment, US Central Command indicated that it had no additional information beyond the initial announcement of the strikes.

‘US could withdraw Ukraine peace efforts within days’

AGENCIES
PARIS

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Friday warned that America may abandon its peace efforts in Ukraine within “days” if it is not possible to end the war between Russia and Ukraine, CNN reported.

Speaking in Paris after high-level talks with European, Ukrainian, and Russian officials, Rubio emphasised the urgency of determining whether the war can be ended or not.

“We need to determine very quickly now, and I'm talking about a matter of days, whether or not this is doable,” he told reporters before departing Paris.

The comments came a day after he and special envoy Steve Witkoff met with the European and Ukrainian allies as US President Donald Trump's administration pushes for an end to Russia's war in Ukraine, CNN reported.

“If it's not possible, if we're so far apart that this is not going to happen, then I think the president is probably at a point where he's going to say we're done. It's not our war. We didn't start it. The United States has been helping Ukraine for the past three years and we want it to end, but it's not our war. President Trump has spent 87 days at the highest level of this government, repeatedly making efforts to bring this war to an end. We are now reaching a point where we need to decide and determine whether this is even possible or not. Which is why



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

we're engaging both sides,” Rubio told reporters.

Marco Rubio met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Friday, where he outlined a proposed peace framework, which received an “encouraging” response in Paris.

The US Department of State in a readout said, “Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke today with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The Secretary conveyed to his Russian counterpart the same message the US team communicated to the Ukrainian delegation and our European allies in Paris: President Trump and the United States want this war to end, and have now presented to all parties the outlines of a durable and lasting peace. The encouraging reception in Paris to the US framework shows that peace is possible if all parties commit to reaching an agreement.”

Earlier, Rubio had said that President Trump has been clear about ending the war between Russia and Ukraine “now.”

The political ties between the United States and Ukraine have evolved

significantly, particularly since Ukraine gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Over the years, the relationship has been characterized by mutual support, particularly in the face of Russian aggression. The U.S. has been a staunch ally, providing military, economic, and diplomatic support to Ukraine, especially after the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia and the subsequent conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

In recent years, particularly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the U.S. has ramped up its involvement, supplying Ukraine with advanced weapons, training, and financial assistance to bolster its defense against Russian forces. U.S. sanctions on Russia have been a significant component of this support, aimed at isolating Moscow internationally.

Ukraine, on the other hand, has sought closer ties with the West, including its aspiration to join NATO and the European Union. The U.S. has supported these ambitions, though the path to membership in these organizations remains uncertain. The bilateral relationship has also seen political complexities, particularly surrounding issues of military aid, corruption, and democratic reforms in Ukraine. However, the overall partnership remains strong, with both countries committed to Ukraine's sovereignty and security in the face of Russian aggression.

Pakistan bans accommodation for ‘illegal’ Afghan immigrants

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has banned offering accommodation, jobs, business property on rent, or hotel stays to Afghan nationals living in the country without proper documents, according to a report by ARY News.

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry announced the decision at a press briefing in Islamabad. He warned that strict action would be taken against anyone found helping undocumented Afghan migrants.

“There will be no extension of stay for Afghan immigrants without a valid passport and visa. There is now zero tolerance for undocumented Afghan nationals,” Chaudhry said.

He shared data showing that since April 1, 2025, a total of 84,869 Afghan nation-



Afghan immigrants in Pakistan.

als have been deported. Out of these, 25,320 had Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC), while 59,549 had no valid documents. Since the start of the one-document policy, a total of 9,07,351 Afghan nationals have been sent back.

Chaudhry said Afghan immigrants waiting to be deported are being kept at special transit locations, where they are provided with medical care, shelter,

transportation, and security. He also made it clear that legal action would be taken against people who rent out residential, commercial, or hotel properties to undocumented Afghan immigrants. He added that offering jobs or any kind of movable or immovable property to illegal Afghan immigrants is completely banned, ARY News reported.

India-Bangladesh business should run on merit: Dhaka

AGENCIES
DHAKA

Business between India and Bangladesh should be based on merit and strength, said M. Humayun Kabir, President of the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), during the Foreign Service Day celebrations in Dhaka on Friday. BEI is a leading think tank in Bangladesh.

Foreign Service Day in Bangladesh is celebrated every year on April 18. The day marks the historic moment in 1971 when Bangladesh diplomats and staff took over the Pakistan Deputy High Commission's office in Kolkata, establishing the first Bangladesh mission abroad. It is also a day to honour the brave diplomats and remember the 3 million people who were killed during the 1971 genocide.

“Well, that was a fiery time. We were all in the field just to gear up for our long liberation struggle. At that time, I recall on the 18th of April 1971, Hosain Ali raised the Bangladeshi flag and declared that the deputy high commission is Bangladesh's property. It represents Bangladesh. That really was a great energiser for all of us,” said Kabir, who is also a former Bangladeshi ambassador and a freedom fighter.

“The announcement that came on the 18th, the deputy high commissioner expressed allegiance to the Bangladesh government, which was a big energy and subsequently also from Delhi, our former senior colleague K M Shihab Uddin and Amzadul Haq, both of them also came out, and that gave us a great degree of strength.

China opposes US shipping fees, claims move will harm US consumers

AGENCIES
BEIJING

In response to the United States' recent announcement to impose additional port fees on Chinese-built or -operated ships docking in US ports, China expressed strong opposition and said that such measures would not only harm the US economy but also have consequences for global shipping, disrupt supply chains and increase inflationary pressures.

The nation further stated that the move will also hurt the interests of American consumers and businesses.

During a regular press conference on Friday, Chinese spokesperson Lin Jian said, “We've stated our position on relevant questions. Let me reiterate that measures such as imposing port fees and levying tariffs



on cargo handling facilities harm the US itself as well as others. The move not only hikes global maritime shipping costs and disrupts the stability of global industrial and supply chains, but also increases inflationary pressures in the US and hurts the interests of American consumers and businesses.”

He added, “The practice will ultimately fail to revitalise the US shipbuilding industry. We urge the US to respect facts and multi-

lateral rules, and immediately stop its wrongdoings. China will take necessary measures to defend its lawful rights and interests.”

According to a report by CNN, a Federal Register notice posted by the US Trade Representative (USTR) on Thursday stated that the US government will charge fees on all Chinese-built and -owned ships docking in US ports, based on net tonnage or goods carried on each voyage.

Intensified US-China trade war leaves the world in shock

This week, the Trump administration has announced that China will face a staggering 245 percent tariff on all imports from the US. It is announced as a response to Beijing's countermeasures in the ongoing trade dispute that has adversely affected global markets and shaken investor confidence. This decision, confirmed in a fact sheet released by the White House this week, marks a significant escalation in the already heightened tensions between the two countries. The official statement revealed that on Liberation Day, President Trump implemented a 10 percent tariff on all nations that impose high tariffs on American products. However, these tariffs were later put on hold as over 75 countries entered negotiations with the US to establish new

trade agreements.

The tariffs imposed on China and other countries on Liberation Day are seen as a continuation of Donald Trump's unwavering ‘America First’ trade policy. This action has elicited a strong backlash from China, which is resolute in its intention to retaliate against the US. In light of the recent introduction of a 245 percent tariff by the US, Lin Jian, a representative of China's Foreign Ministry, reaffirmed the government's steadfast position on tariffs, claiming that the trade dispute was initiated by the US. This underscores China's perspective on the trade conflict and highlights the ongoing tensions between the two nations regarding trade practices and tariffs.

The US previously imposed a 145 percent tariff on Chinese

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI

imports, prompting China to respond with a 125 percent tariff on American goods. This exchange escalated tensions between the two countries and contributed to instability in global stock markets. Additionally, Beijing took further action by prohibiting the export of specific products utilized by aerospace manufacturers and military contractors further escalating the tensions.

The international community is currently facing the repercussions of the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Levant region. In this scenario, Trump

has initiated a trade war, raising uncertainties regarding the future direction of his policies. It is unclear whether he will choose to alter his approach or continue with his existing strategy, as well as how the global community will respond. This situation presents considerable challenges for the world economy, and it is essential for Trump to understand that the US will also incur costs from this indirect conflict he has provoked. We can only hope that he will recognize the broader implications of his actions and put an end to the measures he

has set in motion. The potential fallout from these conflicts and trade tensions could have lasting effects, making it imperative for leaders to navigate these issues with foresight and responsibility. The interconnectedness of the global economy means that decisions made in one nation can reverberate across the world, underscoring the need for careful consideration and strategic planning.

As the global community grapples with the escalating trade conflict between the US and China, US Vice President JD Vance is scheduled to visit India next week for discussions with key leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This marks Vance's inaugural trip to India, where he aims to address mutual economic and geopolitical interests. In addition to

exploring various aspects of the strategic partnership between India and the US, Vance's official meetings are anticipated to cover topics such as the new tariffs implemented during the Trump administration and ongoing negotiations regarding a bilateral trade agreement between the two nations.

Though US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz was also anticipated to visit India during the final week of April; however, his trip has been cancelled amid some controversy. He was slated to engage in the India-US Forum, a private discussion supported by the external affairs ministry, and to co-chair the inaugural meeting of TRUST (Transforming the Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology) alongside his Indian counterpart. This initiative was introduced during

a meeting between President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Modi in Washington in February and represents a rebranded effort of the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET).

The cancellation of Waltz's visit marks a significant shift in the planned diplomatic engagements between the two nations. The TRUST initiative aims to enhance collaboration in strategic technology, reflecting the evolving nature of US-India relations. The forum was expected to serve as a platform for discussing critical issues and fostering deeper ties, but the recent developments have cast uncertainty on these diplomatic efforts.

Amid all these developments, keeping a focus on the bilat-

eral trade agreement, Indian officials express hope for a favourable outcome, emphasizing the ongoing trade negotiations between India and the US. The Indian delegation is preparing to discuss trade matters, following the joint statement made during the meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Modi on February 13. Additional talks are anticipated to tackle significant trade issues and promote a more equitable economic partnership between the two nations.

It is crucial for Trump to acknowledge that his actions should not jeopardize the stability of other nations or the global economy. It is hoped that he will embrace and work towards the Indian principle of ‘Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah’, which advocates for the well-being of all.

KAMAL HAASAN REGRETS NOT COLLABORATING WITH MANI RATNAM AFTER 'NAYAKAN'

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Superstar Kamal Haasan on Friday described his upcoming film Thug Life, a gangster drama directed by Mani Ratnam, as a peace offering to fans who have waited for over three decades for the two stalwarts of Indian cinema to reunite for a movie.

The duo had famously collaborated for the 1987 epic crime drama Nayakan, which was a huge commercial as well as critical hit, winning multiple National Film Awards.

And now they have reunited for Thug Life, another crime drama with high octane action and a star-



studded cast, consisting of actors from both north and south cinema industries.

"We can only say sorry. This film is our peace offering. And the fault lies with us. We could have done it. It's our fault-we kept thinking we could have done it. But it not make it a stage for an apology," Haas-

an said at the launch of the movie's first song "Jinguchaa".

Though they are collaborating after over 35 years, Haasan said their dynamic is still the same.

"Nothing has changed between Mani sir and me. We have done about 25 per cent of what we spoke of. One

is Nayakan and the other one is Thug Life. We have a long way to go. Because we didn't get to realize all our dreams in any film. I am sure that will be the case in the future films that we do."

"We dream so big and then we are constricted to fit our market and our budget," he added.

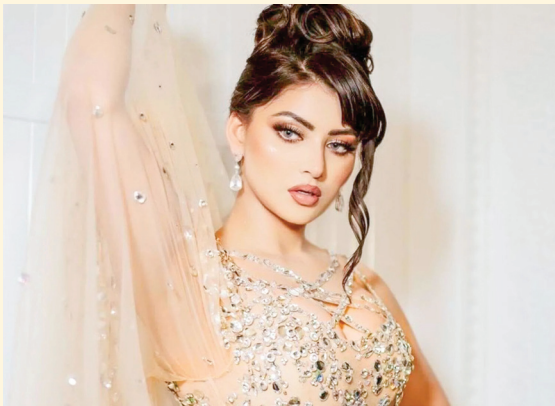
Haasan said in the world of cinema business, many are only concerned if a movie would make money or not. "It might gain profit, it might lead to a loss. But the ultimate judgement is given by the audience. And that's how new, budding artists evolve. That's how STR (Silambarasan TR) has also evolved and is rocking," he said.

Urvashi claims temple in her name exists

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

It's only a few select stars of Indian cinema that can boast to have temples constructed in their honor by their followers names such as Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth, and Nayanthara head that short list. It now appears that actor Urvashi Rautela has become a part of this elite group.

In a chat with host Siddharth Kannan, Urvashi dropped this unexpected hint casually. "Already mere naam ka mandir hai, Urvashi mandir. Aap Badrinath ke mandir ke darshan karne jaoge na, uske theek baaju mein there is a mandir, called



'Urvashi'," she said.

Siddharth, like all of us, was surprised by the sudden assertion and attempted to verify her assertion three times. Each time, Urvashi replied assertively, "Haan, Urvashi mandir wahan pe hai."

While these are surely thought of as a rather important spiritual accomplishment by many, Urvashi is already planning ahead. She told TOI that she had wished for yet another temple to be built in South India. Why?

Because she's recently been causing a stir in the Southern film industry and wishes to provide her fans there with a shrine just like the fans of the local film stars she's collaborated with.

"Within 1.5 years, I debuted in the industry with megastar Chiranjeevi. Then I worked with Pawan Garu Kalyan, with two films, then worked with Balaya Babu. My only desire is that if they have temples of him, then something like that should happen in South too, for the people who are my fans over there, something should happen there," she told.

Anupam Kher set for his second directorial 'Tanvi The Great'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor Anupam Kher is set for his second directorial, which is titled 'Tanvi The Great'. The actor opened up about his new project and how it is different from his debut directorial 'Om Jai Jagdish' in 2002.

Taking to his Instagram handle, Anupam shared a photo in which he was seen wearing a director's shirt while posing for the photograph.

The 'Saaransh' actor in his latest social media post opened up about his debut directorial movie 'Om Jai Jagdish' and said that he loved working in that film as the director.

Now, after 23 years, the actor has donned the director's cap once again to showcase his filmmaking skills with Tanvi The Great.

"It took me 23 years to wear a #Director t-shirt again! I loved directing the first film #OmJaiJagdish The ability I had. I made the film accordingly. But the story of that movie wasn't mine," wrote Anupam.



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

The actor further emphasised the fact that he was committed to the story of the film.

"The story of 'Tanvi The Great' is out of my heart and soul. And then life has taught a lot in the last 23 years. And now I'll keep telling you Tanvi-related talks, stories and stories until the film is released! Don't be bothered! This is marketing and love too! Jai

Ho," added Anupam.

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

Earlier in the month, in a conversation with ANI, Kher opened up about the challenges of bringing 'Tanvi The Great' to life.

BRAIN PICKING



We should respect all religions and just believe in peace, kindness and harmony.

— ANANYA PANDEY
(Indian Actress)

Athiya Shetty, KL share their baby girl's name

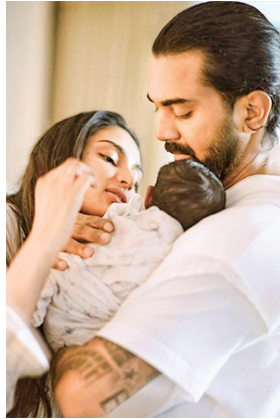
TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Cricketer KL Rahul and Athiya Shetty, who recently became parents to a baby girl, treated fans to her first glimpse on the occasion of the cricketer's birthday.

Taking to Instagram on Friday, the couple shared an adorable picture of themselves with their newborn and also revealed her name-Evaarah.

"Our baby girl, our everything. Evaarah/ivaaraa ~ Gift of God," read the caption of their post.

The couple welcomed their baby girl in March this year. They had announced their pregnancy in November last year with a sweet message that said, "Our



beautiful blessing is coming soon. 2025," accompanied by baby feet emojis.

Meanwhile, the special birthday post wasn't the only highlight of KL's day. His father-in-law, actor Suniel Shetty, also wished him with a warm post on Instagram.

Sharing a photo with KL and son Ahan Shetty, Suniel wrote, "Brother for Ahan, life partner for Tia, and a son for Mana and me. Wishing our most cherished gift a very, very happy birthday @klrahul."

KL Rahul, who is currently playing for Delhi Capitals (DC) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), has also played for Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), Punjab Kings (PBKS), and Lucknow Super Giants (LSG)

He has scored 4,921 runs at an average of 45.99, with a strike rate of 135.45 in 137 matches. He has made four centuries and 39 fifties so far, with a best score of 132*.

'Angreji Rangrasiya' song from Abir Gulaal out now

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

A new song 'Angreji Rangrasiya' from Fawad Khan and Vaani Kapoor's upcoming film 'Abir Gulaal' has been unveiled.

The new track is a wedding number, showcasing Vaani in full dance mode.

Abir Gulaal starring Fawad



khan and Vaani Kapoor releases in theatres on 9th May, 2025 The music is helmed by Amit Trivedi, with additional vocals by the talented Chotu Khan. The lyrics that capture the song's lighthearted essence are penned by the celebrated Lyricist Kumaar, and the female vocals are rendered by Akanksha Sethi. Have a look at this vibrant

track Talking about the song Vaani in a press note shares, "The song has such an electrifying energy, it's vibrant, infectious, and full of life. I had an absolute blast shooting for it. It's a lively, high-octane track that's sure to get everyone on their feet and dancing. Whether you're at a party or just looking to let loose, this track brings the vibe."

REVIEW: DROP *****

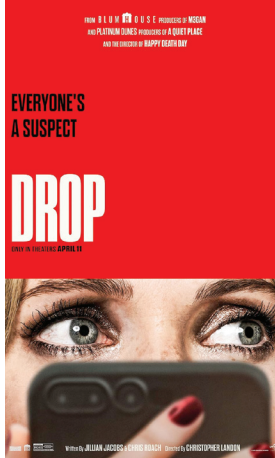
DROP

PRAVEEN NAGDA

Meghann Fahy starrer, DROP is a cellphone thriller explained in two words but keeps you fully hooked through one hour and forty minutes of runtime. The dark side of technology, cloning of the phone, and dangers of dating all lead to making the life miserable of a single mother one fine evening, who had come out

of an abusive relationship and trying to find love and life. It happened to a single mother who unknowingly and unwillingly became a target for committing a murderous crime with all evidence going against her.

Violet (Meghann Fahy), a psychological counsellor by profession is on a date night with the photographer Henry (Brandon Sklenar). The date is set up by her sister Jen (Violett Beane) who drops



in at home to look after her son Toby (Jacob Robinson), while she is on the night out. Henry is running late, and

Violet decides to hang in at the Bar before joining him at the table with a great night view of tall buildings, with their heights and depths speaking for themselves.

She encounters a few characters here, including Cara (Gabrielle Ryan), Phil (Ed Weeks), Richard (Reed Diamond), and Matt (Jeffery Self), who add their bit of funny things, drama and intrigue beautifully to the story as it unfolds. Almost the whole film is completed with two settings: the restaurant and Violet's home.

Henry arrives and as they start a conversation,

Violet's phone comes into action with notifications and alerts of airdropped messages by someone unknown to her. Initially, she shows it to Henry, and they pass it off as some prank, but things turn out murky for Violet who is now fully cyber-hijacked. She starts receiving instructions via airdrops like a handler instructing the team members to criminals for executing a crime.

To her utter disgust, Violet discovers that she is under full watch, not only in the restaurant where her every move is tracked but also be-

cause her son and sister are held hostage at her home. Her efforts to seek help from 911, fellow guests, the front office desk, the bartender, the piano player, and the server all hit a roadblock, and she's confronted with tough threats by the handler. She is being used for destroying the criminal evidence available in the SD card of Henry's camera and then murdering him by poisoning his drink.

Violet survives an abusive relationship, has a great presence of mind and a never-say-die attitude while pretending to fall into the

trap of the handler, and is always looking for an opportunity to fight back and destroy the malicious mission of the handler.

Meghann Fahy as Violet exhibits her terrific acting skills, she pretends to be normal and shows extreme stress at the same time while striking a great balance of frequently changing and visible moods, emotions, and facial expressions. Eventually, she discovers and confronts the handler sitting among the guests while mistaking a few others to be the culprits earlier. The suspense, the thrill,

the intrigue, the anxiety, the tension, and the excitement are well-woven throughout the story unfolding at the perfect timing, and you don't feel for a moment any kind of stagnancy or slowdown in the flow of storytelling.

Directed by Christopher Landon and written by Jillian Jacobs and Chris Roach, DROP is a fantastic crime-suspense-thriller to watch, and you're bound to be glued throughout.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

POSITIVE PARENTING TECHNIQUES: RAISING KIDS WITH LOVE, RESPECT, AND CONSISTENCY

TDG NETWORK

Parenting is one of life's most rewarding yet challenging journeys. In a world filled with constant change and pressures, adopting positive parenting techniques can help foster a nurturing, respectful, and secure environment for children to grow into confident and responsible individuals.

WHAT IS POSITIVE PARENTING?

Positive parenting is a parenting approach focused on mutual respect, open communication, empathy, and setting clear boundaries. Unlike traditional methods that rely heavily on punishment, positive parenting emphasizes guidance over control, helping children understand their actions and encouraging them to make better choices.

KEY POSITIVE PARENTING TECHNIQUES

1. CONNECT BEFORE YOU CORRECT

Children respond better when they feel emotionally connected. Before disciplining, take a moment to acknowledge your child's feelings. A simple, "I see you're upset," can go a long way in diffusing tension. Once the child feels heard, they are more receptive to guidance.

2. USE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Focus on rewarding good behavior instead of only pointing out mistakes. Praising effort, kindness, and honesty builds self-esteem and motivates children to repeat those behaviors. For example, saying

"You did a great job helping your sibling today," reinforces sharing and cooperation.

3. SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AND BOUNDARIES

Children thrive on routine and clear expectations. Rather than yelling when they cross a line, lay out rules in advance and stick to them consistently. Use age-appropriate language and explain the "why" behind

rules so children understand their importance.

4. BE A ROLE MODEL

Children learn more from what they see than what they're told. Demonstrate patience, respect,

honesty, and empathy in your own actions. If you want your child to be polite, show politeness in your daily interactions—even during difficult moments.

5. PRACTICE ACTIVE

LISTENING

Make your child feel valued by listening attentively when they speak. Put away distractions, maintain eye contact, and respond thoughtfully. This builds trust and opens lines of communication, making it easier to address issues when they arise.

6. TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Instead of giving immediate solutions, encourage your child to come up with ways to solve their own problems. This fosters independence and resilience. For instance, ask, "What do you think we can do to fix this?" when they face a challenge.

7. STAY CALM AND PATIENT

Tantrums and misbehavior are part of growing up. Reacting with anger often escalates the situation. Practice deep breathing, count to ten, or take a short break if needed—your calm presence teaches children to regulate their own emotions. Positive parenting is not about being perfect; it's about being present, consistent, and compassionate. It takes time, patience, and self-awareness, but the results—stronger bonds, improved behavior, and emotionally healthy children—are well worth the effort. By focusing on respect, empathy, and love, parents can nurture not just well-behaved kids, but happy and emotionally intelligent individuals ready to face the world with confidence.



Long-Distance Love Stories: When Hearts Connect Beyond Miles

TDG NETWORK

Love doesn't always follow the rules of geography. In a world where careers, education, and personal goals often take people to different corners of the globe, long-distance relationships have become increasingly common—and surprisingly, many of these stories turn out to be some of the most powerful and enduring.

LOVE THAT TRAVELS

Long-distance love is more than just video calls and time zone calculations. It's about commitment, trust, and the strength of emotional connection. Couples separated by thousands of miles often develop deeper communication and appreciation for each other, proving that love is not always about physical presence, but emotional intimacy.

Take, for example, the story of Meera and Arjun.

College sweethearts from Delhi, their paths diverged when Meera got a scholarship in London, while Arjun stayed back in India to grow his startup. They promised to stay in touch but didn't sugarcoat the struggle ahead. Over the next two years, they juggled time zones, dealt with missed birthdays, and faced moments of doubt. But they also grew as individuals and partners. Weekly video dates, surprise handwritten letters, and late-night pep talks became their love language. When Meera returned, they realized they had built a love that wasn't just romantic, but resilient.

LOVE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Technology has become the modern-day cupid for long-distance lovers. From daily good morning texts to shared playlists, gaming dates, and virtual movie

nights, couples have found creative ways to stay connected. Social media and instant messaging may have their downsides, but they also help bridge emotional gaps for couples separated by continents.

Yet, even in this hyper-connected era, long-distance relationships still demand patience and intentional effort. It's about finding joy in the little things—like hearing each other's voice after a long day, or sending a surprise food delivery when one is sick.

Trials That Strengthen Bonds

Not all long-distance relationships have fairytale endings, but many end up even stronger than expected. The challenges—miscommunication, time differences, jealousy, and loneliness—test the foundation of the relationship. But overcoming these together often leads to a deeper understanding and

emotional maturity.

Consider Priya and Raghav, who met during an internship and had to part ways after just three months of dating. She moved to Canada, while he stayed in Mumbai. Everyone warned them it wouldn't last. But five years later, after endless chats and two reunions, they're now happily married. "Distance taught us how to fight for each other," Priya says. "It made us grateful for every moment we finally got to spend together."

THE BEAUTY OF REUNIONS

There's a unique magic in the reunions of long-distance couples. The airport hugs, the overwhelming joy, the silent moments of just being next to each other—these make the wait worth it. It's a reminder that true love isn't always easy, but it's always worth it.

Investing Tips for First-Time Female Investors: Building Wealth with Confidence



TDG NETWORK

For a long time, investing was considered a male-dominated domain, but times are changing. Today, more and more women are taking charge of their finances and exploring investment options to secure their future. Whether you're a working professional, entrepreneur, homemaker, or student—investing is one of the smartest ways to build wealth and gain financial independence.

Here are some practical, beginner-friendly tips tailored specifically for first-time female investors who want to make their money work for them.

1. START WITH FINANCIAL AWARENESS

Before diving into investing, get a clear understanding of your current financial situation. Take stock of your income, expenses, savings, and debt. This helps you set realistic investment goals—whether it's saving for a home, retirement, your child's education, or personal growth.

Create an emergency fund with at least 3–6 months' worth of expenses and ensure you have adequate health and life insurance

in place before you begin investing.

2. UNDERSTAND YOUR RISK APPETITE

Every investor has a different comfort level with risk. Some may prefer safer options like fixed deposits or bonds, while others may be willing to explore mutual funds or the stock market. Assess your risk tolerance based on your age, financial responsibilities, and long-term goals.

A general rule? The earlier you start, the more risk you can afford to take, because time helps smooth out market fluctuations.

3. EDUCATE YOURSELF BEFORE YOU INVEST

Don't let jargon or fear hold you back. Take time to understand basic investment terms—like SIPs (Systematic Investment Plans), mutual funds, ETFs (Exchange-Traded Funds), equity, debt, and diversification.

There are many women-focused financial literacy platforms, podcasts, blogs, and YouTube channels that break down complex concepts into easy, relatable language. Knowledge is power—especially when it comes to your money.

4. START SMALL, BUT START EARLY

You don't need a large sum to begin investing. Even a small amount invested regularly can grow significantly over time due to the power of compounding.

For instance, starting a SIP in a mutual fund with just Rs 500–Rs1,000 a month can create a sizeable corpus in the long run. The earlier you start, the more your money grows.

5. DIVERSIFY YOUR PORTFOLIO

Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Spread your investments across different asset classes like equity (stocks or mutual funds), debt (bonds or PPF), and gold (digital gold or gold ETFs). This reduces risk and increases your chances of better returns.

Diversification ensures that even if one type of investment doesn't perform well, others can compensate.

6. THINK LONG-TERM

Short-term market ups and downs can be scary, but don't panic. Investments, especially in equity, need time to grow. Set long-term goals—like retirement or buying a house—and stay committed.

Avoid reacting emotionally to market volatility. Patience is often the most underrated investment strategy.

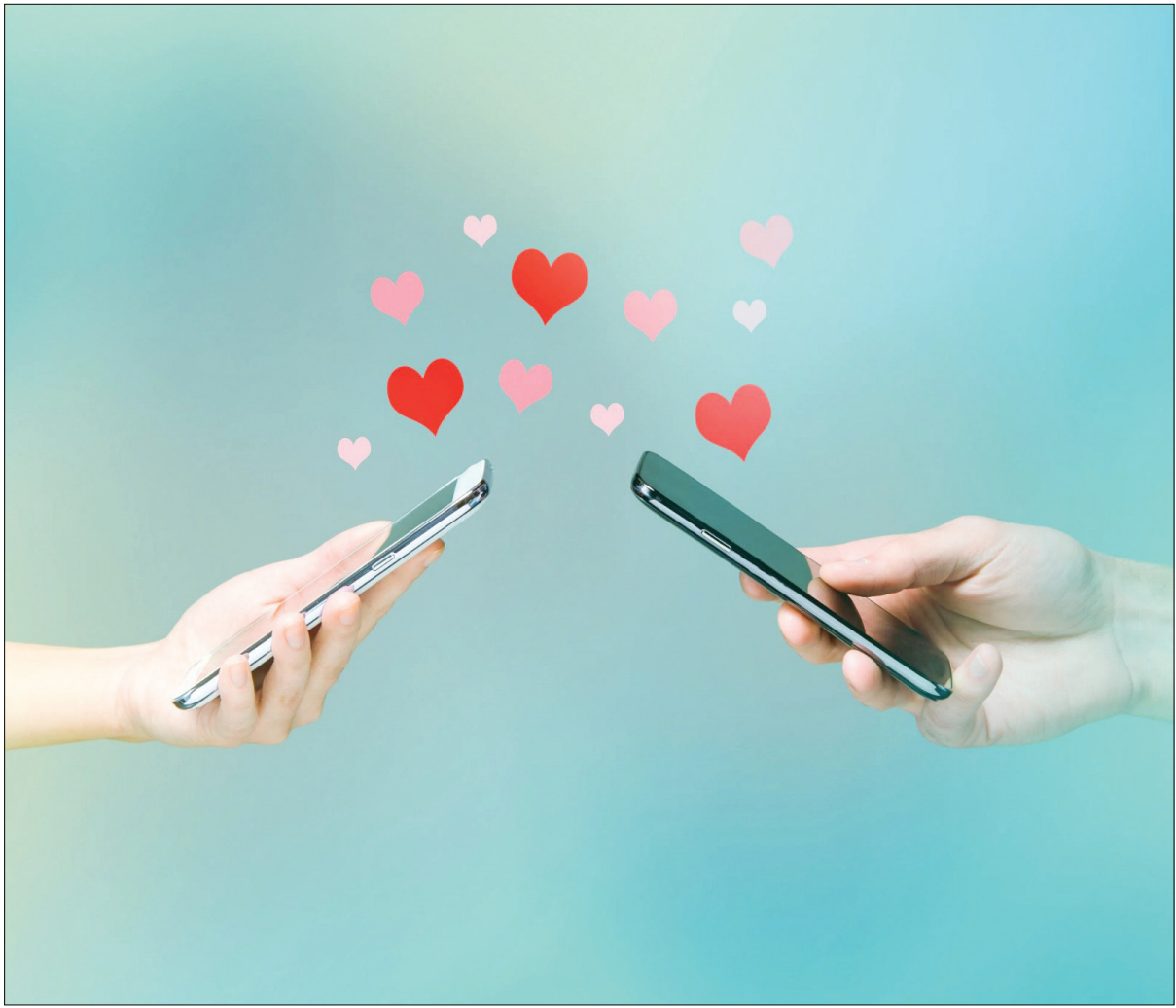
7. SEEK PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE IF NEEDED

If you're unsure where to begin, consult a certified financial advisor. Look for someone who understands your goals and can customize a plan for you. Just ensure you're not blindly following tips from social media influencers or unverified sources.

8. TRACK AND REVIEW YOUR INVESTMENTS

Once you start investing, don't forget to review your portfolio every few months. Life goals change, markets evolve, and your risk profile may shift. Make sure your investments continue to align with your financial journey.

Ladies, remember—you don't need to be perfect to start, but you need to start to grow. Investing is not about beating the market, it's about reaching your personal financial goals with clarity and confidence. Take that first step today. The best investment you can make is in your own financial future.



Be truthful, but with empathy



B.K. SHEILU

Truth is a quality that is equated with God. God is truth, they say. Truth is valued so highly because where there is truth, things are clean and clear – there are no doubts, there is trust, relationships are uncomplicated, and consequently there is peace and happiness.

Being honest and truthful brings several psychological benefits that influence our personal growth and shape our character in meaningful ways. When we are truthful, we do not need to remember conflicting stories or juggle lies, which can be mentally exhausting. Moreover, honesty brings a sense of inner peace and reduces the anxiety that arises from the fear of being caught in a lie or maintaining a facade.

Since people appreciate honesty and are more likely to trust someone who is open and transparent, being truthful helps to foster authentic connections with others. It encourages genuine conversations and



Truth can be presented in a way that is kind and beneficial, instead of being hurled at the other person to cause hurt.

a sense of safety in relationships.

Truthfulness is also closely tied to integrity. When we act in accordance with our values, we feel better about ourselves. Upholding honesty increases self-respect, and this respect radiates into how we perceive and treat others. There is another way in which honesty enhances our sense of self-worth and confidence: it

helps us avoid the feelings of guilt and shame, which often arise from dishonesty.

Truth aids our personal growth at a deeper level too. Honest reflection on our actions, thoughts, and feelings fosters self-awareness. When we are truthful with the self, we can identify areas for improvement and move toward becoming the best we can be. Truthfulness also enables

us to face uncomfortable facts, which builds our emotional resilience by developing our capacity to deal with difficult feelings and situations. Then, honestly taking responsibility for our actions helps to develop accountability, which brings maturity.

While being truthful is a great virtue, how we express truth also matters. Sometimes truthfulness can make us self-righteous

and intolerant of anything or anyone who we see as not aligned with truth. When we express the truth in a way that offends or hurts others, it can lead to negative outcomes, even if our intention is good.

If the truth is delivered in a way that is harsh, blunt, or lacking empathy, it can cause emotional pain and damage relationships. Being truthful does not mean we have to blurt out

everything that comes to mind without considering the other person's feelings. How we say something – the tone, body language, and context – and when we say it are critical. It helps to wait for the right moment and approach a sensitive topic with care.

Being kind and thoughtful while sharing the truth can make it easier for the other person to hear, even if it is difficult.



Some people pride themselves on being brutally honest, but their behaviour can come across as callous and disrespectful. It need not be so. Honesty is constructive when the truth is shared in a way that is considerate and aimed at a positive outcome. It is about focusing on the other person's well-being and offering support where needed. It is important to recognise that not every truth needs to be stated, especially if it is not going to benefit the other person or the situation. And if someone is consistently hurting others with their "truth", it is important for the people around them to set boundaries. Being truthful does not give us the right to be rude or dismissive of others' feelings. Intentionally

hurting someone just to prove a point or asserting our "rightness" is not really right.

At the same time, there are situations where the truth is inevitably painful or hard to hear, such as when giving critical feedback, or confronting harmful behaviour. In these cases, we can aim to be as gentle as possible while still being clear and honest.

In essence, it is about finding the balance between honesty and empathy. Truth that is communicated with kindness and tact is far more likely to have a positive impact, even when the content is difficult.

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

Loving the self

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

"As children of God we first take love from connecting with God, fill the self with love, and give this Godly love honestly... look at each one with a spiritual vision and interact with love. This is how true love grows and flourishes."

Dadi Janki.

The person we spend most time with, is our self. It is the one relationship we need to invest with love. Love for oneself is a sign of wisdom and maturity. Loving the self is not an act of narcissism but an essential part of spiritual growth – if I do not appreciate the value of myself, even while being aware

of aspects of personality that need to change, how will I ever be able to love and appreciate anyone else?

However, it requires understanding of who the self is to be able to bestow the kind of love that is needed. We are beings of consciousness, not the bodies we inhabit. We have lived more than one lifetime, and the accumulation of all our experiences is manifest in what we are expressing now. We have developed habits of reaction to hurt and trauma, that weaken us, but in essence we are beings of love, power, peace, and joy. Becoming aware of the soul, we become aware of both our original, innate qualities of goodness and



Loving ourselves helps us grow and flourish, and to give the best of ourselves.

*Love is the energy that drives the universe.
When we receive love, we grow and flourish
and begin to give the best of ourselves.
The practical form of love is respect.*

love, and what we have acquired that is false. With meditation and regular spiritual study, our spiritual power increases, and our limited understanding of falsely thinking 'I am a perishable body' finishes. I, the soul, a being of light, use the mind to stay in peace and live life in the best way possible. With these good wishes for the self, love emerges in my thoughts, words, and actions.

Love is the energy that

drives the universe. When we receive love, we grow and flourish and begin to give the best of ourselves. The practical form of love is respect. Respect means accepting that each individual is unique and different and has something important and valuable to contribute. Spiritual love has great power. Whatever is spoken with love and respect is free from selfishness and negativity, and has a powerful effect on others. Words spoken out of

love can bring about change in myself and others.

Love has a connection with the heart. When we speak about love, we always put our hand on the heart, not on the head. This reminds us to love ourselves from the heart before acting, and then perform good actions with our hands. We need to build and base our self-esteem on spiritual values, not on achievements or other people's opinions. Negative and harsh thoughts about the self weaken us and make us vulnerable to more hurt, or worse, to the wounding of others. Many of us establish relationships to acquire love, respect, and acceptance, without realising that our role is to give, not get. When our expectations are

not fulfilled, we try to change people, which means we are not providing the acceptance we ourselves are in search of. Our disappointment turns to dissatisfaction and we create an atmosphere lacking in love and consequently our relationships deteriorate. In a world where everyone is forming relationships based on acquiring, and with a lack of self-esteem and self-love, it is unsurprising that relationships are breaking down and families are breaking up. It is time to explore the value of knowing and loving the self, through meditation and spiritual practices.

Chirya Risely is a Rajyoga meditation teacher based at the Brahma Kumaris Peace Village Retreat Center, USA.

Changing my mind



ERIC LE RESTE

Consistently changing one's mind can be seen as a sign of indecisiveness or lack of resolution, but spiritual maturity requires a constant resetting of the mind. Just as our homes need to be cleaned regularly, so too our minds. When we have guests, we make a special effort to make sure the home is welcoming, clean, and a comfortable place to be. Our mind can be likened to a home. The kind of thoughts we entertain, can make us feel safe and peaceful or agitated, anxious, and so uncomfortable that we would prefer not to



To keep the mind clean, we need to become aware of the kind of thoughts we are having.

be there. We can walk out of our house, but our mind goes with us everywhere.

If we pause a while and look into what is going on in our minds, we may find

a lot of unwanted guests. It may be populated by people who want to grab our attention, talk incessantly, make us feel depressed, and exhaust us. Then there are our

own desires, other people's opinions, irrational fears and disappointments. We need to protect our minds from the constant replay of all of these unwanted thoughts. We need to consistently clean our minds. When I was working in Canada broadcasting world news, I finally had to make my mind a toxic-free zone; to protect it from all of the pernicious news arriving on the desk.

We need to know how to clean the mind. The mind is only one 'device' of the soul. It allows us to hear our thoughts, and to form emotions and feelings about what we hear. We also have an intellect. The intellect discerns, judges, and concentrates. These two faculties work in tandem if we perfect the art of doing so. The mind cannot change on its own. The will to change comes from the intellect.

We want our minds to be clean, strong, and beautiful. This is the true nature of the mind, so by cleaning it,

we are restoring the mind to its original condition. To keep it clean, we need to become aware, daily, of the kind of thoughts we are having, and discern if they are doing us any good. If I have negative thoughts about someone, how can that possibly help me? I must re-focus and replace those thoughts with ones that bring peace to the mind and send good wishes to the other.

To keep the mind strong, we need to reinforce what we believe in. We need to respect the mind, and if we need to recalibrate our beliefs about others or the self, we need to do that with deep awareness and understanding. To make the mind beautiful, we need to introduce thoughts of an elevated nature. Thoughts of spirituality, based on truth and recognition of the nature of the soul; its eternal existence and its original beauty. We must create the best thoughts possible. Then we will feel protected,

safe, peaceful, and full of love.

The companions we associate with will be those who have our best interests at heart. The company of the best minds will uplift us. We can seek the company of the highest mind of all, the Supreme mind, of the Supreme Soul, and keep a connection with that One. If I am close to that divine energy, there is a very beautiful influence on my mind. Feeling the presence of that Being brings beauty to my mind and heart. As time goes on, with this constant practice of cleaning, strengthening, and beautifying the mind, the process becomes refined and full of enjoyment, as we experience the inestimable results.

Eric Le Reste was a producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for more than 35 years. He coordinates the Brahma Kumaris centres in Canada and is based in Montreal.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

We collect possessions like clothes, books, furniture, and other things. At some point my closets become full of unused items and I find myself living in a cluttered environment. I can also become cluttered spiritually, with a collection of worries, doubts and sorrow. I can clean my spiritual clutter in the same way a good spring cleaning helps me declutter my physical closets. To clean my inner closets, I must let go of emotional baggage and rearrange my thinking to a higher, more spiritual level. Today let me clean my inner closets and free myself from spiritual and emotional clutter.

PUNJAB KINGS THRASH RCB BY 5 WICKETS



Punjab Kings' Xavier Bartlett and teammates celebrate the wicket of Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Liam Livingstone during their IPL 2025 match, at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, in Bengaluru on Friday. (ANI Photo)

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Kings (PBKS) registered a dominant 5-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in a rain-shortened 14-over contest, thanks to a disciplined bowling effort and a calm chase despite a few hiccups. RCB, put into bat after rain delayed the start, crumbled to 95 for 9 in their 14 overs. PBKS bowlers were relentless from the outset. Arshdeep Singh set the tone,

Brief Scores:
RCB 95/9 in 14 overs (Tim David 50*, Arshdeep 2/14, Jansen 2/12)
PBKS 96/5 in 13 overs (Prabhsimran 23, Shashank 21*, Bhuvneshwar 1/10)
Result: PBKS won by 5 wickets.

removing Phil Salt and Virat Kohli in quick succession. Marco Jansen, Yuzvendra Chahal, and Harpreet Brar kept up the pressure, chipping away with wickets at regular intervals. RCB were reeling at 42 for 7 before Tim David launched a spirited coun-

terattack. Smashing three sixes and as many fours, David's 50 off just 26 balls rescued his side from complete collapse and gave them a fighting total. His aggressive stroke play in the final over off Brar added a semblance of respectability to the score. In reply, PBKS began

steadily. Prabhsimran Singh, coming in as the Impact Sub for Chahal, opened with Priyansh Arya. The start was cautious — just three runs came off Bhuvneshwar Kumar's first over. Arya, playing his debut match, showed maturity beyond his years. Despite losing a few wickets in the middle overs, Punjab's target never looked out of reach. Their batters rotated strike well, and boundary opportunities were capitalized on when available. Prabhsimran and

Despite losing a few wickets in the middle overs, Punjab's target never looked out of reach. Their batters rotated strike well, and boundary opportunities were capitalized on when available. Prabhsimran and Shashank Singh played handy cameos to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Shashank Singh played handy cameos to keep the scoreboard ticking. RCB's bowlers, barring Bhuvneshwar and Dayal in patches, failed to apply sustained pressure. The modest target gave them little room for error, and PBKS crossed the line with five wickets and several balls to spare. This win boosts Punjab's net run rate and gives them a crucial edge in the tightly-contested points table, while RCB will be left to rue another batting collapse — their second in as many matches.

Arsenal's Kai Havertz Could Return For Champions League Final



TDG NETWORK
LONDON

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta said he would bet on Kai Havertz returning before the end of the season as his recovery from a hamstring injury is ahead of schedule. The German international had initially been ruled out for the campaign after having surgery on the injury suffered during a Dubai warm-weather training camp in February. Arsenal have survived the loss of both Havertz and Gabriel Jesus to make the Champions League semi-finals for the first time since 2009 with a famous 5-1 aggregate victory over Real

Madrid. Arteta cooled speculation Havertz could return in time to face Paris Saint-Germain in the last four. But he is on track to be available should Arsenal get the final in Munich on May 31. "For the semi-finals? I think that is too close," said Arteta. "But if I have to bet on him (being available) earlier than expected I would say: 'Yes'." "The way he works, every day he is in the gym, pushing everybody, and I don't think you can hold him back any longer." Arsenal's European run has softened the blow of seeing their Premier League title challenge peter out. The Gunners are on course

to finish second for a third consecutive season. But they trail Liverpool by 13 points with just six games remaining. The title could be sealed as early as Sunday should Liverpool beat Leicester and Arsenal lose at struggling Ipswich. Arteta is keen to avoid that scenario and warned against easing up in the league with Champions League qualification for next season not yet confirmed. "We'll make sure that we win the game and that doesn't happen," added the Spaniard on the possibility of Liverpool winning the league on Sunday.

India send squad to Asian U-15 & U-17 Boxing Championships

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India has fielded a 56-member youth boxing squad—30 U-15 and 26 U-17 pugilists—for the Asian U-15 & U-17 Boxing Championships being held in Amman, Jordan, from April 17 to May 1. This is the first event organised by Asian Boxing, endorsed by both the Olympic Council of Asia and the newly formed World Boxing, as per the release from the Boxing Federation of India (BFI). Standout names in the U-17 boys' squad include Sahil Duhan and Devansh, who clinched silver and bronze, respectively, at the 2024 Asian Junior Championship, along with Tikam Singh, the SGFI 2024 gold medallist. On the girls' side, Samiksha Singh, Anshika, and Khushi Chand were among the medal winners at the 2024 Asian School Boys & Girls Boxing Championships in Al Ain. The U-15 lineup features

These young athletes reflect the bright future of Indian boxing, especially as the country eyes the 2036 Olympics. Competing at this prestigious championship, they carry the hopes of a nation and the potential to inspire the next generation of boxers, it said.

Ravi Sihag, a bronze medalist from the Asian School Boys Championship in Al Ain in 2024, as well as the 2024 sub-junior national girls boxing champion (64-67 kg), Trushna Mohite. These young athletes reflect the bright future of Indian boxing, especially as the country eyes the 2036 Olympics. Competing at this prestigious championship, they carry the hopes of a nation and the potential to inspire the next generation of boxers, it said. The Interim Committee has upheld the values of the Boxing Federation of India by ensuring every athlete gets the support and op-

portunity to shine. It acted swiftly to resolve the deadlock and secured India's participation in this critical championship, the release said. The team, accompanied by coaching staff and officials, travelled to Amman on April 17, with preliminaries beginning on April 19 following the draw on April 18. **Full Squad**
Boys U-15:
Yash Nikam (33 KG), Sanskar Vinod Atram (35 KG), Harsil (37 KG), Prikshit Balahra (40 KG), Hardik (43 KG), Khaidem Rudraksh Singh (46 KG), Sanchit Jayani (49 KG), Ravi Sihag (52 KG), Nelson Khwairakpam

(55 KG), Naman Saini (58 KG), Abhijeet (61 KG), Lakshay Phogat (64 KG), Arpit Bishnoi (67 KG), Parth (70 KG), Yamanveer Jawandha (+70 KG)
Girls U-15:
Komal (33 KG), Khushi (35 KG), Tamanna (37 KG), Svi (40 KG), Milky Meinam (43 KG), Yanshika (46 KG), S Linthoi Chanu (49 KG), Princi (52 KG), Samrudhhi Satish Shinde (55 KG), Navya (58 KG), Sunaina (61 KG), Kanishka Kumari Gorai (64 KG), Trushana Vinayak Mohite (67 KG), Manshi Malik (70 KG), Vanshika (+70 KG)
Boys U-17:
Kharb Dhruv (46 KG), Lai-renlakpam Ambekar Meeti (48 KG), Dev Aman (50 KG), Singh Tikam (52 KG), Raghav Udharm Singh (54 KG), Gariya Rahul (57 KG), Sahil (60 KG), Siwach Aman (63 KG), Deshmukh Anant Gaurishankar (66 KG), Khasa Anshul (70 KG), Sehrawat Priyansh (75 KG), Devansh (80 KG), Gulia Loven (+80 KG).

Smriti, Don Bhagawati launch 'City Cricket Academy' in Dubai

AGENCIES
DUBAI

In a heartwarming and visionary announcement, Indian cricket icon Smriti Mandhana has joined hands with a renowned UK-based cricket academy founded by former first-class cricketer Don Bhagawati. The official launch of the City Cricket Academy by Smriti Mandhana at Dubai International Academy Al Barsha—a state-of-the-art cricket development center was special for all involved. This was announced at a press conference hosted by Cricket Predicta. Designed as a high-performance hub, the academy combines Don's more than two decades of cricket development experience with Smriti's contemporary insights from the international arena. Don's wife, a former England cricketer,



also brings a wealth of experience and empathy to the mentoring process, making this academy a complete ecosystem for young talent. Speaking at the press conference, Smriti Mandhana reflected on the personal and professional values driving this unique & global initiative: "Don and his family have always welcomed me like one of their own. City Cricket Academy by Smriti Mandhana isn't just a training facility—it's a place where young cricketers are encouraged to dream big, think deeply, and grow

as individuals. City Cricket Academy and Don's team truly understand both the mindset of young aspirants and the challenges of elite-level cricket. For me, this is a heartfelt way to give back to the game that's given me everything." Don Bhagawati is proud to see the academy take shape in Dubai and praised Smriti's rare and timely commitment: "Smriti personifies the highest level of dedication and integrity in cricket. It's heartening to see that even while performing at the highest level, she has the

desire to give back. Since the first women's match since the 1700s, this may well be one of the first times a global icon has stepped into a grassroots leadership role while still playing. We are incredibly proud of her and believe City Cricket Academy will enrich the game for generations to come." The academy aims to provide structured coaching programs, mentorship from current and former players, and international exposure. With a focus on character, confidence, and cricketing excellence, the academy is poised to become a regional benchmark. As young cricketers cheered and posed for photos with Smriti and Don, the atmosphere captured exactly what this academy stands for—passion, ambition, enjoyment, and a true love for the game.

BCCI Ombudsman imposes lifetime ban on Mumbai's cricket league team owner

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Ombudsman of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Friday imposed a lifetime ban on Gurmeet Singh Bhamrah, the owner of a Mumbai T20 League team, for "violating" BCCI's Anti-Corruption Code over allegations of attempting to fix a match. BCCI Ombudsman Justice Arun Mishra, a former judge of the Supreme Court of India, stated that corrupt practices such as match-fixing must be dealt with strictly. He imposed the highest prescribed punishment on Bhamrah. According to the order of the



BCCI Ombudsman accessed by ANI, the case pertains to the second season of the Mumbai T20 League. The match in question was the semi-final of the tournament, played in May 2019. The order states that Bhamrah made a match-fixing attempt by approaching a player, who subsequently reported the matter to the concerned agencies.



Houston Rockets center Steven Adams (12) blocks a shot by Golden State Warriors guard Gary Payton II (0) during the second half of an NBA basketball game. (AGENCY)

Shubhankar sharma improves by 13 shots but fails to make cut at China

TDG NETWORK
SHANGHAI

Shubhankar Sharma bounced back from an 82 in the first round with a fine 69 in the second but failed to make the cut at the Volvo China Open 2025 here. Sharma, who started the second round from the tenth, had a bogey on the 12th but birdied the 14th and the 18th to be 1-under at the turn. On the second nine he had four birdies, a bogey and a double bogey on ninth for a 69 at the Enhance Anting Golf Club. Despite improving his score by 13 shots as compared to the first day, Sharma could



not make the cut for the first time after the Magical Kenya Open nearly two months back. In these two months, Shubhankar played four events including the Hero Indian Open 2025 and made the cut in all of them. Haotong Li will take a share of the lead into the weekend as he bids to win

his national title for a second time. After an opening two under par round of 69, the 29-year-old carded a blistering eight under 63 to move to 10 under par at the halfway stage alongside Hero Indian Open winner, Eugenio Chacarra and Finland's Tapio Pulkkanen.