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ON CASTE SURVEY, SAYS
KARNATAKA DY CM**



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STAR IN RCB'S
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FLASH FLOODS, LANDSLIDES LEAVE 3 PEOPLE DEAD IN J&K

More than 100 people rescued, many houses and roads damaged

AGENCIES
RAMBAN/JAMMU

Heavy rainfall due to cloudbursts triggered flash floods and landslides in several areas of Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district early Sunday, leaving three people dead and damaging scores of houses and roads, while more than 100 people were rescued.

Traffic on the strategic Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was suspended as the road was blocked at nearly a dozen places between Nashri and Banihal due to landslides and mudslides, officials said.

Hundreds of commuters were left stranded on the 250-kilometre highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country.

A cloudburst struck the Seri Bagna village, resulting in the deaths of three persons, including brothers Aqib Ahmad and Mohd Saqib. The rescue operation in the village was continuing when the last reports were received, officials said.

With the latest fatalities, five people have lost their lives in rain-related inci-



People walk on debris alongside the vehicles that are under it following a landslide triggered by heavy rains and hailstorm, in Ramban on Sunday. (ANI Photo)

dents in the Jammu region in two days. Two people, including a woman, were killed and another woman was injured when they were struck by lightning in the Arnas area of Reasi district late on Saturday.

The officials said about 40 residential houses were damaged after a flash flood hit Dharam Kund village.

“ *We are in touch with the local administration to ensure immediate rescue efforts....For now, the focus remains on managing the situation on the ground. Citizens are advised to follow travel advisories and avoid non-essential movement in vulnerable areas.*

— Omar Abdullah
J&K Chief Minister

Ten houses were fully damaged while the rest suffered partial damage.

More than 100 trapped villagers were rescued by police personnel who rushed to the site despite the continuous downpour, they said.

Several vehicles were swept away in the flood caused by an overflowing stream, P3

Punjab unveils Rs 500-cr plan to banish stubble-burning

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Aiming to bring the stubble-burning cases to zero in the state, the Punjab Government has formulated an action plan worth Rs 500 crore. The scheme aims to provide farmers with latest CRM machinery on subsidy and implement other strategies to manage the paddy straw efficiently.

Disclosing this here today, Punjab Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian said that Punjab Government has been offering a 50% subsidy to individual farmers and an 80% subsidy to farmer groups, cooperative societies and gram panchayats for the purchase of CRM machines. This initiative aims to make CRM machinery more accessible to farmers, promoting its adoption and ultimately contributing to a cleaner environment, he added.

The minister said that the subsidy would be available on CRM machinery include



Encouraging the farmers to take advantage of the scheme, Gurmeet Singh Khudian said that Punjab Government has been offering a 50% subsidy to individual farmers and an 80% subsidy to farmer groups, cooperative societies and gram panchayats for the purchase of CRM machines. This initiative aims to make CRM machinery more accessible to farmers, promoting its adoption and ultimately contributing to a cleaner environment, he added.

The minister said that the subsidy would be available on CRM machinery include

Super SMS, Happy Seeder, Super Seeder, Surface Seeder, Smart Seeder, Zero Till Drill, Baler, Rake, Shrub Master/ Rotary Slasher, Paddy straw chopper/Shredder/Mulcher, Crop Reaper, Hydraulic Reversible Mould Board Plough.

Dr. Basant Garg, administrative secretary in the Agriculture department, said Punjab witnessed significant progress in crop residue management. The state government distributed 17,600 subsidised CRM machines to individual farmers, cooperative societies, and panchayats during previous season. Additionally, 1,331 Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) were also established to facilitate CRM practices. These efforts resulted in a 70% decrease in fire incidents during the previous season compared to 2023, with only 10,909 incidents recorded compared to 36,663 in 2023.

Delhi BJP to launch campaign on One Nation, One Election

NEW DELHI: Delhi BJP will soon launch a campaign in the city to create awareness about One Nation, One Election (ONOE) to drum up support for the party's stand on it, state president Virendra Sachdeva said on Sunday. He said that the campaign will be taken to every household in Delhi and a public

awareness movement will be started to explain how the society and the nation can benefit from ONOE. A workshop addressed by BJP national general secretary Sunil Bansal at Delhi unit office was attended by senior party functionaries, MPs and MLAs.

DETAILS P5

Kharge attacks PM, Nitish in Bihar rally

AGENCIES
BUXAR (BIHAR)

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday launched a multi-pronged attack on the BJP in poll-bound Bihar, accusing it of misusing probe agencies “to harass” the party and trying to mislead people “through com-

munal polarisation”. Addressing the ‘Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan’ rally here, Kharge also attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that the promise to provide a Rs 1.25 lakh crore package to Bihar had not been fulfilled. While accusing BJP of

P3

Farmers left in lurch as standing wheat crop in acres gutted

High-speed and short circuits in electric lines spark a series of fires

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

A series of devastating fire incidents have gutted thousands of acres of standing wheat crop across Punjab and Haryana over the past week, leaving hundreds of farmers in distress. The initial reports suggest that most of the fires were triggered by high-velocity winds and short circuits in electric lines destroying months of hard labour just days before harvest.

Exact figures are not available for the gutted fields but the reports suggest that thousands of acres of standing wheat crop and crop residue were reduced to ashes in



A farmer at his gutted fields

the past one week in both the leading agrarian sates. In Punjab, the worst-hit districts include Bathinda, Mansa, Sangrur, Barnala, Muktsar and Fazilka. Unconfirmed reports said in Bathinda and Mansa alone over 1,00 acres have

been destroyed in a span of three days, while Sangrur and Barnala districts each reported damage to around 500 acres.

Similarly, in Haryana, fire incidents in Hisar, Kurukshetra, Kaithal Sirsa, P3



Pope Francis waves to the crowd from the popemobile after the Easter mass, at St Peter's square in the Vatican. Agencies

Ex-Karnataka DGP found dead

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Director General of Police (DGP) and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Om Prakash was found dead at his residence on Sunday afternoon. Police suspect the use of a “sharp weapon” in the incident. Senior police officials have confirmed that an FIR will be registered based on a



complaint submitted by his son. Bengaluru Additional Commissioner of Police (East) Vikas Kumar said, “Today afternoon around 4-4:30 pm, we got information about the death of our former DGP and IGP Om Prakash. His son has been contacted, and he is giving a complaint against the incident, and based on that, P3

Vance arrives today, PM Modi to host him, family for dinner; Taj in itinerary

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host a dinner for US Vice President JD Vance and Indian-origin Second Lady Usha on Monday evening after holding talks with the American leader on a range of key issues, including trade, tariff, regional security and ways to expand the overall bilateral engagement. The US Vice President, his

wife Usha and their three children — Ewan, Vivek, and Mirabel — are scheduled to land at the Palam airbase at 10 am on Monday on a four-day India visit.

Vance's first visit to India comes weeks after US President Donald Trump imposed and then paused a sweeping tariff regime against around 60 countries, including India.

New Delhi and Washington are now holding nego-



tiations to seal a bilateral trade agreement that is expected to address a variety of issues, including tariff and market access.

Hours after arriving in Delhi, Vance and his family are scheduled to visit the Swaminarayan Akshardham temple and could visit a shopping complex selling traditional Indian handcrafted goods, people familiar with the matter said.

P3

Meets Pope amid dispute over migrants

AGENCIES
VATICAN CITY

US Vice President JD Vance met briefly with Pope Francis on Sunday to exchange Easter greetings, after they got into a long-distance tangle over the Trump administration's migrant deportation plans.

Vance's motorcade entered Vatican City through a side gate and parked near Fran-

cis' hotel residence while Easter Mass was being celebrated in St. Peter's Square.

Francis, who has greatly cut back his workload to recover from a near-fatal case of pneumonia, delegated the celebration of the Mass to another cardinal.

The Vatican said they met for a few minutes at the Domus Santa Marta “to exchange Easter greetings”.

Vance's office said that they met, but provided no further details.

CONG SLAMS BJP AFTER IT DISTANCES ITSELF FROM MPs' CRITICISM OF SC

Questions why no action has been taken by BJP against their two MPs

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday described the BJP disassociating itself from the criticism of the Supreme Court by its MPs Nishikant Dubey and Dinesh Sharma as “damage control” and asserted that the minimum action against them should be their expulsion from the party. The opposition party also asked why no action had been taken against the two MPs and why no showcase notices were issued to them. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jai Ram Ramesh said the distancing of the “outgoing BJP president” from the “atrocious remarks” made by two MPs on the chief justice of India (CJI) carried little meaning.

“These MPs are repeat offenders when it comes to hate speech and are very often used by G2 to attack communities, institutions, and individuals. The outgoing BJP president’s clarification is nothing but damage control,” Ramesh said in a post on X. “It will fool no-

‘ENTIRE POLITICAL HYPOCRISY’

- “These MPs are repeat offenders when it comes to hate speech and are very often used by G2 to attack communities, institutions, and individuals. The outgoing BJP president’s clarification is nothing but damage control,” Cong leader Ramesh said in a post on X.
- This is Entire Political Science reflecting itself as Entire Political Hypocrisy,” he said.



body. This is Entire Political Science reflecting itself as Entire Political Hypocrisy,” he said. But the “outgoing BJP president” is totally silent on equally unacceptable remarks on the judiciary that are continually made by one of its very distinguished appointees to a high constitutional position, Ramesh said and asked what he had to say about those remarks and if the BJP subscribed to them.

The former Union minister further asked, “If the continued silence of the prime minister on these repeated attacks on the Indian Constitution is not tacitly supportive of them, why has no action been taken against

these two MPs? Has Nadda ji issued show cause notices to these two MPs?” Congress general secretary Mukul Wasnik tagged Ramesh’s remarks on X and said the minimum action called for against the BJP MPs who made the “most atrocious comments” against the CJI and the Supreme Court was expelling them from the party. “But will the BJP’s outgoing president go beyond merely warning the MPs? We know that no action will be taken,” Wasnik said.

Congress deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi said on X, “I have my doubt regarding the statement of BJP President Shri J P Nadda ji. The BJP ecosys-

tem especially those who are close to Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah are hell bent on tarnishing the position of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India.” They are unhappy with the direction of the Court in recent decisions related to Tamil Nadu and Waqf Amendment Act, he claimed. “The RSS-BJP want to turn India into North Korea-Iraq,” Gogoi alleged. Dinesh Sharma on the judiciary department head Pawan Khara also slammed the BJP over the remarks of its two MPs. “Nothing will happen by just distancing from the statement. What Nishikant Dubey said, is a direct attack on the Constitution.

J&K CM fumes at Delhi airport as his Delhi flight diverted to Jaipur

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A Delhi-bound IndiGo flight carrying Jammu and Kashmir (J-K) Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was reportedly diverted to Jaipur on Saturday night, prompting sharp criticism from the CM over what he described as ‘operational chaos’ at Delhi airport.

In a late-night post on X, Abdullah expressed frustration over the ordeal. “Delhi airport is a bloody shit show (excuse my French but I’m in no mood to be polite). 3 hours in the air after we left Jammu we get diverted to Jaipur & so here I am at 1 in the morning on the steps of the plane getting some fresh air. I’ve no idea what time we will leave from here,” he wrote.

Abdullah also shared a selfie standing on the aircraft’s steps after deplaning briefly for fresh air. Passengers on the flight, including Abdullah, were left stranded aboard the aircraft at Jaipur past midnight. IndiGo had not issued an official statement till the time of filing this report.

Earlier in the day, Jammu airport also witnessed chaotic scenes, with hundreds of passengers complaining of inconvenience due to flight delays and cancellations. Bad weather conditions in Srinagar disrupted flight



operations, affecting several connecting flights.

In a post on X on Friday evening, IndiGo issued a travel advisory, stating, “#6ETravelAdvisory: Unfavourable weather in #Srinagar is impacting flights, but we’re here to keep you informed! Stay updated on your flight status <https://bit.ly/31paVKQ> or explore flexible options <https://bit.ly/3l1wD2y>, should there be a need to adjust your travel plans.” “Weather conditions in Srinagar are impacting flight operations. We understand this may cause inconvenience and truly appreciate your patience. Please stay updated on your flight status in real time. If your flight is impacted, you can explore flexible rebooking options or claim a refund easily via our website,” the airline said in its advisory. “Our teams are actively monitoring the situation and will have smooth operations back on track as soon as the weather plays nice,” it added.

‘Incorrect to blame Delhi airport for diversion’

NEW DELHI: Delhi Airport authorities on Sunday issued a clarification about the diversion of a Delhi-bound IndiGo flight carrying Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, attributing the situation to the temporary closure of Runway due to upgradation work and added that it is incorrect to blame Delhi airport for the current delays.

“Dear Mr Abdullah, further to our exchange of morning, would highlight that it is incorrect to blame Delhi airport for the current delays/diversions. The fact is-The closure of Runway 10/28 since 8th April for essential Instrument Landing System (ILS) upgradation,” the airport said in its reply to Abdullah’s post. Earlier, Delhi Airport authorities issued a clarification about the diversion of the Delhi-bound IndiGo flight carrying Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

16 militants arrested in Manipur

AGENCIES
IMPHAL

A total of 16 members of several proscribed outfits have been arrested in the last 48 hours in Manipur, police said on Sunday.

Two cadres of the banned United National Liberation Front (Pambei) were apprehended from Napetpalli Andro road near Nongdam village in Imphal East district on Saturday.

They were allegedly involved in extortion, a senior officer said.

Security forces arrested one member of the outlawed Kangleipak Communist Party (Taibanganba) from Ningthoukhong Ward No 13 in Bishnupur district on Friday, he said.

Cong to launch nationwide ‘Save Constitution’ campaign

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Congress party on Saturday announced the launch of a nationwide ‘Save Constitution’ campaign across the country from April 25, which will continue till May 30, the party said in a statement.

The party will also counter the BJP’s disinformation campaign about the National Herald issue, with senior leaders holding press conferences in different cities

This has not happened for the first time. You would have also seen the comment of the Vice President. “These statements would not have come without the silent nod of PM Modi. These are happening on his instructions, if it is not happening, then they should act, whether a showcase notice was issued? If it was, they should make it public. We understand what is happening,” Khara told PTI Videos. The BJP on Saturday disassociated itself from Dubey and Sharma’s criticism of the Supreme Court, with party president Nadda calling the comments their personal views. Nadda also affirmed the ruling party’s respect for the judiciary as an inseparable part of democracy. “The BJP has nothing to do with the comments of MPs Nishikant Dubey and Dinesh Sharma on the judiciary and the chief justice. This is their personal comments but the BJP neither agrees with them nor does it ever support such remarks. The BJP absolutely rejects them,” Nadda had said in a post on X.

Allegation of disgruntled police officer: ECI on fresh EVM tampering charges

NEW DELHI
PATNA

The Election Commission of India (ECI) responded on Sunday to a viral video on social media. The video, also shared by Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav, shows a former Police official in Maharashtra claiming that Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were being tampered with.

The ECI said the claim was made by a suspended police officer named Ranjeet Kasale and that it had no factual basis.

In a post on microblogging platform X, the ECI wrote, “Allegation comes from a disgruntled police officer (under suspension). Though strict legal admin-

Cong Sirsa MLA Setia opens fire at party, hails BJP again

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

In a fresh blow to the Congress party in Haryana, its MLA from Sirsa, Gokul Setia, has launched a scathing attack on his own party’s high command while showering praise on BJP yet again.

Setia, who had joined Congress just before the 2024 Assembly elections and won from Sirsa defeating Gopal Kanda in a direct contest, posted a strongly worded note on Facebook expressing deep disappointment with the party leadership. He alleged that Congress is ignoring elected MLAs like him and favouring only leaders with “old and big names.”

“Even after winning the election against all odds, I was never invited to any major party meeting. In Gujarat’s convention too, there was no invite. Why are grassroots leaders ignored?” Setia questioned, demanding recognition and respect for first-time MLAs.

Setia didn’t stop there. He called out senior Congress leaders in Haryana, alleging that many of them worked against official party candidates during the elections. “Some Congressmen in



Sirsa openly opposed me, but today they roam around with top leaders. This weakens the party from within,” he said.

His most striking comments, however, were aimed at drawing comparisons between BJP and Congress. “When BJP mayors win, they are taken to meet the Prime Minister. But in Congress, even winning MLAs don’t get to meet the high command,” he said. “This crushes morale and discourages leaders who work hard on the ground.”

Just days earlier, Setia had praised Chief Minister Nayab Saini in a video that went viral. The video was taken during his visit to the CM’s official residence in Chandigarh to discuss farmers’ issues. In it, Setia praised the CM’s humility and respectful conduct — unusual words of warmth coming

from a Congress leader for a BJP Chief Minister.

These repeated gestures of admiration for the BJP, combined with his strong criticism of Congress leadership, have intensified speculation about Setia’s political future.

The Sirsa MLA also referred to the recent municipal council elections, where Congress lost narrowly. “Even then, no senior leader showed up for campaigning or spoke to us afterwards. Is this how the party motivates its workers?” he asked.

Setia’s ongoing rivalry with Gopal Kanda, former Minister of State for Home and leader of Haryana Lokhit Party, has also resurfaced. Kanda, who was aligned with the BJP, lost the Sirsa seat to Setia. Despite winning on a Congress ticket, Setia is now seen moving politically closer to the BJP — a shift political observers are watching closely.

With the Congress party in Haryana reeling under the internal differences, Setia’s remarks further reflect deeper discontent within the party’s state unit, throwing a new challenge for the party’s central leadership forcing it to confront the growing divide between Delhi-based decision makers and grassroots workers.

Taj gears up ahead of US Vice President Vance’s visit

TDG NETWORK
AGRA

The world-famous UNESCO World Heritage site, the Taj Mahal, is being prepared for the upcoming visit of US Vice President JD Vance to India.

The monument, which has welcomed many global leaders over the years, will now see Vice President Vance and his wife walking through the mausoleum and admiring its timeless beauty.

Earlier, in 2020, US President Donald Trump visited the Taj Mahal along with First Lady Melania Trump.

During his visit, Trump had described the monument by

saying, “Taj Mahal inspires awe, a timeless testament to the rich and diverse beauty of Indian culture! Thank you, India.”

Sunil Shrivastava, a local, while speaking on the visit of the US Vice President, said, “It is a matter of good fortune for the residents of Agra that US Vice President JD Vance is coming to Agra. He will also visit the Taj Mahal, and we will get a very good response because of this.”

He also expressed hope that a meeting between JD Vance and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on trade issues such as tariffs would bring positive outcomes for India.



He said this could open up new opportunities and help control inflation.

Shrivastava added that Vance’s visit might also bring benefits to the tourism and visa sectors.

According to the official

website of the Taj Mahal, the monument is considered the finest example of Mughal architecture—a style that blends Persian, Indian, and Islamic elements. In 1983, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and described

as “the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world’s heritage.”

Vice President JD Vance will be in India from April 21 to 24. He is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi on Monday, April 21. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said he will be received at the Air Force Station in Palam at 10:00 am.

A formal meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled the same day at 6:30 pm at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg. On Tuesday, April 22, Vance will visit Jaipur, and on Wednesday, April 23, he will travel to Agra.

Says INDIA bloc to continue in 2027 UP polls

TDG NETWORK
PRAYAGRAJ

Samajwadi Party Chief and MP Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday criticised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, accusing him of turning the Mahakumbh Mela into a political event instead of a religious one.

Speaking to the media, Yadav said, “They wanted to make this a political Kumbh. This was not a religious Kumbh...”

He also claimed that the Chief Minister planned to use the event to project himself as the next Prime Ministerial face.

“It is being heard that during the Maha Kumbh, it was their plan to announce his (CM Yogi Adityanath) name as the Prime Minister’s face,” he further said.

The Mahakumbh 2025 concluded on Maha Shivratri, February 26, with over 66 crore 21 lakh devotees taking a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam. Earlier in the day, Yadav also launched a sharp



attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing it of ignoring real issues faced by the public.

“This government has two achievements, pakora and bhagoda (fugitive). Anyone who wants employment, they ask them to make pakora, and you know about the fugitive who ran away with the country’s money,” Yadav said. He also criticised the recently passed Waqf Act, questioning its relevance to the problems faced by farmers. “Will the income of farmers be doubled after the Waqf Bill is passed? These people want to create trouble. If you see a riot anywhere, the Bharatiya Janata Party is behind it...This army is Yogi Army, Yogi Ji is hell-bent on

destroying Uttar Pradesh,” he added.

The SP leader also said that the opposition INDIA coalition will continue in the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. He attacked the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alleging it was trying to grab land like the mafia through the Waqf (Amendment) Bill. Addressing a press conference, Yadav said that the “PDA (Backward, Dalits, and Minorities) would uproot the BJP” from the state in the 2027 assembly elections. When asked about the INDIA bloc, he reiterated, “INDIA alliance is (present) and will remain”, dispelling doubts about the fate of the alliance formed ahead of the 2024 general elections.

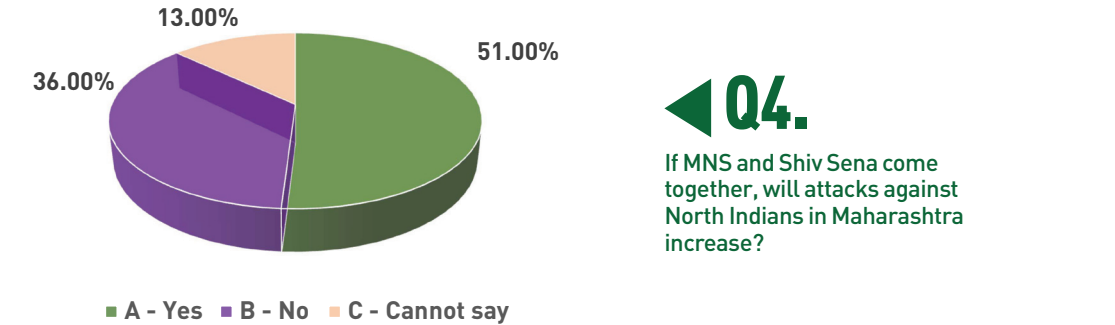
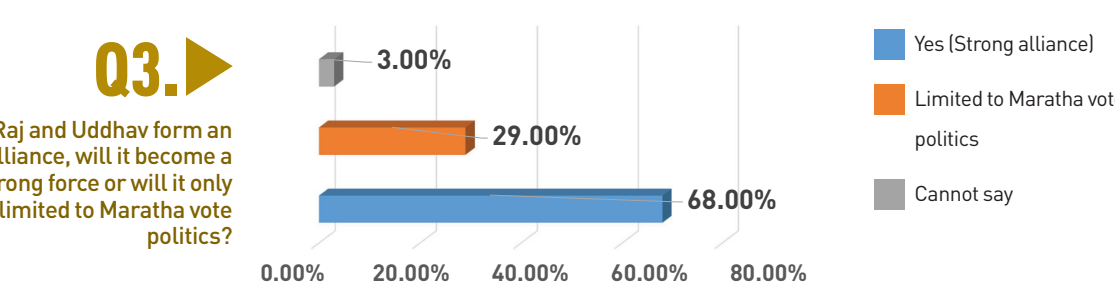
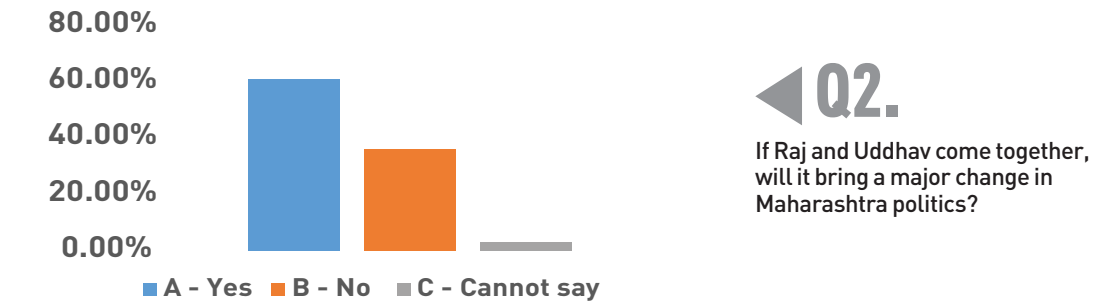
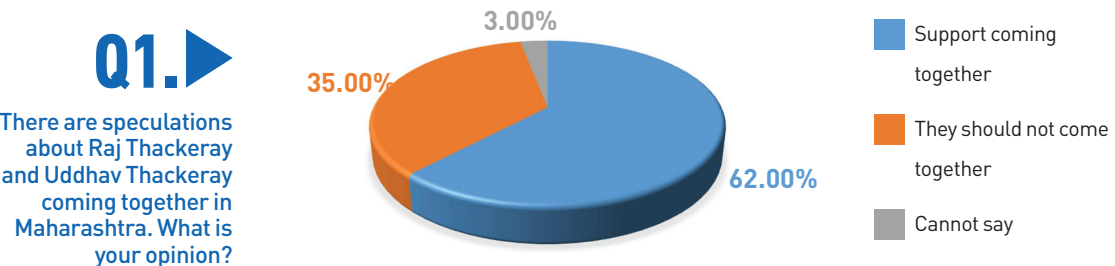
THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON MAHARASHTRA POLITICS

61% believe a Raj-Uddhav alliance will significantly impact Maharashtra politics.

A recent survey on Maharashtra politics reveals 62% support a Raj-Uddhav alliance, with 61%

believing it would significantly impact politics. 68% feel the alliance would form a strong bloc, not just

Maratha-focused. However, 51% fear increased attacks on North Indians if MNS and Shiv Sena unite.

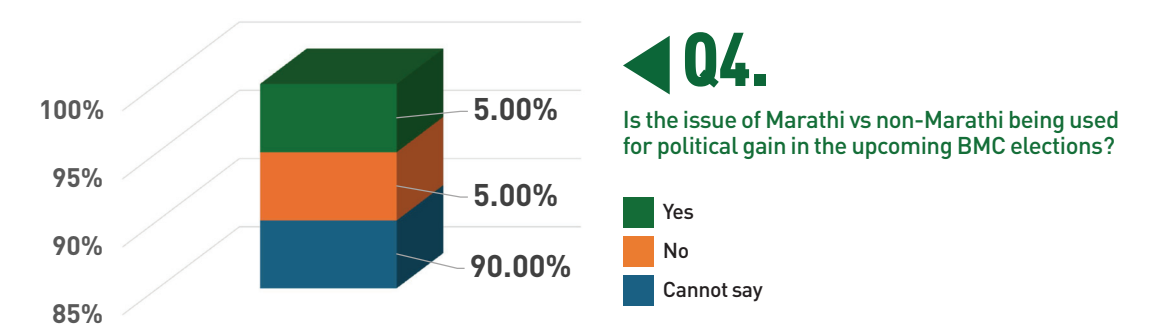
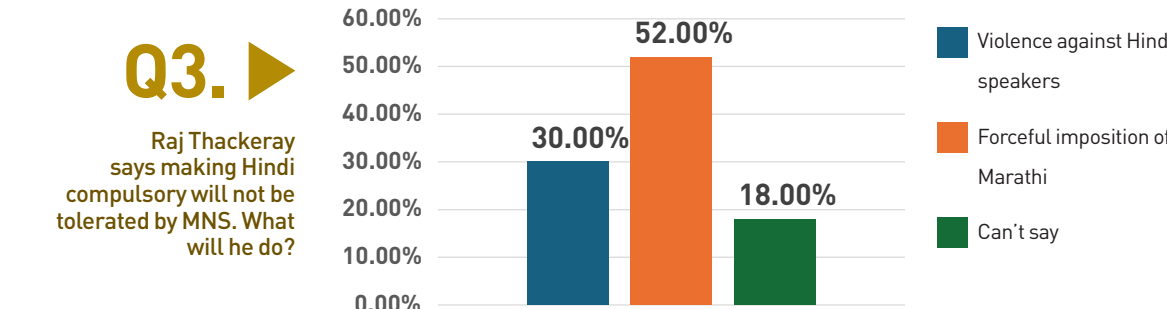
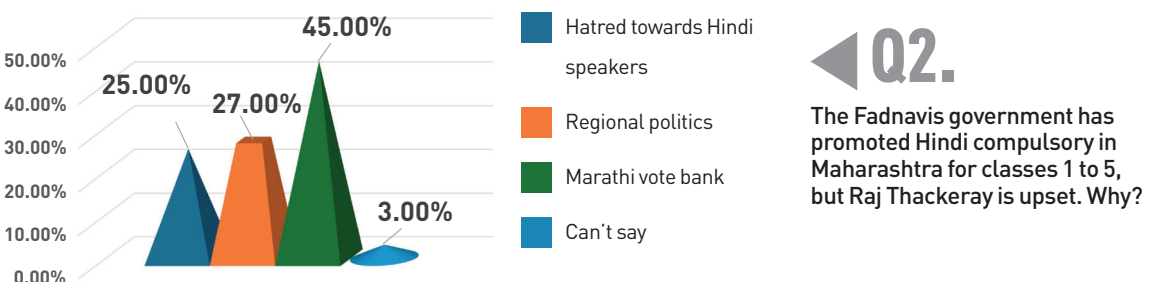
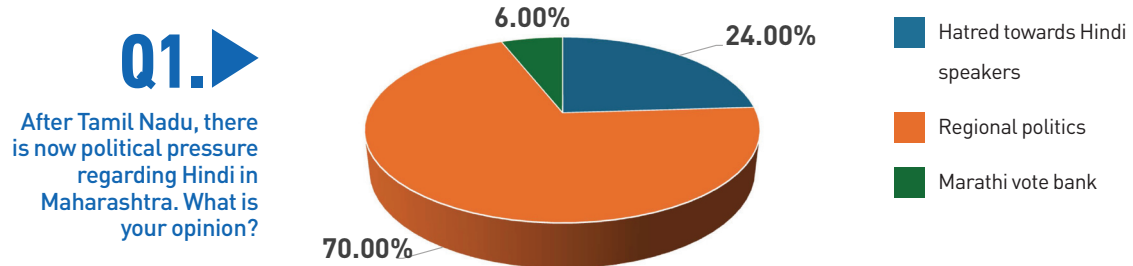


THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON MARATHI VS HINDI CONTROVERSY

90% say Marathi language issue is being politicised ahead of BMC elections.

Under the new NEP 2020-aligned curriculum, Maharashtra has made Hindi a mandatory third language for Classes 1 to 5 in both Marathi and English-medium schools. Currently, only Marathi and English

are compulsory from Classes 1 to 4. A government resolution issued on April 16, 2025, outlines the phased implementation of this change by the State School Education Department.



Flash floods kill 3 people in J&K

CONTINUED FROM P1

officials said, "The situation is bad.. on my return I will submit my report to the chief minister," Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary said in Ramban after he visited the affected areas accompanied by NC MLAs Arjun Singh Raju (Ramban) and Sajad Shaheen (Banihal).

A senior government official said there has been massive damage in the entire district due to heavy rain, cloudbursts, high-velocity winds, landslides and hailstorms. "We are monitoring the situation and an assessment will be carried out later to provide assistance to the affected population. Our priority at the moment is

to safeguard lives," said the senior official, who did not wish to be named.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed grief over the loss of lives and said that all possible assistance is being extended to the affected families. The district administration, State Disaster Response Force and rescue teams were on the job to ensure swift relief, Sinha said.

"The purpose of my visit is to convey to the people that Omar Abdullah led government stands with them in this hour of grief," the deputy chief minister said in Ramban.

He said a detailed report

will be sought from the deputy commissioner and every attempt will be made to compensate the losses suffered by the people. A traffic department spokesperson said vehicular movement on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was stopped from both sides due to landslides, mudslides and shooting stones at multiple places between Nashri and Banihal. He said the rain was continuing along the highway and commuters were advised not to travel on the arterial road till the weather improved and the road cleared.

A stretch of the road near Panthiyal was also swept away, the officials said and added all the stranded people were moved to safety.

Farmers left in the lurch

CONTINUED FROM P1

Fatehabad, and Jind districts have damaged close to 2,000 acres of ripe wheat crop and crop residue.

The fires are believed to have started from short circuits in overloaded or loose electric wires, which, under strong winds, ignited dry crop residues and quickly spread through fields. Farmers say the blaze travels at lightning speed during high wind, giving them no time to control it.

"This is our only livelihood. The fire has snatched away everything," said Hakam Singh, a farmer from Mansa, whose seven-acre wheat field was reduced to ash. "There is no compensation policy for fire-affected crops unless it happens due to natural calamities. We are helpless," he added.

In lack of proper compensation policy for burnt crop the aggrieved farmers were left without compensation as the PM Kisan Fasal Bima Yojana does not cover fire incidents.

Despite repeated appeals by farmer unions and local representatives,

neither the Punjab nor Haryana government has a specific policy to compensate farmers whose crops are damaged in fires caused by electrical faults. Under the current norms, only disasters notified under the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) are eligible for compensation.

The absence of a support mechanism has further angered farmer organisations, with BKU (Ugrahan) and BKU (Ekta Sidhupur) staging protests demanding immediate compensation and insurance coverage for fire-related damages.

"The governments must wake up. Farmers are losing their entire harvest, yet there is no accountability from power departments or relief for affected families," said Joginder Singh Ugrahan, president of BKU (Ugrahan).

All India Kisan Khet Mazdoor Sangathan's state secretary Jaikaran Mandouthi and president Anoop Singh Matanhail stated that due to a powerful storm that struck on Friday evening, standing wheat crops spread across nearly 900 acres in 25 villages across five districts of the state were reduced

to ashes after catching fire. He demanded the government provide compensation of Rs 50,000 per acre for the burnt standing crop. The farmer leaders alleged that the government had a satellite to detect stubble burning incidents but now they have turned a blind eye to the farm fires.

Even the opposition parties have demanded compensation from the government for the losses suffered by farmers due to fire and heavy rains. Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the government should take cognizance of all incidents of crop damage in the state and compensate farmers accordingly.

Meanwhile, Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) national president Abhay Singh Chautala warned that if the government fails to provide timely compensation to farmers, his party will take to the streets and launch an agitation.

In Haryana, the agriculture and farmers welfare minister Shyam Singh Rana on Sunday met several aggrieved farmers in Kurukshetra.

Kharge attacks PM, Nitish in Bihar rally

CONTINUED FROM P1

misusing Enforcement Directorate against party leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case, Kharge also mentioned Robert Vadra and said it was all being done to "finish Congress". Robert Vadra, husband of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, had been questioned by ED earlier this week in the Gurugram land case. The Congress president said he had spoken of "eleven lies" by PM Modi and the "twelfth" is about the package announced for Bihar.

He alleged there is a "BJP-RSS conspiracy" to implicate Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi so that Congress members may get scared.

He said Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi belong to a family which has a great and glorious record of sacrifices for the unity and integrity of the country.

He pointed out that former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took bullets on her chest for preserving the unity and integrity of the country. Alleging that the National

Herald case was a conspiracy, Kharge said "lies" were being spread about the case.

He said India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had donated his ancestral house and other ancestral properties to the Congress party.

Kharge accused the BJP and PM Modi of treating the Congress leaders "like their enemies" and said "that is why they were slapping false cases on the Gandhi family".

He said the Gandhis or Congress "will not be scared" of "intimidation and arm twisting".

"PM Modi and BJP treat us as enemies. The way they have filed a chargesheet against Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi and started an investigation against Robert Vadra, this is just to harass the Congress party and finish us..."

The Gandhi family is not going to bow down in front of anyone. They will keep fighting for the country," he said.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on April 15 filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in connection with the National Herald case.

PM Modi to host Vance, family for dinner; Taj in itinerary

CONTINUED FROM P1

The Vances will be welcomed on their arrival at the Palam airbase by a senior Union cabinet minister.

Vance's first visit to India comes weeks after US President Donald Trump imposed and then paused a sweeping tariff regime against around 60 countries, including India.

The Vances will be welcomed on their arrival at the Palam airbase by a senior Union cabinet minister.

Besides Delhi, Vance and his family will travel to Jaipur and Agra. Vance is expected to be accompanied by at least five senior officials, including from the Pentagon and the State Department, people familiar with the matter. At 6:30 pm on Monday, PM Modi will welcome Vance and his family at his 7 Lok Kalyan Marg residence that will be followed by official talks.

The focus of the meeting is likely to be on early fi-

nalisation of the proposed bilateral trade pact as well as ways to boost overall trajectory of ties between the two countries, the people cited above said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, NSA Ajit Doval, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Indian ambassador to US Vinay Mohan Kwatra are expected to be part of the Indian team to be led by PM Modi, they said.

Following the talks, Modi

will host the Vances and the accompanying American officials for dinner. The people cited above said Vance and his family will leave for Jaipur on Monday night. In Delhi, the US Vice President and his family are set to stay in ITC Maurya Sheraton hotel.

On April 22, the Vances will visit a number of historical sites, including the Amer Fort, also known as Amber Fort. The fort is a UNESCO world heritage

site.

In the afternoon, the US Vice President is scheduled to address a gathering at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jaipur, they said.

Vance is expected to delve into broader aspects of India-US relations under the Donald Trump administration during his speech that is expected to be attended by diplomats, foreign policy experts, Indian government officials and academia.



Indian Air Force will participate in the Multinational Exercise Desert Flag-10 at Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on Sunday. The IAF is fielding Mig-2 and Jaguar aircraft in the exercise. ANI

NO HASTY DECISIONS ON CASTE SURVEY, SAYS KARNATAKA DY CM

Cong committed to delivering justice to all communities, says DKS

TDG NETWORK
MANGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar stated on Sunday that the state government would not take any hasty decision regarding the socio-economic survey, commonly referred to as the caste census.

He emphasised that the Congress party remains committed to empowering the oppressed and delivering justice to all communities.

"We will empower the oppressed and ensure justice for everyone. There will be no hasty decisions on this matter," Shivakumar said while addressing the media in Mangaluru.

When asked about Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's recent letter reportedly concerning the caste census, Shivakumar said he had not

'POOR IN ALL COMMUNITIES'

- "We will empower the oppressed and ensure justice for everyone. There will be no hasty decisions on this matter," Shivakumar said.
- He highlighted that poverty exists across all communities, mentioning specific groups to underscore the inclusive nature of the Congress party's agenda
- "There are poor people in all communities, including Jains, Vokkaligas, and Lingayats, and justice will be provided to all," he added.



seen the letter.

He reiterated the Congress party's stance on equitable development and inclusive justice.

"I have not seen that letter. The Congress party is committed to taking all communities forward equally. Our aim is to provide justice to everyone. Nowhere have we said we want to do injustice to anyone. Empowering the oppressed is our primary

goal," he said.

Shivakumar also highlighted that poverty exists across all communities, mentioning specific groups to underscore the inclusive nature of the Congress party's agenda.

"There are poor people in all communities, including Jains, Vokkaligas, and Lingayats, and justice will be provided to all," he added.

Lok Sabha leader of opposition, Rahul Gandhi on Friday,

had urged the state government to enact the Rohith Vemula Act to ensure that no one faces caste-based discrimination in the education system.

"Recently, I met students and teachers from Dalit, Advansi 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 primary 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 Tadvai 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.

If we need to come together, we will: Raut on possible Raj-Uddhav reunion

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday spoke on the possibility of a reunion between the estranged cousins, Raj and Uddhav Thackeray, and stated that there was no alliance in place as of now, with only emotional talks taking place.

Speaking to the media, Raut further stated that the relationship between the two brothers had not been broken.

"There is no alliance (between MNS and Shiv Sena -UBT) as of now, only emotional talks are going on... Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray are brothers. We have been together for years. Our relationship has not broken... Both brothers will decide (about the alliance). We have accepted what Uddhav Ji said: for Maharashtra, if we (MNS and Shiv Sena -UBT) need to come together, we



will."

Furthermore, he stated that the parties claiming to be well-wishers of Maharashtra were actually its enemies, and broke the Shiv Sena to attack the state's pride. He added that no relations should be maintained with such parties.

"Uddhav Ji said that there are a few parties who claim to be well-wishers of Maharashtra, but they are the enemy of Maharashtra. They broke Balasaheb's Shiv Sena to attack the pride of Maha-

rashtra, and with such parties, we shouldn't have any relations, and then only we can be true Maharashtrians, and this is not a condition but the feelings of the people of Maharashtra, and this is what Uddhav ji has said..." the Shiv Sena (UBT) MP further added.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis welcomed the possibility of a reunion between the two cousins and called it a 'good' step.

Speaking to reporters, Fadnavis said, "If the two come together, we will be happy about it. If people settle their differences, it is a good thing. What else can I say about it?"

Fadnavis was responding to Raj Thackeray's recent statement, where the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief expressed willingness to reunite with Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav ji by forgetting past differences.

ED's chargesheet against Sonia, Rahul political vendetta: DMK

AGENCIES
CHENNAI

The DMK on Sunday slammed the BJP over ED action against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case, calling it an "unacceptable," vendetta that was "shameful."

DMK Treasurer and its Parliamentary Party Leader, TR Baalu charged the Central BJP with "unleashing" investigating agencies, including the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on the Congress as it was opposing the saffron party on issues including the Waqf by uniting various parties. On behalf of the DMK, I strongly condemn the ED filing chargesheet against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case due to BJP's political vendetta,"



Baalu said in a party statement here.

He said the recent AICC meeting in Gujarat effectively highlighting the Central BJP's "anti-people" activities and the party workers' resurgence has rattled the BJP. He said ED carried out raids during a previous AICC session in Chattisgarh's Raipur. A similar template was being used post Gujarat AICC meeting, he alleged.

"Congress standing firm against the Waqf (Amendment) bill and

making the opposition parties vote against it has not gone down well with the BJP government. It is fearful of the Congress taking to people, the central government's anti-people initiatives and its failures. That is why the ED is circling the Congress party and has not spared its leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi," Baalu added.

Unable to take on the Congress politically, the BJP government was "unleashing" ED and other agencies which was "not only disgusting but a shameful political vendetta unacceptable to anyone," he said.

The ED had recently filed a chargesheet against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and others before a special court in New Delhi in the National Herald case accusing them of allegedly laundering Rs 988 crore.

Incorrect to say Hindi being imposed: Maharashtra CM on language row

TDG NETWORK
PUNE

Amid the ongoing row over the Maharashtra government's decision to make Hindi a compulsory third language, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said it is wrong to say that Hindi is being imposed, as Marathi will continue to be mandatory in the state.

Speaking to the media, Fadnavis said, "It is incorrect to say Hindi is being imposed as Marathi will remain mandatory in Maharashtra. I am often surprised that while we oppose an Indian language like Hindi, we praise and carry



English on our shoulders. I find it curious why Indian languages feel distant to us while English feels closer. This is something that we need to think about."

He further clarified that Hindi is not replacing Marathi. "The first thing to understand is that Hindi has not been made mandatory in

place of Marathi; Marathi remains compulsory. However, the New Education Policy (NEP) offers an opportunity to learn three languages, and learning three languages is mandatory. According to the policy, two of these three languages must be Indian languages," he added.

In line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Maharashtra government has made it compulsory for students in state board schools to learn Hindi as a third language from Class 1, alongside Marathi and English.

Rahul Ashok Rekhawar, Director of the State Council of Educational Research

and Training (SCERT), Maharashtra, said that the decision was taken by the School Education Department on April 16.

Speaking to ANI on Thursday, Rekhawar said, "On behalf of the Maharashtra Government, the School Education Department has taken a decision in which teaching Hindi language along with Marathi and English has been made compulsory from Class 1 in all the schools of the state board. This decision has been made with all the appointments and their development in view, and the students will definitely benefit from it."

Tirupati laddu row: SIT issues notice to Gwalior trader



AGENCIES
GWALIOR

The Special Investigation Team probing into the allegations of use of adulterated ghee to make 'laddu prasadam' of the renowned Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple at Tirumala Hills in Andhra Pradesh has served notice to a trader in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior, a police official said. Following the Supreme Court's direction on constituting an independent SIT in November last year to conduct an investigation into allegations of use of animal fat in making Tirupati lad-

dus, the Central Bureau of Investigation had formed a committee.

The five-member SIT comprises CBI officials, Andhra Pradesh police personnel and a functionary of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Gwalior City Superintendent of Police (CSP) Robin Jain said some members of the court-appointed SIT had come here recently. "They found the link of this case to a trader in Dal Bazaar and took our help in serving the notice. The SIT will take further action in this regard," he said.

Retired Karnataka DGP found dead at Bengaluru residence

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Retired Director General of Police (DGP) Om Prakash, a 1981-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from Karnataka, was found murdered at his residence in HSR Layout, Bengaluru, the Bangalore City Police confirmed on Sunday.

According to a brief statement issued by the police, "Retired DGP Om Prakash, 1981 batch IPS officer from Karnataka, has been murdered. The murder took place at a residence in HSR Layout, Bengaluru. The exact reason for the incident is not yet known."

Police officials reached the scene shortly after receiving information about the incident. No arrest has been made in connection with the case at this time. The motive behind the killing remains unknown.

Over 66,000 devotees taken on pilgrimage in last 3 years at Rs 9.86 crore: Gujarat Govt

TDG NETWORK
GANDHINAGAR

The Gujarat government has supported over 66,000 devotees on pilgrimages since 2022 under schemes such as Shravan Tirth Darshan and Sindhu Darshan, according to an official statement from the Gujarat Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

Senior citizens formed the majority of beneficiaries, with Rs 9.86 crore disbursed as assistance, the statement added.

Further as per the release, the Government of Gujarat remains committed to respecting the faith and devotion of its people. Recognising that many devotees may not have the financial means to embark on pilgrimages, the Gujarat state government has stepped forward to sup-

port them by facilitating these spiritual journeys free of cost. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel is actively working not only towards the development of religious sites but also towards helping thousands of devotees to undertake pilgrimages. These efforts reflect the Prime Minister's guiding mantra of 'Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi'.

The release stated that the state government is running "various schemes that allow the devout people of the state to receive government assistance and embark on journeys to their preferred religious pilgrimage sites within the state, as well as to Sindhu Darshan and Kailash Mansarovar."

Inter-faith couple from Sagar traced in Gwalior, taken for interrogation

TDG NETWORK
GWALIOR

An inter-faith couple who had fled from Sagar's Sanodha village, leading to violence in the region, has been caught by Sagar Police in Gwalior and is being taken back for interrogation.

Speaking on the incident, Padav Police Station in-charge Alok Singh Parihar said, "They are an inter-faith couple who eloped from Sagar's Sanodha to get married. The law-and-order situation in the region was greatly affected by this action of theirs. When we got information from the Sagar Police, we tracked them and caught them from Kesar Mall near the railway station... They were planning on going to Ajmer... Both are adults."

Earlier, Violence erupted in parts of the Sanaudha area in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh, with shops getting vandalised and security forces being brought in to control the situation. Locals in the area and an MLA have claimed



"We are investigating the issue now; the more important thing is to control the law and order. We are also looking to file an FIR," he said.

that the woman was "kidnapped" by the man.

Sagar's Collector, Sandeep GR told reporters on Saturday that the situation is under control and additional forces have been deployed.

"We got some information about an incident here that

some had gathered, and on that all our police teams were deployed, including the DSP, SP and solve the issues. Now the law and order is under our control, and for that police and security forces are deployed. I also request everyone to send a message of peace," the district Collector said.

"We are investigating the issue now; the more important thing is to control the law and order. We are also looking to file an FIR," he said. BJP MLA, Pradeep Lariya told reporters, "A person from one village has been kidnapped by a criminal type, who drinks alcohol, does gambling, he makes houses on encroached land. Our demand is simple. I believe it is an issue of Love Jihad. The family also runs a beauty parlour. Police should investigate the matter thoroughly and bring the woman back. The people here are demanding that all these activities, alcohol, gambling and everything else should also be removed from here."

CM Mohan Yadav releases 2 cheetahs in Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary under 'Project Cheetah'

TDG NETWORK
BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday released two cheetahs in the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary under Project Cheetah, marking a new phase in the government's wildlife conservation efforts.

The cheetahs were relocated from Kuno National Park

to Gandhi Sagar as part of a plan to expand their habitat and support biodiversity.

"History has been written today, as two cheetahs have been released in the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary. I congratulate the countrymen," CM Mohan Yadav said.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's support for wildlife conservation, the chief minister added, "PM

Modi had pledged to make Madhya Pradesh a cheetah state on the occasion of his birthday... Taking that pledge forward, we released cheetahs in Kuno National Park... due to which the state has become a centre of research."

He also said the initiative would help create jobs. "'Project Cheetah' will also provide employment opportunities to many people,"



Yadav said. Neemuch Chief Forest Of-

ficer Subharanjan Sen explained the process behind

the cheetah release.

"When it was decided to bring cheetahs here, Kuno was the most suitable place, so the cheetahs were released there first. Apart from this, some places in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh were also chosen for releasing cheetahs," he said. "After Kuno in Madhya Pradesh, there was Gandhi Sagar, so they were released there. After this, Nauradehi

was also considered a suitable place for cheetahs. We plan to release cheetahs there too in future," Sen added.

Meanwhile, CM Yadav said on Saturday that the state government has filed an appeal in the Supreme Court seeking permission to build a safari in the Chambal region, which would also help generate employment.

"Yesterday, in the review of the forest department, we tried to mobilise a lot of management for the next phase of the Cheetah project in the Chambal region, especially in terms of employment. An appeal has also been filed in the Supreme Court, requesting to build a safari here and provide employment to people through tourism," the MP CM told reporters.

OVER 1,000 WATER TANKERS FLAGGED OFF TO QUENCH CITY'S THIRST THIS SUMMER

This is a step towards complete transparency, says CM Gupta



A fleet of 1111 GPS-enabled water tanks for Delhi Jal Board lined up during the flagging off ceremony, in New Delhi. ANI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday flagged off 1,111 tankers fitted with a location tracking system to boost water supply in the city during the summer. The system will enable the tankers' location to be tracked on an IT dashboard from the Delhi Jal Board headquarters.

"This is a step towards

complete transparency. This is not the final solution, we will work on a new town plan to provide water from the tap to every resident," Gupta said during the ceremony marking 60 days of her government in Burari.

Water Minister Parvesh Verma, Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, BJP MPs and MLAs were present at the event.

In its budget for the 2025-26 fiscal, the Delhi

government has allocated Rs 9,000 crore for the water sector. This amount includes allocation for installing smart meters, reviving water bodies, laying pipelines and desilting drains, among others, Gupta said.

"We have deployed 50 super sucker machines across the city to deal with sewer overflow. The previous government only procured two such machines," she added.

Rebranding old project for 'headline politics': AAP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The AAP and the ruling BJP in Delhi on Sunday locked horns over the deployment of GPS-enabled water tankers in the city, with the opposition party accusing the government of rebranding an old initiative for "headline politics". The BJP, however, dismissed the claims as "hilarious" and asked why the previous AAP government could not curb the black-marketing of water supplied through tankers if the tracking system was already in place.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday flagged off 1,111 tankers equipped with GPS devices to boost water supply in the city during the summer. These devices will enable tracking of the tankers' location on an IT dashboard from the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) headquarters.

Addressing a press conference, the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP's) Delhi unit chief Saurabh Bharadwaj alleged the BJP government was "misleading Delhiites" by claiming to have introduced GPS-enabled tankers, a feature that has existed since 2015. "When I was the DJB vice-chairman in 2022, the GPS tracking system was already in place and functional," he said, citing a 2015 news report as evidence. He accused CM Gupta of repainting old tankers to project them as a new initiative and criticised the administration of engaging in "headline politics" and wasteful spending for publicity. The former Delhi minister also alleged that the figure of 1,111 GPS-enabled water tankers announced by the BJP government was inflated.

BJP launches campaign for 'One Nation, One Election' awareness

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP will soon launch a campaign in the city to create awareness about One Nation, One Election (ONOE) to drum up support for the party's stand on it, state president Virendra Sachdeva said on Sunday. He said that the campaign will be taken to every household in Delhi and a public awareness movement will be started to explain how the society and the nation can benefit from ONOE. A workshop addressed by BJP national general secretary Sunil Bansal at Delhi



unit office was attended by senior party functionaries, MPs and MLAs. They received valuable guidance from Bansal and held discussions on making One Nation, One Election a national campaign, Sachdeva said. Frequent elections hin-

der the country's development, he said. "If we look at the data from the last 30 years, there is an election in some state every year, and every five years, state assembly elections are held along with Lok Sabha elections. It complicates the electoral process," he said. ONOE is a "national necessity", Sachdeva added. "Through One Nation, One Election, we can envision a developed nation by saving the country's time, money, and resources." In the last Lok Sabha elections in 2024, he said that one crore (10 million) personnel were involved throughout the process.

Police nabs two drug traffickers, over 27 kg of cannabis seized

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Crime Branch has apprehended two drug traffickers and recovered over 27 kilograms of cannabis from their possession in the North-West area of Delhi. The drug traffickers have been identified as Birender Pratap Singh (46) and Jayaram Das (54), both residents of Samaypur Badli. Police said that the duo was involved in supplying cannabis in Delhi at wholesale from Odisha and Bihar. Jayaram Das, originally from Bihar, was responsible for transporting the narcotics from Odisha to Delhi.

He was arrested based on the information provided by his co-accomplice, Birender Pratap Singh. Sharing information, police said that a raid was carried out and 27.568 kilograms of cannabis (ganja) were recovered from the possession of the accused Birender Pratap Singh. Following the seizure, a case was registered under sections 20/25 of the NDPS Act at PS Crime Branch. Upon interrogation, it was revealed that co-accused Jayaram Das was expected to visit said Birender Pratap Singh to collect the proceeds from the sale of the narcotics.

Delhi tightens security for Vance's visit

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Security has been stepped up across the national capital in view of the arrival of US Vice President J D Vance and Indian-origin second lady Usha on Monday morning, an official said on Sunday. The US vice president, his wife Usha and their three children -- Ewan, Vivek, and Mirabel -- are scheduled to land at the Palam airbase at 10 am on Monday on a four-day India visit. "We have already conducted mock drills according to the security protocol for the high level visit of the US vice president.

Eight committees formed to implement Ayushman Bharat

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a major step towards implementing the central government's flagship health scheme, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) in the national capital, Delhi government's Department of Health and Family Welfare has formed eight committees for the effective implementation of the scheme.

With this implementation, Delhi becomes the 35th state or Union Territory to implement this health scheme.

Eight committees have been formed by the department to ensure the smooth functioning of the scheme, covering



the entire process from enrollment to completion, said an official.

Out of the eight committees formed, the major one is the State Empanelment Committee, along with seven other committees, which are as follows: The State Empanelment Committee will be chaired by the CEO of AB-PMJAY and will oversee hospital registrations, disciplinary actions, and inspections

of registered hospitals.

The second one is the District Empanelment Committee, which will handle timely hospital registrations, document verification, and field verification.

The third one is the District Implementation Committee, which will assist in creating Ayushman cards, conducting awareness campaigns, and resolving grievances of beneficiaries. The fourth one is the State Grievance Redressal Committee (SGRC), which will provide a final resolution to complaints related to beneficiaries and hospitals. The fifth one is the State Anti-Fraud Cell, which will frame policies to prevent misuse of services and monitor fraud.

Fire at Aya Nagar: Man suffers burn

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 39-year-old man suffered serious burn injuries in a fire that is suspected to have broken out due to an electric scooter charging in the parking area of a house in south Delhi's Aya Nagar area, an official said Sunday. A call about the blaze was received on Saturday following which two fire tenders were rushed to H-Block in Aya Nagar to douse the flames, an official of the Delhi Fire Services said. The injured, identified as Virender Tiwari, suffered nearly 50 per cent burn injuries and was immediately rushed to Safdarjung Hospital for treatment, he said.

Verma alleges corruption by AAP in Timarpur project, orders probe

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Water minister Parvesh Verma on Sunday ordered an investigation into the Timarpur oxidation pond project, alleging corruption in water management by the previous AAP government. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) dismissed the allegations saying the BJP "shielded" the top officer of the Delhi Jal Board whenever the party raised concerns on the matter.

"This is an example of the corruption perpetrated by the Aam Aadmi Party government. Around Rs 35 to 40 crore were spent just on grass and landscaping, and



“Around Rs 35 to 40 crore were spent just on grass and landscaping, and another Rs 45 crore on the construction of ponds -- totalling approximately Rs 85 crore.”

another Rs 45 crore on the construction of ponds -- totalling approximately Rs 85 crore,” Verma said. A full

investigation has been ordered, and strict action will be taken against those found guilty, he added.

Climate experts suggest summer leaves, water ATMs at labour hubs to beat the heat

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Climate experts have proposed urgent measures, including paid heat leave, free water ATMs at labour hubs and legal recognition for the 'right to cool', to protect India's informal workforce during the extreme summer months.

More than 80 per cent of Delhi's workers, including street vendors, construction labourers and ragpickers, face severe health risks and income loss due to extreme

heat. The women among them are disproportionately affected, the experts said.

Amruta, a campaigner at Greenpeace India, highlighted that heat waves were no longer just weather events but disasters for those without shelter, water or rest spaces.

A Greenpeace India report last year found that 61 per cent of street vendors lost more than 40 per cent of their daily income during extreme heat while 75 per cent lacked access to cooling infrastructure near



workplaces.

Hisham Mundol, chief advisor at Environmental Defense Fund - India, said informal workers bore the brunt of heat waves and rising cases of dehydration, heatstroke and chronic illnesses such as kidney damage underscored the urgent need for intervention.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted above-normal maximum temperatures for large parts of northwest, central, and eastern India between April and June.

City records highest minimum temp in 3 years

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded its highest minimum temperature in three years on Sunday with the mercury settling at 26 degrees Celsius, 4.4 degrees above the season's average.

The last time the city saw such high minimum temperature was in 2022, when it touched 26.2 degrees Celsius. The maximum temperature on Sunday was at 39.8 degrees Celsius, three

The last time the city saw such high minimum temperature was in 2022, when it touched 26.2 degrees Celsius.

notches above normal. Humidity levels fluctuated between 63 per cent and 38

per cent.

The weather department has forecast a partly cloudy sky for Monday, with the maximum and minimum temperatures hovering around 40 and 25 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Meanwhile, the city's air quality was in the 'moderate' category at 4 pm on Sunday, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 140, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.

LESSONS FROM BUILDING COLLAPSE

MCD begins crackdown on illegal high-rise building

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has begun clamping down on illegal high-rise constructions in unauthorised colonies and initiated strict action against erring officials after a building collapsed in the northeastern part of the city. Eleven people, including three children, were killed after a two-decade-old four-storey building collapsed in Shakti Vihar in the early hours of Saturday. The incident also left 11 persons injured.

It was located in an area which was part of an unauthorised colony. A closer look into the buildings of the area has revealed that several of them were five to six-storey tall, which were in violation of safety norms.

"The moot point is how such massive unauthorised constructions mushroomed in the first place," the civic body said in a statement, adding the matter warranted a detailed inquiry.

MCD officials said that in unauthorised colonies, building plans are not sanctioned and property owners continue to add floors without any concern for structural load or public safety. The building that collapsed was said to be old and structurally weak.

The civic body said that it would pull down a property adjoining the collapsed building that had already been marked for demolition to avoid further risks.

In response to the allegations of a breach of norms that came to the fore following the building collapse, the civic body kickstarted a

survey to identify and seal similarly dangerous structures in the area. So far, 15 properties have been identified for action.

The civic body has also initiated disciplinary measures against its staff found guilty of negligence.

Officials said that a junior engineer, who was posted in the area between March 2019 and August 2021 and faced multiple disciplinary proceedings earlier, has been removed from service.

Action, including dismissal or compulsory retirement, has been taken against three more officials, they said. Another junior engineer, posted in the area since November 28, 2024, has been transferred to another department to enable a fair probe. A show-cause notice has been served to him.

AAP, CONG DEMAND COMPENSATION TO KIN



NEW DELHI: Delhi Mayor Mahesh Kumar on Sunday demanded that the BJP government provide compensation to the families of those killed and injured in the four-storey building collapse in northeast Delhi's Mustafabad. The incident occurred around 3 am when a 20-year-old four-storey building collapsed in Shakti Vihar, Mustafabad, claiming 11 lives and leaving 11 others injured, several of whom remain in critical conditions. Addressing a press conference, Kumar said the families of the deceased should be given Rs 10 lakh each, and those injured must receive Rs 5 lakh in compensation. He criticised the government for not announcing any financial relief so far, despite senior ministers visiting the site. "This is a very tragic incident. May

God give peace to the souls of the deceased and strength to their families. But prayers are not enough - the government must act," Kumar said. "The Delhi government passes budgets worth crores for various events, but when it comes to helping the poor, there is no money," he said. The mayor also said that a letter has been sent to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) commissioner, urging a strict action against any official found guilty of negligence. "So far, no accountability has been fixed. We have demanded that a strong action be taken against those responsible for this tragedy," he said. Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav also asked the BJP Government to immediately provide financial relief.

WILL PM CONVEY CONCERNS ON DESTRUCTION OF MULTILATERAL TRADING: CONG ON VANCE VISIT

The grand old party queries if PM Modi will raise concerns over US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and the WHO.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Ahead of talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US Vice-President JD Vance, the Congress on Sunday asked if the prime minister would convey India's concerns on the manner in which Indian citizens were being deported and the "complete destruction" of the multilateral rules-based trading system anchored in the WTO.

The opposition party also asked if the prime minister would convey India's concerns at US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and the WHO.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh asked in a post on X if the prime



minister would convey India's concerns at the manner in which Indian citizens were being deported and Indian students made to live in an atmosphere of fear in the US after their parents spent their life savings to support their children's education in America.

Will the prime minister convey India's concern at the complete destruction of

the multilateral rules-based trading system anchored in the WTO, from which India has gained greatly, he asked.

Ramesh further questioned if Modi would convey India's concern at US withdrawal from the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement, "which is so very essential for managing global warming that threatens the livelihoods of crores

of our people".

Will the prime minister convey India's concern at the US withdrawal from the WHO, which plays an important role in global public health research and management, Ramesh further asked.

He also asked if Modi would convey India's determination to ensure that any further bilateral trade liberalisation did not adversely impact Indian farmers, industry, and MSMEs.

The US vice-president, his Indian-origin wife Usha and their three children — Ewan, Vivek, and Mirabel — are scheduled to land at the Palam airbase at 10 am on Monday on a four-day visit.

Modi will host a dinner for Vance and Usha in the evening after holding talks

with the American leader on a range of key issues, including trade, tariff, regional security and ways to expand the overall bilateral engagement.

Vance's first visit comes weeks after US President Donald Trump imposed and then paused a sweeping tariff regime against about 60 countries, including India.

New Delhi and Washington are now holding negotiations to seal a bilateral trade agreement that is expected to address a variety of issues, including tariff and market access.

The Vances will be welcomed on their arrival at the Palam airbase by a senior Union Cabinet minister.

Besides Delhi, Vance and his family will travel to Jaipur and Agra.

Nine, including women, minors held in Seelampur murder case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Nine people, including women and minors, have been held by the Delhi Police in connection with the murder of a 17-year-old boy in the Seelampur area.

According to Delhi Police, the main accused, 'Lady Don' Zikra, along with Sahil (18), Zahida (42), Nafish (32), Sohaib (35), Aneesh (19), Vikas (29) and two minors aged about 17 and 15 years, have been taken into custody.

Police teams from the North-East District carried out raids across Delhi-NCR, including Ghaziabad, Meerut, Moradabad, and Amroha in Uttar Pradesh. Based on technical surveillance, clues, and local inputs, the suspects were arrested on April 20.

During the investigation, evidence was collected against Zikra, Sahil, and two minors referred to as "Children in Conflict with Law" (CCLs). Police allege that



North-East District police arrests accused Sahil, Anis and Nafis in the Seelampur murder case, in New Delhi on Sunday. 09 persons, including 02 females and 02 CCLs arrested in the case. ANI

these individuals planned the attack on the victim, Kunal.

The police said, "Relevant evidence was collected, which confirmed the involvement of the accused in this heinous crime during the probe."

It was revealed that Sahil had an old rivalry with Kunal. On April 17, the group allegedly caught Kunal and stabbed him multiple times.

Giving more details, police said, "On April 17, at about

7:38 PM, information regarding the stabbing of a person in J-Block, Jhuggi Seelampur, was received at the Seelampur Police Station." When the police team reached the location, they found the victim had already been taken to JPC Hospital by his family, where doctors declared him dead.

The victim was identified as Kunal, a 17-year-old boy from the New Seelampur area in Delhi.

Delhi sees 2-fold rise in drug related cases

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi witnessed a two-fold increase in drug-related offences in the first three months of 2025 as compared to 2024, while offences under the Excise Act saw a jump of more than 80 per cent, as per the data shared by the police on Sunday.

According to the data, between January 1 and March 31, 2025, Delhi registered a total of 2,496 cases under the Excise Act while a total of 1,382 cases were registered in 2024 during the same period.

Similarly, Narcotics Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Act violations climbed from 257 to 544 cases, averaging around six drug-related cases every day, the data read.

Cases under the Arms Act also increased, from 957 last year to 1,049 this year, while those under the Gambling



Act rose to 1,018 from 677 in 2024.

The spike is attributed to increased enforcement and crackdown operations across Delhi, a senior police officer said. Crimes registered under different acts, including the Arms Act and Gambling, also shot up significantly with 6,836 cases registered in the first three months of 2025 — a steep rise from 4,143 cases in 2024 and 4,080 in 2023 for the same period.

"The rise in Excise and NDPS cases reflected proactive policing efforts and targeted operations against bootlegging and drug peddling networks. Police are also using surveillance tools and informant networks to track syndicates across the city," the officer said.

In contrast, overall cases under the Indian Penal Code and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita crimes saw a slight decline. Delhi recorded 63,898 such cases in the first quarter of 2025, about 710 cases a day, as compared to 64,256 last year and 82,534 in 2023.

Burglaries also dropped to 1,725 from 2,017, house thefts dropped to 3,578 from 3,644. Motor vehicle thefts remained largely unchanged, with 9,070 cases in 2025 compared to 9,080 in 2024, the data revealed.

However, "other theft" cases saw an uptick, rising to 27,066 in 2025 from 24,226 last year, nearly 300 cases per day.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

From his 2015 Independence Day address in Delhi to the one delivered at an eye hospital opening last year in Varanasi, a set of 34 speeches made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a wide range of cultural subjects has now been compiled in a book.

Titled 'Sanskriti Ka Paanchva Adhyay', the curated collection lays emphasis on Modi's addresses on Indian culture, traditions, spiritual values and heritage delivered on various occasions in the past 10 years.

The book was released on Friday evening by Acharya Mahamandaleswar Pujya Swami Avdhesanand Giri Maharaj, the head of the



Juna Akhara, in the presence of Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh, at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) here.

The compilation contains 34 speeches, arranged chronologically, beginning with his 2015 Independence Day address delivered from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi and the last in the series, being his speech at the

inauguration of the RJ Shankar Eye Hospital in Varanasi on October 2024.

These speeches cover a wide range of cultural contexts -- from sacred shrines like Kedarnath, Ram Janmabhoomi, Kashi Vishwanath Dham and Omkareshwar to occasions such as the launch of various editions of the 'Bhagavad Gita', Guru Nanak Jayanti, the Global Buddhist Conference, the birth anniversary of Acharya Vijay Vallabh Surishwar Maharaj and the World Sufi Conference, the IGNCA said.

The IGNCA is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture.

"These speeches reflect a quest to identify the Indian

ness in various religious traditions. The appendix contains reflections by Acharya Shri Pragya Sagar Ji Maharaj and Shankaracharya Shri Shankar Vijayendra Saraswati Swami Ji of Kanchi Kamakoti. Both appear to affirm the cultural vision espoused by the prime minister," it said in a statement.

The Rajya Sabha deputy chairman in his address said the country is currently in 'Azadi ka Amrit Kaal' period."

And the prime minister gave a resolve to make a 'Viksit Bharat' by the time we complete 100 years of our Independence. This dream of 'Viksit Bharat' was dreamt after 2014 and not dreamt before it," he added.

Vehicles not displaying colour-coded stickers to be penalised, city govt

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi transport department is set to crack down on vehicles that do not display colour-coded stickers indicating their fuel type, officials said on Sunday. According to a public notice, non-compliance will attract penalties under the Motor Vehicle Act. The stickers are part of the High Security Registration Plates (HSRP) mandate, introduced in 2012-13 and made compulsory for all vehicles by 2019.

"The Motor Vehicles (High Security Registration Plates) order, 2018 for displaying colour-coded stickers/third registration mark on the windshield of the vehicle. Non-compliance with the above order will also attract the provisions of Section 192(1) of the Motor Vehicle Act 1988," said the public notice issued by the department on Sunday.

Section 192(1) of the Motor Vehicles Act states the pun-



ishment for those who drive or cause or allow a motor vehicle to be driven in contravention of Section 39 (which relates to registration).

"The vehicle owners are advised to ensure strict compliance with the aforesaid order," the notice said further. In 2020, the transport department decided to launch a special drive against violations of the High-Security Number Plates (HSRP), under which there was a provision of a fine of Rs 5000 on any vehicle found plying without HSRP and stickers pasted

on number plates. According to officials, the HSRP number plate was introduced in the year 2012-13 and was made mandatory for all new vehicles in April 2019. The government made it compulsory for all old vehicles in Delhi to get the HSRP affixed. According to rules, colour-coded stickers for diesel vehicles are orange, for petrol and CNG vehicles it is light blue and grey for all other vehicles.

Vehicle owners who do not comply with the order will not get Pollution Under Control (PUC) Certificates.



Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) performs on the second day, at Army Ground, Namkum, in Ranchi district, Jharkhand, Sunday. Agencies

Cheetahs in MP get a new home

TDG NETWORK
SHEOPUR

After spending two years at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district, 6-year-old cheetahs Prabhash and Pavak will reach their new habitat on Sunday evening, officials said. The two cheetahs will be shifted to the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, located more than 250 km from Kuno where the ambitious intercontinental translocation of the big cats was launched nearly three years ago. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Uttam Kumar Sharma on Saturday said preparations were completed for shifting of the two male cheetahs.

Prabhash and Pavak would be taken by road to the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, which straddles Mandsaur and Neemuch districts, where Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will release them in the evening, he said.

Harassment in insurance claims no ground for criminal offence: HC

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Harassment faced by a client during the approval of insurance claims in a hospital can be a ground for seeking compensation but does not amount to a criminal offence, the Delhi High Court has said.

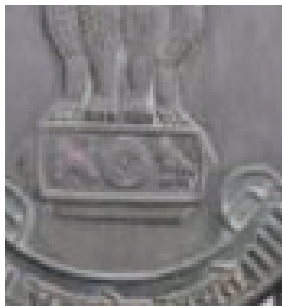
The court, at the same time, said patients frequently suffered harassment in the set-

tlement of final bills and the issue of smoothening settlement of bills and discharge of patients should be taken up by authorities.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna made the observations while dealing with a lawyer's plea against a sessions court order refusing to uphold the summons issued to a private hospital here by a magisterial court on his complaint.

The lawyer, who had undergone surgery at the private hospital in 2013, accused it of cheating, misappropriation of funds and wrongful restraint.

He alleged that despite having the authorisation under the cashless insurance scheme offered by a private insurance company, he was made to deposit the entire estimated amount before surgery, and he was



subsequently not discharged until the entire payment was cleared under the policy.

The court, in the judgement passed on April 17, said although there was procedural delay, no offence, as alleged by the petitioner, was made out and refused to interfere with the sessions court's decision.

The hospital submitted that it committed no offence as the initial authorisation was only for a limited amount and for a lower category room, and according to the norms of

the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA), the difference in price approved and the actual charges were required to be taken from the patient before his discharge.

The court said the condition to pre-deposit the balance amount might seem onerous, but could neither be said to be extraction of money nor could any dishonesty or fraudulent intention be at-

tached to the hospital, in this regard.

In the order, the court nonetheless acknowledged the harassment and trauma experienced by patients in setting their bills with the insurance companies, saying that is "riddled with delays".

"Much angst has been expressed on this system of getting the approvals from the insurance company at many forums and by the courts,

but such situation may be a ground for seeking compensation for mental harassment but does not tantamount to any criminal offence," the court said. "Though many a times courts have recommended that there may be some regulatory policy and even a Charter of Patients' Rights has been proposed by NHRC, but unfortunately no final redressal to this aspect has been worked out till date.

GOLD SURGES 25% ON IN 4 MONTHS OF 2025

Persistent trade tensions, inflationary pressures, and central bank gold purchases are expected to continue supporting prices.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Gold has delivered a stellar performance in the first four months of 2025, gaining nearly 25 per cent and marking all-time highs on both MCX and COMEX.

Silver has also followed suit with a 15 per cent price gain on COMEX.

This sharp rally is attributed to a combination of heightened geopolitical risks, trade tensions--particularly between the U.S. and China--and a surge in safe-haven demand from both institutional and retail investors, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd (MOFSL) said in a report.

The outlook for gold remains constructive, Motilal Oswal said.


Persistent trade tensions, inflationary pressures, and central bank gold purchases are expected to continue supporting prices.

As per Motilal Oswal, technical levels indicate strong support for gold around Rs 91,000 per 10 grams and resistance near Rs 99,000 on MCX, while on COMEX, key levels to watch are USD 3,100 per ounce and USD 3,400.

With the global economy

QUICK VIEW

- Gold up 25%, silver 15% in 2025 as safe-haven demand surges amid U.S.-China trade tensions and geopolitical risks, says Motilal Oswal.
- Bullish outlook for gold driven by inflation, central bank buying, and weak dollar; MOFSL maintains "buy on dips" view.
- Key levels: Rs 91,000–Rs 99,000 (MCX), \$3,100–\$3,400 (COMEX).
- Fed pause, Trump tariffs, stagflation fears fuel gold rally; EM central banks ramp up gold reserves.



navigating through policy uncertainty and slowing growth, gold is likely to remain an attractive asset class.

"In an environment dominated by policy uncertainty, inflationary pressures, and volatile geopolitics, gold continues to be a beacon of stability. As central banks bolster their reserves and investors seek safety, we believe gold will remain a favoured asset. Barring any significant resolution

in global trade tensions, we maintain a 'buy on dips' view from a medium to long-term perspective," said Navneet Damani, Group Senior Vice President, Head Commodity and Currency Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Gold's momentum has notably outpaced silver's so far this year, both in terms of scale and pace.

Following recent comments from President Trump regarding higher

tariffs on Chinese goods, gold briefly corrected but quickly recovered--demonstrating resilience and investor confidence. The Trump administration's aggressive trade stance has targeted dozens of trading partners, with particularly steep tariffs imposed on China (up to 245 per cent), prompting retaliatory measures from Beijing. This has led to market-wide concerns of a prolonged slowdown or potential stagnation in

Energy storage sector to expand fivefold: IESA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

According to an estimate by industry body India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA), India's energy storage sector will expand fivefold between 2026 and 2032, receiving about Rs 479 thousand crore in investment by 2032.

India's energy storage sector has taken significant strides in the past few years, backed by government incentives such as the approval of Viability Gap Funding for 13,200 MWh of Battery Energy Storage Systems by 2030-31.

Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd. (SECI), NTPC,



SJVN, and states like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh have announced various tenders for standalone energy storage systems, dispatchable renewable energy, and peak power solutions.

Discussing the industry's future at the 5th Edition of Gujarat's Biggest Interna-

tional Conference on Stationary Energy Storage India (SESI) 2025, industry experts stated that strategic investment is the need of the hour to advance technological innovations and infrastructure required for a robust energy storage ecosystem in India.

While addressing the inau-

CAIT to host national conclave to oppose quick e-commerce business

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

At a conclave to be held on Tuesday, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said it is set to "expose the darker and exploitative side" of modern retail.

The national conclave is titled 'Cruel Face of Quick Commerce and E-Commerce' to be held at the Constitution Club, in association with All India Mobile Retailers Association (AIMRA), and All India Consumer Products Distributors Federation (AICPDF).

According to CAIT, this

conclave will bring together trade leaders, policy experts, economists, and stakeholders from across the country to highlight the unethical practices and long-term threats posed by digital commerce platforms to India's traditional retail ecosystem. Once seen as revolutionary innovations, CAIT, in a statement, said quick commerce and e-commerce are now revealing their cruel underbelly--engaging in predatory pricing, violating FDI norms, eroding consumer and seller rights, and pushing small traders and shopkeepers to the margins.

Earlier this year, industry body CEAMA had asked for another round of PLI for air conditioners, which will help the industry to have domestic value addition beyond 70 per cent.

Asked about it, Sharma said, "I very strongly support it. That is the need of the hour."

"The air conditioner industry, in particular, has demonstrated... (it) has aggregated the demand. That's why such a catalysing effect could happen and at a fast speed," he added.

Need PLI for compressors, motors: Panasonic India chief

TDG NETWORK
JHAJJAR (HARYANA)

A separate production-linked incentive (PLI) for the air conditioner segment, focusing on high-value components like compressors and motors, is the need of the hour, Panasonic India head Manish Sharma said, echoing the demand of the industry.

On the government's recent PLI scheme for passive or non-semiconductor electronics components, Sharma, the Chairman of Panasonic Life Solutions

India, said it will encourage the industry and boost its competitiveness in the global markets.

On March 28, the government approved a production-linked incentive scheme for passive or non-semiconductor electronics components with an outlay of Rs 22,919 crore. It is the first scheme that focuses on promoting the manufacturing of passive electronic components.

Currently, India imports USD 12-13 billion worth of non-mobile electronics.

Almost USD 5-6 billion of PCB (printed circuit board) are being imported from elsewhere for assembling here, he said. "Now, the industry is being encouraged. We should start to populate those aggregated components... the heat sinks, the passive components, the capacitors, the resistors, etc," Sharma told PTI on the sidelines of the launch of the company's first smart home experience centre.

According to Sharma, if India has to "genuinely" embark on a journey to

manufacture components in the country, it needs to produce more PCB boards in the country only. "Then we will be able to aggregate the demand for components. If these are coming in from elsewhere, populated elsewhere, then it would be very difficult for us to do local manufacturing and make it viable," Sharma, who also chairs industry body FICCI's committee on 'Electronics & White Goods Manufacturing', said. However, he acknowledged that semiconductor is still a big game.

Sitharaman to hold series of meetings during her visit to US, Peru

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will have a series of meetings during her visit to the United States and Peru beginning Sunday. She will interact with CEOs from prominent fund management firms during her visit to the United States and participate in an event featuring the Indian diaspora.

The Union Finance Minister will visit San Francisco and Washington DC from April 20 to 25.

In the course of her two-day

visit to San Francisco beginning 20th April 2025, the Union Finance Minister will deliver a keynote address at the Hoover Institution at the Stanford University, San Francisco, on 'Laying the foundations of Viksit Bharat 2047' followed by a fireside chat session.

Sitharaman will also interact with top CEOs from prominent fund management firms during a Roundtable meeting with investors, besides holding bilateral meetings with CEOs from top information technology (IT) firms based in San Francisco.

She will also participate in an event featuring Indian diaspora in San Francisco and interact with the Indian community settled there.

During her visit to Washington DC, from April 22 to 25, Sitharaman will participate in the Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the second G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governor (FMCBG) Meetings, Development Committee Plenary, IMFC Plenary, and Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable (GSDR) meeting.

CAIT to host conclave to oppose quick commerce

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

At a conclave to be held on Tuesday, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said it is set to "expose the darker and exploitative side" of modern retail.

The national conclave is titled 'Cruel Face of Quick Commerce and E-Commerce' to be held at Constitution Club, in association with All India Mobile Retailers Association (AIMRA), and All India Consumer Products Distributors Federation (AICPDF).

According to CAIT, this conclave will bring together



trade leaders, policy experts, economists, and stakeholders from across the country to highlight the unethical practices and long-term threats posed by digital com-

Foreign exchange reserves climb to \$678 billion

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves (Forex) rose USD 1.567 billion to USD 677.835 billion in the week that ended on April 4, extending gains for the sixth straight week, according to the official data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

According to the data released by the RBI, for the week ended April 11, the foreign currency assets rose by USD 892 million to USD 574.98 billion. The foreign currency assets are the major constituents of forex reserves.

The gold reserve also saw an uptick as it surged by USD 638 million to USD 79.997 billion during the week, suggests the RBI data.

However, the Special Drawing Rights (SDRS) saw a decrease by USD 6 million to USD 18.356 billion, the data shows.

According to the RBI estimates, India's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to cover approximately 10-11 months of projected



In 2023, India added around \$58 billion to its foreign exchange reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of \$71 billion in 2022.

imports.

India's foreign exchange (forex) market has seen strong growth in recent years, with average daily turnover nearly doubling from USD 32 billion in 2020 to USD 60 billion in 2024.

In 2023, India added around USD 58 billion to its foreign exchange reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of USD 71 billion in 2022. In 2024, the reserves rose by a little over USD 20 billion. For-

eign exchange reserves, or FX reserves, are assets held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority, primarily in reserve currencies such as the US Dollar, with smaller portions in the Euro, Japanese Yen, and Pound Sterling.

The RBI often intervenes by managing liquidity, including selling dollars, to prevent steep Rupee depreciation. The RBI strategically buys dollars when the Rupee is strong and sells when it weakens.

IBS services at 'unviable rates' to Mumbai Metro not possible: Telcos

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

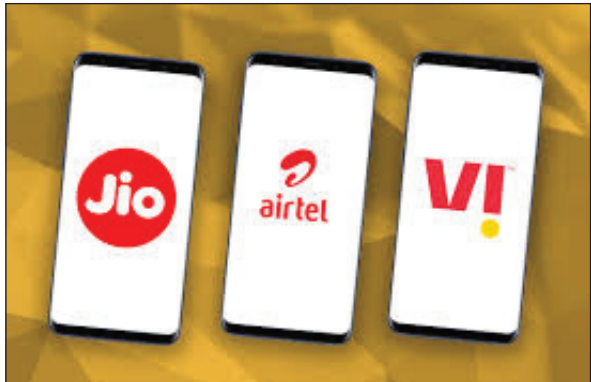
Three major telecom companies, Jio, Airtel and Vodafone-Idea, have said that providing In-Building Solution (IBS) services at unviable rates to Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) will not be possible.

Although the telecom companies offered to provide connectivity to the IBS network of ACES by installing their equipment at a rate set by them.

The companies expressed their inability to provide IBS services at unviable rates offered by selected ACES (Advanced Communications and Electronics Systems) partners by the MMRCL.

"To avoid inconvenience to your customers, we propose to offer connectivity to the IBS network of ACES by installing our equipment. However, this offer of connectivity is purely on a Free of Cost (FOC) basis till the time there is an agreement on terms and conditions providing connectivity of the IBS network to your selected partner's ACES. We would start payment for using the IBS network with prospective effect only from the date of signing of the agreement," the companies said in a letter, which is a continuation of the February 21 letter sent to the MMRCL's MD.

The letter added, "In case



In the February letter, the telecom companies said that given the Mumbai Metro handles a significant number of passengers daily, telecom connectivity within the metro premises must be of world-class quality.

this solution is acceptable to you to alleviate the problems of your customers, then kindly let us know so that we can make the necessary interim arrangements till the time terms and conditions for using the IBS network of ACES are finalised."

As per the letter, Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd has awarded a tender to ACES India Pvt Ltd for providing In-Building Solutions (IBS) at Mumbai Metro, including underground stations and associated tunnels.

In the February letter, the telecom companies said that given the Mumbai Metro handles a significant number of passengers daily, telecom connectivity within the metro premises must be of world-class

quality. The telecom players said in the letter, "To address this need, we propose a collaborative initiative involving the three licensed Telecom Services (TSPs) - Reliance Jio, Airtel, and Vodafone Idea - to implement a state-of-the-art IBS within Mumbai Metro stations. All three TSPs have agreed to implement a state-of-the-art IBS within Mumbai Metro stations.

All three TSPs have agreed to this proposal, recognising the importance of developing a shared infrastructure that leverages our combined resources and expertise. By working together, we aim to establish a telecommunications infrastructure that not only meets current demand but is also scalable for future expansion."

revealing their cruel underbelly--engaging in predatory pricing, violating FDI norms, eroding consumer and seller rights, and pushing small traders and shopkeepers to the margins.

According to CAIT, the uncontrolled growth of these platforms is not only harming trade but also threatening the socio-economic fabric of the nation.

Key issues to be addressed at the conclave include manipulation of consumer behavior through deep discounting; systematic violation of FDI rules and policy frameworks; margin-

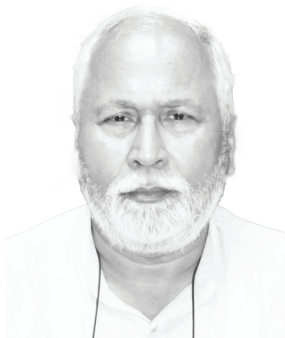
alization and displacement of small traders and retailers; exploitative working conditions for quick commerce delivery personnel; among others.

CAIT Secretary General and Chandni Chowk MP, Praveen Khandelwal, stated, "It is high time we unmask the black truth behind quick commerce and e-commerce. While consumers may enjoy convenience, traders are facing devastation. At the same time, delivery personnel working under intense time pressures are subjected to harsh physical and mental conditions."

MODI'S VISION, SHAH'S EXECUTION: WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL: THE MAGNA CARTA OF MUSLIM EMPOWERMENT

OPINION

RAGHAVENDRA PRASAD
TIWARI



Injustice in landholding is one of the fundamental determinants of social justice. And land redistribution based on democratic ethics is a powerful weapon against any form of social injustice. Hindrances in access to land and natural resources, invariably, have defined not only economic but also social and political deprivation of the masses. However, these deprivations have also generated powerful reactions which have resulted in new regulations for restructuring the extant, archaic and regressive political construct. In India, the existing inequalities in the distribution of wealth, power and social status, specifically in the context of the Muslim community, has impeded the efficient use of resources, depressed the rates of economic progress and prevented the achievement of minimum social and political stability. History shows that countries with greater justice in asset holding have grown faster.

In this context the transformative vision driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and executed with strategic precision by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Government of India has introduced many bills to deepen democracy. Recently, Modi government has successfully passed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025. This landmark reform marks a defining moment for the empowerment of India's Muslim community. For

decades, Waqf properties—meant for the welfare and upliftment of the community—remained enmeshed in opaque practices, mismanagement, and elite control. The amendment aims to dismantle these entrenched structures and usher in a new era of transparency, accountability, and inclusive governance. Under Modi's vision and Shah's assertive execution, the Bill sets a clear course for empowering ordinary Muslims, ensuring women's representation, and redirecting Waqf resources toward genuine public welfare.

GOVERNMENT'S IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT TO UNIFIED GOVERNANCE
The passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in Parliament is not merely a legal development—it is emblematic of the Government of India's deeper ideological commitment to building a more transparent, inclusive, and unified Bharat. At the heart of this push is Union Home Minister Amit Shah, whose recent legislative efforts continue to shape the government's vision of "One Nation, One Law." This reform is part of a broader series of governance efforts—such as the abrogation of Article 370 and personal law reforms—meant to harmonize India's legal landscape and reinforce constitutional equality. It demonstrates the government's resolve to unify legal standards across all communities, ensuring justice is not fragmented but delivered uniformly, without preference or prejudice, through consistent and inclusive frameworks.

CURBING LEGAL LOOPHOLES AND ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY
The amendment seeks to address long-standing concerns around the management of

Waqf properties by eliminating discretionary and elitist powers and emphasizing accountability through proper documentation. One of the most impactful changes is the removal of the "deemed waqf" provision, which previously allowed properties to be designated as waqf simply due to religious use. This clause had long been criticized for creating legal ambiguities and encouraging land disputes. Under the new law, clear proof of ownership is mandatory, aligning Waqf governance with mainstream land laws and reducing the scope for arbitrary claims. The focus on ownership evidence ensures that no community or institution can override national laws, promoting clarity in land rights and reducing opportunities for exploitation and unlawful encroachment.

FROM FAITH-BASED EXEMPTIONS TO RULE-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY
This emphasis on documentation and legal scrutiny over faith-based exemptions reflects a growing belief within the Government of India: that religious institutions managing public assets must adhere to modern standards of transparency. As Amit Shah stated in Parliament, "No land can be claimed based on faith alone; laws must apply equally to all citizens." This represents a clear pivot toward standardized governance and a rebalancing of trust with legal integrity. It marks a transition from traditional informal practices to a transparent system, where publicly utilized assets are governed through documentation, audits, and processes benefiting the wider population.

EMPOWERING MUSLIM WOMEN THROUGH LEGAL REFORM
One of the most progressive aspects of the Waqf Bill is its powerful commitment to gender justice and women empowerment. The Bill mandates the inclusion of Muslim women in Waqf boards and related decision-making bodies, giving them a platform to voice their perspectives and influence policy. In cases of family waqfs,



the amendment ensures that women receive their rightful share of inheritance—a right often denied under patriarchal norms. Much like the landmark Triple Talaq legislation, this reform demonstrates the government's consistent push to uphold women's rights within community-specific legal frameworks. Amended Bill ensures women's participation, promotes fairness and equity, giving them a rightful role in managing assets meant for community welfare and strengthening institutional balance.

A CALL FOR PLURALISTIC PARTICIPATION:
Another notable feature of the amended Bill is the provision allowing non-Muslim members to be included in Waqf Boards and the Central Waqf Council. While this move has sparked debate, the government maintains that public bodies dealing with public resources, especially those linked to state land or taxpayer money, should reflect pluralistic participation. It's a step toward institutional transparency and a reimagining of public faith management through inclusive governance. Such representation enhances oversight, encourages co-operation across communities, and ensures that institutions serve national interests, not limited circles or sectarian interests.



King Charles III, (Charles Philip Arthur George)

person with a challenging assignment in hand. "... finally! I cannot imagine what happened to your earlier one (communication), but I fear I have been somewhat overwhelmed in the last two years".

A significant share of Waqf income will also support scholarships, women-led initiatives, and youth training programs. This ensures that the real beneficiaries—the poor and marginalized—finally receive the support they deserve. It converts dormant land and wealth into tools for development, empowering underprivileged communities with better infrastructure, learning access, and dignified livelihoods.

TRANSFORMING WAQF ASSETS FOR PUBLIC GOOD
The Waqf amendment Bill also ensures the strategic utilization of waqf assets—worth thousands of crores—for community upliftment. These properties will now be channelled toward education, health, housing, skill development, and employment opportunities for underprivileged Muslims. A significant share of Waqf income will also support scholarships, women-led initiatives, and youth training programs. This ensures that the real beneficiaries—the poor and marginalized—finally receive the support they deserve. It converts dormant land and wealth into tools for development, empowering underprivileged communities with better infrastructure, learning access, and dignified livelihoods.

ENDING THE MONOPOLY OF ELITES:
For far too long, Waqf institutions were captured by



politically connected elites, operating behind closed doors. The new Bill breaks this monopoly by mandating digitized records, regular audits, and greater decentralization of decision-making. Power is being returned to local stakeholders and ordinary citizens, fulfilling the original charitable vision of Waqf foundations.

By challenging elite control, the reform encourages grassroots ownership, transparency in operations, and genuine community-driven development that aligns with the spirit of public good.

AMIT SHAH'S STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP:
At the helm of this transformation is Shri Amit Shah, whose political foresight and legislative determination have brought about this historic reform. Amid opposition from various quarters and misrepresentations in public discourse, Shah defended the Bill as a necessity for justice and clarity. His ability to confront complex issues with resolve

further establishes him as a modern-day Chanakya—blending civilizational wisdom with contemporary statecraft.

His leadership reflects strategic conviction in promoting legal equality, resolving sensitive matters with decisiveness, and securing public trust in reform processes affecting millions. Therefore, it may not be an exaggeration to equate Mr. Shah's abilities and commitment with the political acumen, determination and patriotism of Sardar Patel, the first Home Minister of Independent Bharat.

TOWARD A TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE:
The Waqf (Amendment) Bill is not an isolated piece of legislation. It forms part of a broader governance philosophy promoted by the Government of India—one that seeks to modernize India's institutions, bridge legal divides, and ensure equality for all under the Constitution. While some may interpret these moves as

challenging minority autonomy, the government frames them as foundational steps toward national integration, fairness, and legal coherence. It envisions a future where all citizens participate equally in public systems, and institutions are built on trust, efficiency, and fairness beyond communal lines.

A BOLD STEP TOWARD LEGAL AND SOCIAL EQUITY:
In a country as diverse as India, the challenge has always been to balance tradition with progress. The success of the Waqf reform will ultimately depend on its implementation—whether it brings real empowerment, fosters fairness, and upholds the democratic ideals of inclusion and equity. This Bill is not just a legal document—it is a symbol of the Modi Government's resolve to ensure justice and dignity for every citizen. Under the strategic guidance of Amit Shah, India has taken yet another bold step toward rewriting outdated narratives and building a modern, cohesive society. This legislative step, if implemented sincerely, holds the promise of transforming institutions into engines of equitable development, benefiting generations to come through fairness and opportunity.

The author is Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda.

Views are personal.

A letter king size!

OPINION

SUNNY SEBASTIAN

And finally when the King's letter came, it was king size—both in affection and in appreciation!

King Charles III wrote a personal letter to India's iconic social worker Bunker Roy, in the last week of March, almost regretting the gap of two years in remaining in touch. This is Charles' first letter to Roy after taking over as the king of the United Kingdom and 14 other Commonwealth realms in 2022.

Responding to Mr. Roy's letter of December 2024,

King Charles wrote in his reply of March 23, 2025: It was great joy to receive your December letter... Your letter reminded me of all the years I have known and admired all your heroic efforts in Rajasthan...

Now, Bunker Roy, who founded the Barefoot College (Also known as the Social Work and Research Centre, Tilonia) in Rajasthan's Ajmer district along with his equally illustrious wife, Aruna Roy, had seemingly almost given up on hearing again from the

King who had been very pally with him as Prince Charles!

"This is from a friend to a friend," Bunker Roy, now in Tilonia convalescing after Covid-19 and other ailments which followed. "This time the gap had been big," Bunker Roy, a member of the former Planning Commission and Padmashri awardee, said conceding that Charles' silence appeared unusual going by the past association.

The communication from King Charles, who is also a patron of the Barefoot College which caught the world's imagination pioneering the concept of Barefoot—Barefoot solar engineers, Barefoot doctors, Barefoot teachers and the like-- conceded the gap and attributed it to the changed life style and the time constraints of the



King Charles III, (Charles Philip Arthur George)

person with a challenging assignment in hand. "... finally! I cannot imagine what happened to your earlier one (communication), but I fear I have been somewhat overwhelmed in the last two years".

The King, as Prince Charles in the past, had visited Tilonia village in Kishengarh tehsil of Ajmer more than once. As Prince, King Charles' itineraries in India in the past included a trip to Tilonia and a photo session



Bunker Roy

with Bunker Roy. Perhaps making up for the gap this time the British king lavished praise on Bunker Roy who was a path breaker in developmental perspectives in the seventies and eighties at the global level.

"You have clearly become a phenomenon—in fact a 'National Treasure'—and I am constantly singing your praises whenever I can, especially in Africa," King Charles, who was diagnosed with cancer in Feb-

ruary 2024 and is presently undergoing treatment even while maintaining a full schedule of engagements, said. Only recently King Charles made a state visit to Italy to send a message across on the UK's "soft power" and its interest in things abroad.

While King Charles did not indicate any immediate plans to visit India and Tilonia he invited Bunker Roy to meet him whenever he happens to be in the UK next. "There is much to discuss as I have many initiatives going on around the world and long for an opportunity to see you, if you ever come to the United Kingdom at any stage".

"Yours most sincerely" signed off his letter with the words, "In the meantime I send you countless thoughts and kindest possible wishes".

WAS JINNAH RIGHT? THE TWO-NATION THEORY RE-EXAMINED

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The “Two-Nation Theory” was the idea that the Hindus and Muslims of the Indian subcontinent were not just two religious communities, but two distinct nations with their own identities. This theory became the ideological basis for the partition of British India in 1947, which led to the creation of Pakistan as a separate homeland for Muslims. Over time, the Two-Nation Theory has been both championed and challenged, from its 19th-century origins and its role in independence, to how it has been interpreted in Pakistan and India since Partition. Even today, it sparks debate and was recently reaffirmed by Pakistan’s leadership.

ORIGINS OF THE TWO-NATION THEORY (PRE-1947)

The roots of the Two-Nation Theory go back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when some Muslim thinkers in British India began emphasising the distinct identity of Indian Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–1898) is often credited as an early proponent. Initially, Sir Syed was a strong advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity – famously stating that he saw Hindus and Muslims as “two eyes of a bride”, two vital parts of one body. However, events like the Hindi-Urdu language controversy of 1867 changed his perspective. When Hindu activists in north India pushed to replace Urdu (written in Persian script) with Hindi (in Devanagari script) as an official language, Sir Syed was dismayed. He warned that if even language could become a source of division, then “when even the language of a nation is not safe in the hands of other nations in a region, it would be unwise to continue living with them.”. By the late 1860s, Sir Syed had openly concluded that Hindus and Muslims had irreconcilable differences, saying he was “convinced that the Hindus and Muslims could never become one nation as their religion and way of life [were] quite distinct from one another.”. This marked



Sir Syed Ahmad Khan Biography (Indian Islamic Reformer and Educationist Who Founded the 'Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College', the First Muslim University in Southern Asia). Photo source: thefamouspeople.com.

an early articulation of the idea that Indian Muslims constituted a separate “nation” within India.

In the early 20th century, this sense of a distinct Muslim identity led to political organisation. The All-India Muslim League was founded in 1906 with the aim of advocating for the interests of Muslims in British India. Over the next few decades, several Muslim leaders and intellectuals debated how Hindu-Muslim differences should be managed. Many still hoped for cooperation within a united India, but others began to imagine a separate Muslim polity.

A major ideological leap came from Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), the poet-philosopher who presided over the Muslim League’s session in Allahabad in 1930. In his famous Allahabad Address, Iqbal explicitly proposed the idea of autonomous Muslim regions. He argued that India was not a homogeneous nation

but a continent of diverse peoples and religions, and that “the principle of European democracy cannot be applied to India without recognising the fact of communal groups”. Iqbal envisioned a reorganisation where Muslims could develop to their full potential. He declared, for instance, “I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind, and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. ... the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims”. In other words, Iqbal proposed a “Muslim India within India”, a foreteller of what would later become Pakistan. His idea was that Muslim-majority areas in the northwest (and even perhaps in the east) should be grouped into a self-governing unit to protect Muslim interests. Iqbal’s vision was a philosophical justification for Muslim nationhood,

though he did not outline the exact mechanics of Partition. Importantly, he did not call for expelling Hindus or creating a theocracy; he imagined a state where Muslims would govern themselves within a federal India or even outside it, without harming minorities. Iqbal’s address electrified Muslim political thought and laid the intellectual groundwork for the demand for a separate country.

Another key figure was Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), who would later be known as the “Qaid-e-Azam” (Great Leader) of Pakistan. Jinnah initially worked for Hindu-Muslim unity – he was a member of the Indian National Congress and helped broker the 1916 Lucknow Pact between Congress and the Muslim League. But by the 1930s, politics had polarised. After witnessing communal riots and feeling that Muslim rights were neglected under Indian National Congress



Allama Muhammad Iqbal made a major ideological breakthrough in his 1930 Allahabad Address, where he proposed autonomous regions for Muslims while presiding over the Muslim League session. Photo source: Wikimedia Commons

rule in the 1937 provincial governments, Jinnah became convinced that a power-sharing arrangement in a united India might not safeguard Muslim interests. He gradually adopted the Two-Nation Theory wholeheartedly. Under Jinnah’s leadership, the Muslim League argued that Indian Muslims were not simply a minority but a separate nation in themselves. This set the stage for the explicit demand for a separate Muslim homeland.

THE ROAD TO PARTITION AND THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN

Muslim League leaders in Lahore, March 1940, when the party adopted the historic Lahore Resolution calling for “independent states” for Muslims. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (seated center) and his colleagues formalized the demand for a separate homeland – a key step driven by the Two-Nation Theory. The Lahore Resolution’s principles laid the groundwork for the creation of Pakistan.

By 1940, the idea of carving out a Muslim state had entered mainstream politics. At the Lahore session of the All-India Muslim League in March 1940, Jinnah gave a landmark address and the party passed what came to be known as the Lahore Resolution (later often called the Pakistan Resolution). In his speech, Jinnah forcefully articulated the Two-Nation Theory. He argued that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations that could not be simply blended into one country. “It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality,” Jinnah said, describing Islam and Hinduism as not merely religions but “different and distinct social orders.” He noted that the two communities “belong to two different civilizations”, with values and social customs so divergent that “they neither intermarry nor interdine together”. Because their outlook on life was so different, Jinnah warned, “to yoke together two such nations under a single state... must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built”.

What began as an ideological response to colonial politics became the basis for the bloodiest Partition in modern history—and continues to shape India-Pakistan relations today.



Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir urged every Pakistani to pass down the nation’s birth story to their children, ensuring it is never forgotten (Screengrab).

These words echoed the core of the Two-Nation Theory – that Hindus and Muslims were separate nations by every measurable standard, and that any constitutional plan for India had to acknowledge this reality.

The Lahore Resolution, approved on 23 March 1940, formally demanded “independent states” in the Muslim-majority areas of India (in the northwest and northeast). While it did not explicitly use the name “Pakistan”, it essentially called for sovereign regions where Muslims would be dominant and could live according to their ethos. This was a political manifestation of the Two-Nation Theory. The resolution galvanised Muslims across British India; Pakistan as an idea had moved from poetry and theory into a concrete political goal. Over the next few years, especially as World War II unfolded, the Muslim League grew in strength, rallying masses under the slogan of Pakistan. Jinnah emerged as the voice of Indian Muslims demanding nationhood, countering the Indian National Congress’s insistence on a unified India.

When World War II ended, the British government began making plans to leave India. Despite last-ditch efforts (like the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946) to keep India united in a federated structure, Jinnah and the Muslim League were adamant that Muslims needed a sepa-

rate state. Communal tensions reached a peak in 1946, with incidents like the Direct Action Day riots in Calcutta, which tragically underscored how Hindu-Muslim distrust had grown. Faced with the prospect of civil war, British leaders – and Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel – eventually agreed to a partition of the country along religious lines. The Indian Independence Act was passed in July 1947, and it was decided that two dominions would be created: a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan.

A crowded train of refugees leaves Punjab during the Partition of India in 1947. The creation of Pakistan – and the corresponding independence of India – triggered the largest mass migration in history. Between 12 and 20 million people were displaced along religious lines as Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs migrated to what they hoped was the safety of their majority community’s new country. This upheaval was accompanied by horrific communal violence that left hundreds of thousands dead.

The Partition of India in August 1947 turned the Two-Nation Theory into reality – but at an immense human cost. British India was split into the Dominion of Pakistan (comprised of two wings on either side of India: West Pakistan and East Pakistan, which is today’s Bangladesh) and the Union of India. As the new borders were drawn, mil-

lions of Muslims fled from India into Pakistan, while millions of Hindus and Sikhs fled from Pakistan into India. It was a chaotic and traumatic transfer of populations. Historically, some 12 to 20 million people were uprooted during Partition, making it the largest forced migration in recorded history. Communal massacres broke out in Punjab, Bengal, and elsewhere; estimates of the death toll range from 200,000 to 2 million lives lost in the carnage. Communities that had lived together for centuries were torn apart in a matter of months. The violence was a stark reminder that while the Two-Nation Theory had been presented as a solution to Hindu-Muslim friction, the process of separating the nations unleashed even more hatred and bloodshed in the short term.

On 14-15 August 1947, Pakistan and India achieved independence as sovereign states. Jinnah became the first Governor-General of Pakistan. In Pakistan’s eyes, its birth validated the Two-Nation Theory: the Muslims of South Asia had their own homeland where they would not be dominated by a Hindu majority. In India’s eyes, Partition was a painful price to pay – a tragedy of division, even if it resolved the deadlock. The two new nations embarked on very different paths, influenced in no small part by how they viewed the events that created them.



Muslim refugees crowd onto a train bound for Pakistan as it leaves the New Delhi area in India on Sept. 27, 1947. In the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan after gaining independence from Britain in 1947, an estimated 1 million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were killed in rioting, and 12 million were uprooted from their homes. Photo source: AP

JEEN MATA TEMPLE: A SPIRITUAL EPICENTER OF RAJASTHAN

TDG NETWORK

Jeen Mata, a village of significant religious importance, is situated in the Sikar district of Rajasthan, India. The village lies 29 kilometers south of Sikar city and is home to a population of 4,359 people. Jeen Mata is famous for its ancient temple dedicated to Shri Jeen Mata Ji, the Goddess of Power, who is revered by countless devotees from all over the country. The temple is considered one of the most prominent Shakti Peeths (sacred spots) in India and is known for its rich history, divine miracles, and vibrant festivals that continue to attract pilgrims' year after year.

The History of Jeen Mata Temple

The temple is believed to be over a thousand years old, built during the 8th century. It stands as a significant testimony to the spiritual history and cultural richness of Rajasthan. The story of Jeen Mata, as passed down through generations, is intertwined with divine miracles and powerful folklore.

According to popular local legends, Jeen Mata was originally a Rajput girl named Jeevan, born into the Chauhan dynasty. She had a brother named Harsh, with whom she lived a happy and peaceful life. However, a dispute arose between Jeevan and her sister-in-law, which caused both siblings, Jeevan and Harsh, to fall into a state of anger. After this, Jeevan left her home and traveled to the Kajal Shikhar in the Aravalli hills,

where she began performing intense penance. It is said that her devotion led to her transformation into a goddess, and she began being worshipped as Jeen Mata. This divine transformation later led to the construction of the temple at the site where she performed penance.

Architecture and Significance of the Temple

The Jeen Mata Temple is an architectural marvel constructed using limestone and marble. The temple's structure, with its intricate carvings and large central idol, stands as a beacon of Rajasthan's religious heritage. The Sarvamandapa (hall) and the surrounding pillars, although over a thousand years old, continue to exude a sense of divine energy. The temple has been repaired and reconstructed many times over the centuries, and its history reflects the continuous devotion and reverence that it commands from its followers.

The most remarkable feature of this temple is its ever-burning flame, which is believed to have been donated by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. According to one of the most famous stories, when Aurangzeb attempted to destroy the temples in Shekhawati, he came across Jeen Mata's temple. But upon entering the temple, he was struck by a miraculous event. Jeen Mata is said to have released an army of bees upon Aurangzeb and his soldiers, forcing them to retreat. Impressed by this miracle, Aurangzeb donated an eternal oil lamp from his



Delhi palace, which continues to burn to this day in the temple as a symbol of divine protection.

Legends and Miracles

The Jeen Mata Temple is known for its powerful miracles that have been experienced by its devotees throughout history. One such miracle involves the goddess accepting an offering of liquor from her devotees every morning. According to temple lore, the liquor offered to the goddess mysteriously disappears without any trace, and no one knows where it goes. This act of divine acceptance has been witnessed for centuries and continues to baffle the devotees.

Another notable miracle that is said to occur at the temple is the curing of leprosy. It is widely believed that individuals suffering

from this chronic disease have been miraculously healed simply by visiting the temple. This healing power has contributed to the temple's reputation as a place of immense spiritual significance and divine intervention.

The Connection to the Mughal Period

The temple's significance extends beyond its spiritual importance and reaches into the pages of history. During the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb, there is a well-known story of his attempt to destroy the temples of Shekhawati. When Aurangzeb's forces reached the region, they began to vandalize the local temples. However, Jeen Mata's devotees invoked the goddess's power for protection. In response, the goddess is said to have sent a swarm of bees to at-

tack the emperor's army, forcing them to retreat in panic. The bees are now regarded as an embodiment of Mata's divine power and protection.

After this miraculous event, Aurangzeb is said to have been deeply moved and impressed by the goddess's power. In an act of respect and gratitude, he donated a unique, ever-burning oil lamp to the temple. This lamp continues to burn in the temple, adding a layer of historical and spiritual significance to the already revered site. The flames of the oil lamp symbolize the eternal presence of the goddess and her protection over her devotees.

Jeen Mata as the Kuldevi

Jeen Mata holds a special place in the hearts of several communities in Rajas-

than. She is considered the Kuldevi (family goddess) of various communities, particularly the Saini, Yadav (Ahir), Brahmin, Rajput, Ladi, Agrawal, Janjir, Mee-na, and Aoninth Baniya families.

The goddess is especially revered by the warrior classes, including the Shekhawati Rajputs (Shekhawat and Rao Rajputs), who consider her their divine protector.

Many families, particularly those who believe in Jeen Mata's power, pledge to visit the temple after the birth of a male child in their household. As part of their vows, the first hair cut (called Jadula in Rajasthan) of the child is offered to the goddess at the temple. Devotees also offer a large quantity of sweets, known as Savamani, in gratitude for the birth of the child.



The Festivals of Jeen Mata

The temple sees large gatherings of devotees during the two major festivals of Navratri, held in the months of Chaitra and Ashwin. These festivals attract a huge crowd of devotees who come to seek the blessings of Jeen Mata. The temple is beautifully decorated during these occasions, and special prayers and ceremonies are performed. The devotees offer prayers, light lamps, and sing hymns in honor of the goddess. The festivals are marked by vibrant processions, folk music, and dances, creating a festive atmosphere that brings together people from all walks of life.

In addition to Navratri, the temple also attracts pilgrims during the Falguni and Khatu Shyam Ji Monthly Fairs. These fairs are held to honor the dei-

ties and bring prosperity and blessings to the community. The surrounding region is filled with shops, food stalls, and religious items, contributing to the festive spirit.

Jeen Mata Temple stands as one of the most revered spiritual destinations in Rajasthan. Its centuries-old history, miraculous tales, and divine presence make it a remarkable place for both spiritual seekers and history enthusiasts. From the fascinating legends of its divine origins to the miraculous events that continue to take place within its walls, the Jeen Mata Temple is an epitome of faith, power, and devotion. Whether one is drawn to its divine power, its rich history, or its deep spiritual significance, a visit to this temple offers an unforgettable experience of peace, devotion, and connection to the divine.

Understanding mindfulness: A pathway to spiritual awakening

TDG NETWORK

In the fast-paced world we live in today, it is easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of tasks, responsibilities, and distractions. The noise of modern life often drowns out the subtler, inner calls of the soul. But amidst this chaos, one practice has emerged as a powerful antidote: mindfulness. Mindfulness is more than just a trend or a buzzword; it is a practice deeply rooted in ancient spiritual traditions, yet highly relevant in our contemporary search for meaning and peace. In this article, we will explore how mindfulness acts as a pathway to spiritual awakening, helping individuals deepen their spiritual connection and live more consciously.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment, with complete awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and the surrounding environment. It is about observing life as it unfolds, without judgment or distraction. Mindfulness can be cultivated through meditation, breathing exercises, and other practices that encourage focus and presence. At its core, mindfulness invites individuals to become more aware of their inner world and the present moment. It teaches one to acknowledge thoughts and emotions without being overwhelmed by them. Instead of living on autopilot, mindfulness encourages us to be intentional with each moment, fostering a deeper connection with ourselves

and the world around us.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MINDFULNESS AND SPIRITUALITY

While mindfulness has gained significant attention for its mental health benefits, its roots are deeply spiritual. The practice originates from ancient Buddhist traditions and is also present in various other spiritual systems, such as Taoism, Christianity, and Hinduism. In these traditions, mindfulness is not only about improving mental clarity but also about connecting to a higher consciousness, divine presence, or spiritual truth. Spirituality, in its essence, is about finding a deeper meaning in life and connecting to something greater than oneself. It transcends religious boundaries and focuses on the inner journey of personal transformation. Mindfulness is an important tool in this journey because it allows individuals to quiet their mind, open their hearts, and tune into the spiritual dimension of their lives.

Through mindfulness, individuals can experience a profound sense of connectedness with the universe. It helps cultivate a state of awareness where one is attuned to both the physical and spiritual realms. When practiced with intention, mindfulness becomes a doorway through which the individual can access deeper insights and spiritual truths.

HOW MINDFULNESS FACILITATES SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Spiritual awakening is often



MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

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described as a shift in perception, where individuals come to see beyond the surface of life and connect to a higher, more authentic reality. It is a process of inner transformation, where individuals move from a state of unconsciousness or ignorance to a state of heightened awareness and connection. Mindfulness plays a pivotal role in this process, as it helps individuals become more aware of their thoughts, emotions, and actions. By observing their inner world, individuals can begin to recognize the patterns that limit their growth and spiritual progress. They may notice areas where they are stuck, operating from old habits, or

trapped in negative thinking. Mindfulness creates the space for reflection, where one can consciously choose to let go of these limiting patterns and open up to higher possibilities.

1. CULTIVATING AWARENESS AND PRESENCE

One of the most important aspects of mindfulness is the cultivation of awareness. In the context of spiritual awakening, awareness is essential because it allows individuals to perceive life as it truly is. The more aware one becomes, the more they begin to notice the subtle energies, emotions, and thoughts that influence their behavior. This

awareness creates a deeper connection with the present moment, and through this connection, individuals often experience moments of clarity and insight. Awareness, in its purest form, is the gateway to spiritual growth. When we are fully present, we stop being distracted by the past or future, and we can listen more deeply to our own soul's calling. Mindfulness, therefore, acts as a tool that helps us cultivate this awareness and remain grounded in the present moment.

2. LETTING GO OF JUDGMENT AND ATTACHMENT

Another key aspect of mind-

fulness is non-judgment. In our everyday lives, we constantly evaluate and judge our experiences, often labeling them as "good" or "bad." These judgments lead to attachment, which creates suffering and blocks spiritual progress. When we are attached to outcomes or opinions, we are not free to experience the moment as it truly is.

Mindfulness teaches us to let go of judgment and attachment. By simply observing our thoughts and emotions without labeling them, we allow them to pass freely, without holding onto them. This creates a sense of freedom, as we are no longer tethered to our past or our desires. In spiritual terms, this is akin to letting go of the ego, which often holds us back from experiencing the divine presence.

3. DEVELOPING COMPASSION AND LOVING-KINDNESS

Mindfulness is not just about being present with ourselves; it also encourages us to extend this awareness to others. As we cultivate mindfulness, we naturally develop greater empathy and compassion. In spiritual terms, compassion is one of the most powerful qualities we can nurture, as it allows us to connect with the suffering of others and respond with kindness.

In many spiritual traditions, compassion is seen as an essential virtue. Through mindfulness, we begin to see others more clearly, without the veil of judgment or prejudice. We understand that everyone is on their own journey,

and that each person has their own struggles and challenges. This awareness leads to greater empathy, and ultimately, to a deeper spiritual connection with all living beings.

4. EXPERIENCING ONENESS

As mindfulness deepens, individuals often report experiencing a sense of oneness with all of creation. This is a profound spiritual experience where one feels connected to the universe, to nature, and to all beings. It is a moment of pure unity, where the separation between the self and the other dissolves.

The experience of oneness is often described as a spiritual awakening, as it reveals the interconnectedness of all things. In mindfulness, individuals are taught to be present with everything around them, not just their own thoughts and feelings. This expansive awareness helps cultivate a sense of unity with the world, and in many cases, this realization is seen as the true essence of spiritual awakening.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO INTEGRATE MINDFULNESS INTO DAILY LIFE

Mindfulness is not just a practice reserved for meditation sessions; it can be integrated into all aspects of daily life. Here are some practical ways to cultivate mindfulness and enhance your spiritual journey:

Mindful Breathing: Take a few moments each day to focus on your breath. Inhale slowly and deeply, and then exhale, allowing

yourself to be fully present in the moment.

Mindful Eating: Pay attention to the taste, texture, and aroma of the food you eat. Avoid distractions like television or smartphones while eating, and savor each bite.

Mindful Walking: Take a walk outdoors and notice the sensations in your body as you move. Be aware of the sounds, sights, and smells around you.

Body Scan Meditation: Practice a body scan, where you mentally scan your body from head to toe, bringing awareness to each part. This practice helps increase body awareness and reduces stress.

Gratitude Practice: Every day, reflect on things you are grateful for. Mindfulness and gratitude often go hand-in-hand, as they both encourage us to focus on the present moment and acknowledge the beauty of life.

Mindfulness is much more than a technique for stress reduction—it is a pathway to spiritual awakening. By cultivating mindfulness, we begin to open ourselves up to a deeper spiritual connection with ourselves, others, and the universe. Through the practice of awareness, non-judgment, compassion, and oneness, mindfulness can transform the way we experience life and help us discover a more profound sense of peace, clarity, and purpose. In a world filled with distractions, mindfulness offers us the opportunity to reconnect with our true nature and embark on a journey of spiritual awakening.

BNP LEADER ACCUSES HASINA OF ‘SELLING OUT’ TO INDIA

Shamsuzzaman Dudu's accusations against Sheikh Hasina fuel growing political tensions over Bangladesh's sovereignty.

On April 19, Shamsuzzaman Dudu, a senior BNP leader from Bangladesh's main opposition party, blamed the country's former PM Sheikh Hasina for selling out Bangladesh's sovereignty by becoming too friendly with India. He alleged that, if Hasina were still in power, she could have even united Bangladesh with India. These are indications of increasing political tensions in Bangladesh as Dudu blamed Hasina for eroding the nation's independence and democratic system.

WHO IS SHAMSUZZAMAN DUDU?
Shamsuzzaman Dudu is a prominent BNP leader and a close ally of party chairperson Khaleda Zia. He has long been a vocal critic of Sheikh Hasina's government. Having been a former parliamentarian and political activist, he has on many occasions

blamed the country's ruling Awami League (AL) for compromising the democratic credentials of Bangladesh. His remarks on April 19 were not the first time he had made scathing attacks on Hasina. Indeed, Shamsuzzaman Dudu has persisted in arguing that her policies endanger the sovereignty and independence of the country.

In his address, Shamsuzzaman Dudu declared that Hasina's "true address" is India and hinted that her alignment with India was a betrayal of Bangladesh's national interests. In Dudu's view, if Hasina had been in office longer, she would have integrated Bangladesh into India completely. These assertions are important because they draw on deep-seated nationalist feelings within the BNP and other opposition parties that blame Hasina for compromising Bangladesh's sovereignty by aligning too closely with India.

Why Does Shamsuzzaman Dudu Accuse Sheikh Hasina of Being Pro-India?
Shamsuzzaman Dudu's criticism of Sheikh Hasina extends beyond individual criticism. He has alleged that Hasina's government has put Bangladesh too much in the hands of India. Dudu says that such dependency has undermined Bangladesh's sovereignty. Dudu implies that Hasina has put the nation in a weak position by giving undue importance to India's concerns rather than Bangladesh's. Moreover, Dudu condemned India for suppos-



BNP Vice Chairman Shamsuzzaman Dudu. File photo

edly supporting Hasina's rule. Dudu accused India of standing behind its government to continue its grip on Bangladesh. As he put it, "India is fascist," and he charged that only fascism can coexist with another fascism. Such disparaging rhetoric highlights Dudu's overall disapproval of Hasina's policies, which in his opinion, have caused Bangladesh to lose its independence and democratic institutions.

Dudu's remarks follow an era of increased political tensions between Bangladesh and India. The nations have long had a history of cooperation, but the recent assassination of a Hindu leader in Bangladesh has put the two nations at odds. Dudu's statements reflect increasing anxieties within Bangladesh over its sovereignty against what some perceive as undue Indian influence.

Role of India in Bangladesh's politics
India's involvement in Bangladesh politics has been controversial for years. On the positive side, India has been a close friend of Bangladesh, especially regarding regional security as well as



BNP leaders and activists gather in front of Naya Paltan. Photo taken on 10 April 2025. PICTURE SOURCE: Prothom Alo

economic integration.

In contrast, certain political leaders in Bangladesh, such as Dudu, consider India's power suspicious. Dudu's remarks are based on a general feeling among the BNP that the current Hasina government has let India dominate too much in Bangladesh's domestic affairs.

In Dudu's view, Hasina's alignment with India has eroded the sovereignty of Bangladesh. In his view, Hasina was more interested in pleasing India than

cently, free from excessive external control. Dudu contends that Hasina has enabled Bangladesh to be overly dependent on India, something he thinks undermines the country's sovereignty.

At the centre of this contention is the fact that Hasina has eroded the democratic institutions of Bangladesh. Dudu asserts that Hasina has undermined the democratic system by weakening the election process, stifling opposition political par-



protecting Bangladesh's independence. This, for Dudu, is a betrayal of the nationalism ideals cherished by the BNP.

WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS ABOUT BANGLADESH'S SOVEREIGNTY?

Dudu's allegations point to a larger issue of Bangladesh's sovereignty during Hasina's rule. Sovereignty, in this sense, is Bangladesh's capacity to govern itself indepen-

ties, and amassing power for herself. These actions, to Dudu, have rendered it hard for Bangladesh to operate as an independent and democratic state.

By too closely following India, Dudu contends, Hasina has undercut Bangladesh's capacity to decide without foreign pressures. In his opinion, it has exposed the nation to pressures from outside and compromised its independence in domestic as well as foreign policy.



The Pakistani Instrument of Surrender was signed between India (alongside the Provisional Government of Bangladesh) and Pakistan to end the Bangladesh Liberation War and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. Lt. Gen. A. A. K. Niazi of the Pakistan Army signing the Instrument of Surrender under the direction of Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora of the Indian Army and Bangladesh Forces. File photo

Political Climate in Bangladesh

Dudu's statement comes when the political atmosphere in Bangladesh is becoming more and more polarised. The BNP and other opposition parties have for a long time been accusing Hasina of authoritarianism and weakening democratic standards. Dudu's statement contributes to this discourse, which accuses Hasina of putting her interests above those of the nation.

In addition, Dudu's allegations are part of a larger backlash against Hasina's rule. The opposition has long said that Hasina has undermined the democratic process by quashing dissent, imprisoning political activists and opponents, and rigging the election system. These allegations have even increased in the aftermath of the 2018 general election, which the opposition alleged was tainted by fraud and irregularities.

To Dudu and the other leaders of the BNP, the

question of Bangladesh's sovereignty is not separable from the question of Hasina's rule. Her alliance with India is part of a larger trend of actions that have diminished Bangladesh's autonomy. Hasina's policies have taken the country down a path of authoritarianism and dependency, they believe.

TENSIONS BETWEEN BANGLADESH AND INDIA

The timing of Shamsuzzaman Dudu's comments is interesting, coming as they do at a time when there is heightened tension between Bangladesh and India. Bangladesh recently came under attack for the murder of Hindu leader Bhabesh Chandra Roy, which India has strongly criticised. Bangladesh's caretaker government has dismissed allegations that the murder was part of a larger trend towards persecution of religious marginalised groups. This has further fueled the flames of political tensions, especially in the BNP.

Dudu's remarks reflect the broader concerns about the political climate in Bangladesh. While he accuses Hasina of making Bangladesh a "slave" of India, his criticisms also speak to a larger debate about the nature of the relationship between the two countries. Some view Hasina's pro-India stance as a necessary step for regional security and economic growth, while others see it as a betrayal of Bangladesh's sovereignty.

WHAT DOES BANGLADESH STAND TO LOSE?

Shamsuzzaman Dudu's comments reflect Bangladesh's growing political polarisation. The BNP's relentless opposition to Hasina's rule is grounded in fears for the sovereignty and democratic integrity of the nation. Dudu's allegations indicate that, in his perception, Hasina's policies have undermined both. With an election in the offing, Bangladesh's political climate is going to become even more charged.

As tensions continue to rise, both domestically and internationally, the future of Bangladesh's political system remains uncertain. The BNP's criticism of Hasina's pro-India stance will likely continue to play a central role in shaping the upcoming election.

What happens next will depend on how the political factions navigate their differences and whether the country can find a way to balance its relations with India while safeguarding its sovereignty.

● TDG NETWORK

Explained: US Supreme Court Halts Deportations Under Alien Enemies Act — What Happens Next?

The U.S. Supreme Court has temporarily blocked the Trump administration from deporting a group of Venezuelan migrants under the Alien Enemies Act, an 18th-century wartime law. Here's an explainer on what this means and what might happen next:

WHAT IS THE ALIEN ENEMIES ACT?

The Alien Enemies Act is part of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, allowing the president to detain or deport non-citizens from hostile nations during times of war or national emergency. President Donald Trump invoked the law to deport migrants, citing national security concerns, particularly linking detainees to the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, the US media reported.

HOW DID THE SUPREME COURT INTERVENE?

In a rare overnight order early Saturday, the Supreme Court blocked the administration from deporting a group of Venezuelan migrants detained in Texas. According to CNN, the court stated, "The government is directed not to remove any member of the putative class of detainees from the United States until further order of this court."

Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito reportedly dissented, but the court did not elaborate on



its reasoning.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Reports suggest this is the second time in two weeks that the Supreme Court has been asked to intervene in the litigation over the use of the Alien Enemies Act.

The court's earlier 5-4 ruling, the report said, was "opaque" and allowed both sides to claim victory, which in turn led to legal confusion and another urgent appeal.

The current order prevents deportations temporarily, giving the court more time to decide on broader questions about due process and legal standards for deportation under the Act, the report said.

HOW HAS THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION RESPONDED?

In its reply to the court Saturday, the Justice Department reportedly requested permission to deport some migrants under alternative immigration laws instead of the Alien

Enemies Act.

According to CNN, U.S. Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote, "The government has agreed not to remove pursuant the AEA those AEA detainees who do file habeas claims."

He also urged the court to let lower courts handle the matter, reportedly saying the case moved too quickly for facts to be properly established.

WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT ARGUING?

The Trump administration has contended that even if the Alien Enemies Act is paused, it should retain the authority to deport the same individuals under existing immigration statutes, the report said.

WHAT ARE THE LEGAL ISSUES AT STAKE?

Due process: Critics have argued that the Alien Enemies Act allows the government to circumvent normal legal protections, such as notice and the right to challenge deportation.

Evidence concerns: The administration, re-

ports suggest, has relied on tattoos and clothing to justify gang affiliations — evidence that legal experts have called "tenuous".

Jurisdictional clarity: Multiple cases are unfolding in New York, Texas and Colorado, and the Supreme Court's intervention points towards potential implications for immigration law and executive power.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Supreme Court will likely issue further guidance in the coming days or weeks, the report said, adding that Justice Alito is expected to explain his dissent soon.

The White House, for now, appears focussed on defending its stance, with White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt reportedly saying, "President Trump promised the American people to use all lawful measures to remove the threat of terrorist illegal aliens. We are confident in the lawfulness of the administration's actions."

● TDG NETWORK

Why half of revoked US student visas belong to Indians

President Zelenskyy claimed Russia's Easter ceasefire was a sham, as Ukrainian forces faced fresh shelling. Despite reduced activity, assaults continued, undermining Putin's gesture amid strained US-brokered peace efforts.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has blamed Russian troops for breaking the Easter ceasefire announced by President Vladimir Putin, terming it a "sham" as fighting went on along the front-line. On Saturday evening, Putin had called for a temporary ceasefire until midnight on Sunday in celebration of Orthodox Easter. But Zelenskyy said Russian forces were still launching attacks and shelling Ukrainian positions.

"Even attempting to fake a ceasefire, Russia continued to conduct offensive operations in certain directions," Zelenskyy wrote in a social media update on Sunday morning. He added that there were hundreds of shelling incidents last night, followed by 59 shelling episodes and five attempts at assault early Sunday.

The military of Ukraine acknowledged a slow-down in front-line operations but stressed that the combat had not completely ceased. "It's more silent, but not calm," declared Viktor Trehubov, an Eastern Front spokesperson.



In addition, at least three explosions were heard in Russian-occupied Donetsk early Sunday morning, according to Russian news outlets. The reports remain unverified.

The ceasefire effort came after new US pressure for peace negotiations, as President Donald Trump threatened to back out of negotiations if both parties were not serious. Trump also indicated a shift in policy that is more friendly to Moscow.

Zelenskyy reaffirmed Ukraine's willingness to accept a 30-day ceasefire but cautioned that Kyiv would retaliate in kind against further Russian aggression. The European Union cautiously welcomed the ceasefire, and the United Nations reiterated its support for a peaceful resolution concerning Ukraine's sovereignty. In his Easter message, Zelenskyy called on Ukrainians to remain hopeful and united. "We



"Even attempting to fake a ceasefire, Russia continued to conduct offensive operations in certain directions," Zelenskyy wrote in a social media update on Sunday morning. He added that there were hundreds of shelling incidents last night, followed by 59 shelling episodes and five attempts at assault early Sunday.

know what we are defending and for whom," he said, wearing traditional clothing in front of

Kyiv's historic Saint Sophia Cathedral.

● TDG NETWORK

ZELENSKY: RUSSIA FAKES CEASEFIRE, CONTINUES ATTACKS RELENTLESSLY

Claims that Ukrainian troops were killed in a Russian “ambush” on Sunday

AGENCIES
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused Russia on Sunday of creating a false appearance of honoring an Easter ceasefire, saying Moscow continued to launch attacks after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a unilateral temporary truce.

“As of Easter morning, we can say that the Russian army is trying to create a general impression of a ceasefire, but in some places, it does not abandon individual attempts to advance and inflict losses on Ukraine,” Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

Despite Putin’s declaration of an Easter ceasefire, Zelenskyy said Sunday morning that Ukrainian forces had recorded 59 instances of Russian shelling and five assaults by units along the front line,



A ruined city centre in Kostiantynivka , the site of heavy battles with Russian troops, in the Donetsk region Ukraine. Agencies

as well as dozens of drone strikes.

In later updates, Zelenskyy said that despite Ukraine declaring a symmetrical approach to Russian actions, “the trend of increasing the use of heavy weaponry by Russian forces continues.” He

said, however, that it was “a good thing, at least, that there were no air raid sirens.”

He noted that some Ukrainian troops were killed in a Russian “ambush” on Sunday in the Donetsk region, and said the Russian soldiers responsible would be “eliminated.”

Russia’s Defense Ministry accused Ukrainian forces of overnight attacks in the Donetsk region despite the ceasefire. It said Ukraine had sent 48 drones into Russian territory. According to the ministry, there were “dead

and wounded among the civilian population,” without giving details. It claimed Russian troops had strictly observed the truce.

Russia-installed officials in the partially occupied Ukrainian region of Kherson also said Ukrainian forces had launched attacks.

Zelenskyy said that Russia must fully adhere to the ceasefire conditions and reiterated Ukraine’s offer to extend the truce for 30 days when it ends midnight Sunday. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said Moscow had not responded to Kyiv’s proposal.

“In practice, either Putin does not have full control over his army, or the situation proves that in Russia, they have no intention of making a genuine move toward ending the war, and are only interested in favorable PR coverage,” Zelenskyy wrote.

Hindu minister attacked in Pakistan

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani Hindu Minister of State was attacked in Sindh by protestors opposing the federal government’s controversial irrigation canal projects on the pretext that it would reduce the downward flow of rivers that are key for irrigation in the southern province.

Kheal Das Kohistani, state minister for religious affairs in Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government, was driving through the Thatta district of the province on Saturday when his motorcade was pelted with tomatoes and potatoes.

Officials said that Kohistani remained unharmed in the attack. Meanwhile, police have arrested Sindh Taraqi Pasand party’s leader Syed Jalal Shah for his involvement in the attack on the convoy of Kohistani.

An FIR named several other activists of his party. Prime

Minister Shehbaz strongly condemned the attack on Kohistani and assured him of a thorough investigation into the incident.

“The attack on the public representatives is unacceptable. The persons involved in the incident would be given exemplary punishment,” he said.

Kohistani is a member of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the protesters also chanted slogans against the party’s federal government.

Federal Minister for Information Atta Tarar also took notice of the incident and declared it “an attack”.

He also sought details of the incident from Sindh Inspector General Police (IGP) Ghulam Nabi Memon and a report from the federal interior secretary.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah also strongly condemned the act in the strongest terms. In his statement, he said that no one has

the right to take the law into their own hands.

He directed the Deputy Inspector General of police for the Hyderabad region to immediately arrest the miscreants involved in the attack and submit a report.

According to personal details on the website of the National Assembly, Kohistani hails from the Jamshoro district of Sindh and he was for the first time elected as a member of the parliament in 2018 on the ticket of PML-N.

After serving for the full five-year term, he was re-elected in 2024 and also got the nod for elevation to become minister of the state.

The federal government has announced that there is a proposal to construct six canals in the Punjab province to irrigate land in the Cholistan region under the Green Pakistan Initiative – a project having the support of the powerful army, the federal government and the Punjab provincial administration.

Gurdwara desecrated with Khalistan graffiti

AGENCIES
OTTAWA

Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara, also known as the Ross Street Gurdwara, was desecrated with pro-Khalistan and anti-India graffiti. The management of the Gurdwara in Canada’s Vancouver has accused “extremist forces” of the vandalism. They claimed that it was an attempt to instil fear within the Sikh community in Canada. The miscreants used spray paint to desecrate the Gurdwara.

The management issued a statement that was published on their Instagram account. Calling for unity and reflection amidst extremism, the management said that the community was shocked to



witness the act of vandalism at the Gurdwara. “A small group of Sikh separatists, advocating for Khalistan, defaced our sacred walls with divisive slogans like ‘Khalistan Zindabad’.

This act is part of an ongoing campaign by extremist forces that seek to instil fear and division within the Canadian Sikh community,” the statement read.

The management further noted that such actions undermine the values of inclusivity, respect and mutual support that are “foundational to both Sikhism and Canadian society”.

They added, “What occurred on April 19th is not only an attack on our Gurdwara but also an assault on the legacy our ancestors built – a legacy grounded in hard work, uni-

ty, and peaceful coexistence.”

They further called on all Canadians, Sikhs and people of goodwill to stand together in the face of extremism. “We must denounce these acts and reaffirm our shared commitment to the values of peace, unity, and respect. This attack is an attack on all of us – on the very unity that makes Canada strong. Let us unite against division and extremism, for the future we all share,” the management concluded in the press release.

Speaking to Hindustan Times, Joginder Sunner, a member of the Gurdwara management, said the incident occurred between midnight and 3 AM on 19th April and described it as a painful moment in the history of the community.

Israeli military admits ‘professional failures’ over Gaza paramedic killings

AGENCIES
GAZA

Israel’s military has admitted to several “professional failures” and a breach of orders in the killing of 15 rescue workers in Gaza last month, and said that it was dismissing a deputy commander responsible. The deadly shooting of eight Red Crescent paramedics, six civil defence workers and a UN staffer by Israeli troops, as they carried out a rescue mission in southern Gaza at dawn on 23 March, had prompted international outcry and calls for a war crimes investigation.

Their bodies were uncovered days after the shooting, buried in a sandy mass grave alongside their crushed vehicles. The UN said they had been killed “one by one”.

Israel at first claimed that the medics’ vehicles did not have emergency signals on when troops opened fire but later backtracked after phone video recovered from one of the medics contradicted the account.

On Sunday, the military said



an investigation had “identified several professional failures, breaches of orders, and a failure to fully report the incident”.

As a result, the deputy commander of the IDF’s Golani Brigade “will be dismissed from his position due to his responsibilities as the field commander ... and for providing an incomplete and inaccurate report during the debrief”.

Another commander, whose unit was in operation

in the southern city of Rafah where the killings took place, would be censured for “his overall responsibility for the incident”, the military said.

Despite admitting mistakes, the report does not recommend any criminal action to be taken against the military units responsible for the incident and found no violation of the IDF’s code of ethics.

The report maintains, without providing further evidence, that six of the 15 Pal-

estinians killed were Hamas militants. Previous claims by Israel along the same lines have been denied by Red Crescent.

The investigation provided the most thorough account from Israel’s forces about what they alleged took place that night. According to the report, it was an “operational misunderstanding” by Israeli forces that led them to fire on the ambulances. They denied that there had been any “indiscriminate fire” and claimed troops were simply alert to “real threats” from Hamas on the ground, accusing the militant group of regularly using ambulances to transport weapons and terrorists.

The investigation claimed that “poor night visibility” was to blame for the deputy battalion commander’s conclusion that the ambulances belonged to Hamas militants and began firing on them. Video footage that emerged from the scene showed that the ambulances were clearly moving with flashing emergency lights.



Atlanta, Georgia: A member of a western lowland gorilla troop enjoys a frozen jelly Easter egg at the zoo (AGENCIES)

First Syrian Air flight lands in Dubai

AGENCIES
DUBAI

A Syrian Airlines (SyriaAir) aircraft landed today at Dubai International Airport from Damascus International Airport, marking the resumption of direct flights between Syria and the United Arab Emirates. This step comes as part of an exceptional first phase announced by the airline in an official statement, aimed at restoring regular air connectivity between Syria and the UAE.

SyriaAir stated that this inaugural flight will be followed by a weekly schedule, with plans to gradually increase the number of flights over the coming period.

According to the airline, four weekly flights will operate from Damascus to Dubai on Saturdays, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Mark Carney calls China top security threat

AGENCIES
OTTAWA

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has identified China as the country’s foremost national security threat, citing foreign interference, cyber activity, and strategic ambitions in the Arctic, as reported by Express Tribune. Carney made the stark declaration during a televised leaders’ debate on Thursday evening, marking one of his most direct statements yet on Canada-China relations as the federal election campaign enters its final week.

“China,” Carney said bluntly when asked to name the greatest geopolitical threat to Canada. The statement drew sharp reactions domestically and abroad and underscored a grow-

ing shift in Canada’s foreign policy posture.

Speaking the following day during a campaign stop in Niagara Falls, Carney expanded on his comments, warning that Chinese interference poses a direct challenge to Canada’s democratic institutions. “China is the biggest threat from a geopolitical sense. We’re taking action to address it,” he told supporters. He added that safeguarding Canadian sovereignty -- particularly in the Arctic -- would remain a cornerstone of his national security agenda if re-elected, as reported by Express Tribune.

The Chinese Embassy in Ottawa has yet to respond to Carney’s statements. However, a Beijing-based foreign affairs expert suggested the rhetoric was politically motivated.

“Carney’s remarks seem to be driven more by election dynamics than long-term strategy,” the expert said, urging Canada to pursue a “rational and pragmatic” relationship with China, especially amid global uncertainty, as cited by Global Times.

Carney’s Liberal Party remains in the lead in most national polls, though foreign policy and economic anxieties are shaping the final stretch of the campaign. In addition to geopolitical tensions with China, Canada is also grappling with a simmering trade dispute with the United States. Ottawa recently imposed retaliatory tariffs after Washington introduced duties on Canadian autos, aluminum, and steel -- a move that has strained relations with Canada’s closest ally.

Hong Kong’s oldest pro-democracy party shuts down

AGENCIES
HONG KONG

Hong Kong’s oldest and most prominent pro-democracy party is preparing to shut down amid an intensifying crackdown by China.

The Democratic Party, which has been a key part of the city’s opposition movement for over 30 years, has begun the process of disbanding after receiving strong warnings from Chinese au-

thorities, according to two longtime members who spoke with CNN.

Yeung Sum, a former chairman of the party, said the message from Beijing was clear: disband or face consequences.

Caribbean descendants demand reparations at UN gathering

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS

The great-great-grandson of 19th-century British Prime Minister William Gladstone said he was horrified to learn seven years ago that his ancestors were slave owners in Jamaica and Guyana.

And former BBC journalist Laura Trevelyan said she learned after records of Britain’s Slave Compensation Commission were put online in 2013 that one of her ancestors, Sir John

Trevelyan, owned sugar cane plantations in Grenada and about 1,000 enslaved people.

They spoke at a meeting at U.N. headquarters in New York this past week where, for the first time, descendants of slave owners and enslaved people in former British colonies in the Caribbean sat at the same table with diplomats and experts from those nations discussing the contentious issue of reparations.

“This was a historic event,” said Trevelyan, who moderated



the meeting on the sidelines of the U.N. Permanent Forum on People of African Descent’s week long session.

From about the year 1500, millions of West Africans were sent to work mainly on plantations in the Caribbean and the Americas, including the southern United States. U.N. human rights chief Volker Türk told the forum that an estimated 25 million to 30 million Africans were uprooted for the purpose of slavery.

The Geneva-based Human

Rights Council has called for global action for years, including reparations, apologies and educational reforms to make amends for racism against people of African descent.

The 15-nation Caribbean Community, known as CARICOM, has a 10-point plan for reparatory justice, starting with demands for European countries where enslaved people were kept and traded to issue formal apologies.

Türk noted a European Union statement in 2023 profoundly

regretting the “untold suffering” caused by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the African Union’s designation of 2025 as the “Year of Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations.”

At the meeting of descendants of enslaved people and slave owners on Tuesday, Trevelyan spoke of her family’s decision to apologize to Grenada and to make a contribution of 100,000 British pounds (about \$133,000) toward education in the Caribbean island nation.

VIKRAM BHATT URGES BOLLYWOOD TO PRIORITISE MASS APPEAL AND CONTENT

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

With Bollywood witnessing a spate of recent box office disappointments, filmmaker Vikram Bhatt — known for films like ‘Ghulam’ and ‘Raaz’ — has shared his thoughts on what the industry needs to do to regain its lost footing. Speaking to ANI, Bhatt emphasised the importance of reconnecting with the masses and reviving the kind of cinema that once drew audiences to theatres in droves.

"Everyone forgot the masses and went after niche films," Bhatt remarked.

"During Covid, the habit of going to theatres disappeared. We stopped making films that cater to the larger audience. If you



look at the South Indian film industry, it's flourishing because it never stopped prioritising the masses. They still enjoy watching larger-than-life movies like ‘Pushpa’ or ‘Kantara’. They still cheer, whistle, and clap at the villain. We've forgotten how

to make those kinds of films."

Bhatt also highlighted the need for urgency in storytelling — a factor he believes is essential in drawing audiences to cinemas.

"We have to make films that create a sense of urgency," he said.

"I realised this recently with my film ‘Tumko Meri Kasam’. It received good reviews but didn't perform well because it lacked that urgency. People weren't compelled to rush to the theatres for the first day-first show.

In addition to content and audience engagement, Bhatt touched on the importance of understanding the financial ecosystem of the industry. He suggested that instead of focusing primarily on star power, filmmakers should invest in strong content and storytelling.

"This problem can be solved if music, digital, and satellite companies step up and say, ‘We need good songs, we need good films,’” he explained.

Mahesh Babu pays tributes to mother

AGENCIES
CHENNAI

Actor Mahesh Babu remembered his mother, Indira Devi, on her birth anniversary on Sunday, sharing a heartfelt note and a throwback picture on social media.

Sharing a candid throwback picture with his mother sitting alongside him while they shared a heartfelt chat, Mahesh Babu wrote, “Happy Birthday Amma. Miss you more than words can say.”

Fans also chimed in the comments section and



shared their heartfelt tributes for the actor's late mother.

“Stay Strong Dear Sir,” a fan wrote.

“Incomplete house without mom,” another fan wrote.

Mahesh Babu's wife, Namrata Shirodkar, also paid tribute to her mother-in-law, sharing a monochrome picture of Indira Devi with the caption, “Celebrating you in spirit, today and always.”

Indira Devi, wife of veteran actor Krishna and mother of Mahesh Babu, passed away on September 28, 2022, at the age of 70. The family has been remembering her through various tributes and posts on social media.

Meanwhile, Mahesh Babu is currently preparing for his upcoming film, SSMB29, directed by SS Rajamouli and co-starring Priyanka Chopra. The film is expected to be a high-budget action adventure spanning multiple countries.

Anurag Kashyap's comments on Brahmins invite wrath of lyricist

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

In a heated response to filmmaker Anurag Kashyap's recent remarks, renowned lyricist and poet Manoj Muntashir Shukla has publicly condemned the director, accusing him of making casteist statements and targeting the Brahmin community. The issue stems from an earlier social media post by Kashyap, which criticised the ongoing controversy surrounding his upcoming film ‘Phule’, a biopic of social reformer Jyotirao Phule.

Taking to his official X account, Shukla delivered a direct message to Kashyap in a video saying, “If you have less income, then you have to control your expenses, and if you have less knowledge, then you have to control your words. Anurag Kashyap, you have less income and less knowledge, so control both.”

He further admonished Kashyap for his alleged remarks, adding, “You don't have enough water in your body to pollute the entire legacy of Brahmins.”

In his message, Shukla



The poet further expressed his willingness to pray for Kashyap's “sick mind” and offered to take responsibility for any treatment Kashyap may need.

challenged Kashyap to name a Brahmin figure from history whom he believed deserved to be insulted, listing prominent figures such as Acharya Chanakya, Peshwa Bajirao, and the legendary poet Tansen, among others.

“The proud tradition of Brahmins will not end. I, a Brahmin, give you an open challenge. Choose one name from the 21 I have listed and let me know,” Shukla said.

Shukla's post went on to describe Brahmins as

the “honour of India” and denounced Kashyap's comments as “heartless thoughts.”

He added, “A Brahmin may forgive your heartless thoughts, but the Hindu society will never forgive you for dividing the country.”

The poet further expressed his willingness to pray for Kashyap's “sick mind” and offered to take responsibility for any treatment Kashyap may need.

“#AnuragKashyapko meri khuli chetawani,” he captioned the video.

Tejas Deoskar reveals why he cast Emraan Hashmi in ‘Ground Zero’

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Director Tejas Prabha Vijay Deoskar recently spoke about his experience working with actor Emraan Hashmi in the upcoming film ‘Ground Zero’, and why he felt Hashmi was the perfect fit for the role.

Deoskar revealed that Hashmi was his first and only choice for the lead character.

“When you start writing and visualising a script, you also begin seeing the actor in the role. I thought Emraan



could bring a certain level of novelty, especially because he has never portrayed a character in uniform before,” Deoskar shared.

“Nobody has imagined him as a soldier or officer, and that allowed us to bring a fresh perspective to the character.”

Set in Kashmir during the early 2000s, ‘Ground Zero’ follows the courageous mission of BSF Commandant Narendra Nath Dhar Dubey, who played a critical role in eliminating terrorist mastermind Ghazi Baba. Hashmi steps into the shoes of Com-

mandant Dubey, while Sai Tamhankar plays the role of his wife.

The film recently had a special screening for BSF jawans in Srinagar, where a significant portion of the movie was shot.

Reflecting on the experience, Deoskar said, “It was fabulous — like coming full circle. We shot the film in Srinagar, the story is based there, so it felt right to have the first-ever public screening there. The administration supported us throughout, and we were extremely at ease

PICTURE PERFECT



Rasha Thadani snapped in a sparkling purple mini dress.
(Image credit: Instagram)

BRAIN PICKING



As an entertainer, I try to do projects that reflect a woman having the ability to stand up for herself.

— PRIYANKA CHOPRA
(Indian Actress and Film Producer)

Mikey Madison turns down role in upcoming ‘Star Wars’ film

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Oscar winning-actress Mikey Madison has reportedly declined a role in the upcoming Star Wars film, Star Wars: Starfighter, which is set to star Ryan Gosling. According to a source cited by Variety, Madison was offered a part in the film but chose not to participate.

The film is directed by Shawn Levy, known for his work on ‘Deadpool & Wolverine’. The film promises to deliver a brand-new adventure with new characters. The movie is slated to hit theatres on May 28, 2027.

Star Wars: Starfighter takes place after the Battle



of Exegol, a pivotal moment in the ‘Star Wars’ saga. Levy has promised a brand-new adventure with new characters, blending heart, action, and fun in a way that's both new and original.

“It takes place in a period after the Battle of Exegol, after episode 9,” Levy said during the movie's announcement in April, as per Variety.

“[There are] so many opportunities to tell a Star Wars story that has all the heart and action and fun of Star Wars, but to do it in ways that are new and original,” he added.

Levy confirmed Gosling's role in the film at the ‘Star Wars Celebration’ event in Tokyo, and said, “I had heard at one point that my movie was going to star Ryan Gosling and believe me, that would be a dream come true for me, that rumor is 100% true,” as quoted by Variety.

Olivia Williams opens about battle with pancreatic cancer

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Olivia Williams, known for her roles in ‘The Crown’ and ‘The Sixth Sense,’ has shared her harrowing experience with pancreatic cancer, revealing years of misdiagnoses and dismissals by doctors. As per Deadline, the actress is now sup-



porting Pancreatic Cancer UK, a charity that aims to raise awareness and fund research for the disease.

Williams was diagnosed with VIPoma, a rare neuroendocrine tumour of the pancreas, after visiting 10 doctors in three countries over four years. She was initially misdiagnosed with lupus, perimenopause, and other forms of cancer,

and was even referred for a psychiatric assessment. “If someone had well diagnosed me in the four years I'd been saying I was ill, then one operation possibly could have cleared the whole thing and I could describe myself as cancer-free, which I cannot now ever be,” she said in an interview, as quoted by Deadline.

Steven Soderbergh critiques lack of support for mid-budget movies

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Academy Award-winning director Steven Soderbergh has expressed his deep concern with the underperformance of mid-budget films like his latest espionage thriller, ‘Black Bag,’ at the box office. Despite receiving critical acclaim, the film's lacklustre box office draw has Soderbergh concerned about the future of cinema. Soderbergh believes that the inability of mid-level budget,



star-driven movies to attract audiences over 25 is a negative trend for the industry.

“If a mid-level budget, star-driven movie can't seem to

get people over the age of 25 years old to come out to theatres -- if that's truly a dead zone -- then that's not a good thing for movies,” he said in an interview, as quoted by Deadline.

The director worries that this trend will limit opportunities for filmmakers who want to make movies for grown-ups.

“What's going to happen to the person behind me who wants to make this kind of film?” he asked, as per Deadline.

Drawings, Animations, and Tapestries by Tilak Samarawickrema

INA PURI

Gallery Ragini is proud to present “Not Just a Doodle”, a landmark exhibition that brings together for the first time in India the intricate and multidisciplinary oeuvre of Sri Lankan artist and designer Tilak Samarawickrema. Curated by the distinguished writer and cultural archivist Ina Puri, the exhibition showcases Samarawickrema’s prolific five-decade journey across mediums - drawing, etching, animation, and hand-woven textile - revealing the deeply personal and philosophical core of his artistic practice.

Though trained as an architect at the University of Melbourne and deeply influenced by the design vision of Geoffrey Bawa, Samarawickrema’s practice has never been confined by disciplinary boundaries. In-



stead, it radiates outward - intertwining the sacred and the sensual, the folk and the modern, the ritual and the dreamlike—into a language that is unmistakably his own. As the exhibition’s title playfully suggests, these are “not just doodles” but the result of decades of meditation through mark-making, sto-

rytelling, and collaboration. At the heart of the exhibition are Samarawickrema’s drawings and etchings, many of which date back to his early years in Milan in the 1970s, where he was first introduced to the European avant-garde. These works are intimate, gestural, and psychologically

charged - archetypal forms emerge from seemingly spontaneous lines. Some figures appear genderless, others divine, erotic, playful, or wounded. There is both restraint and abandon in his strokes.

“In these drawings,” curator Ina Puri notes, “we see the birth of a language - a vocabulary of line that breathes, stutters, dances, trembles. There’s rhythm here. And above all, there’s listening—the line is listening to itself as it moves. That’s what makes it sacred.”

For Samarawickrema, the act of drawing is almost trance-like, a release of memory and myth. “I never plan a drawing,” he shares. “I start, and the line takes me somewhere. The moment I try to control it, it dies. So I follow.”

A rare gem of the exhibition is the screening of Samarawickrema’s animated short

film Andaré of Sri Lanka - a stylised tribute to the legendary 18th-century court jester of the Kandyan Kingdom, Andaré. Rendered entirely in his line-drawing style and produced in Italy, the film was commissioned by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Affairs and won critical acclaim at international festivals. Its inclusion in the exhibition offers a rare window into the artist’s experimentation with motion, sound, and folklore, showing how traditional South Asian storytelling can be reimagined through contemporary forms.

Also on view are his original storyboards, concept sketches, and drafts - a treasure trove for those interested in the process of animation, as well as the crossover between art, film, and oral tradition. Perhaps the most visually arresting works in the exhibition are his monumental hand-woven tapestries, created

in collaboration with the master weavers of Thalagune village in Sri Lanka’s Central Highlands. In the 1980s, Samarawickrema returned to Sri Lanka and began a lifelong engagement with these artisans, working closely to transform his drawings into thread-based narratives. These tapestries are not reproductions, but reinterpretations—infusing local weaving traditions with modernist aesthetics and symbolic storytelling. Drawing from Buddhist temple murals, Sinhala scripts, ritual architecture, and cosmological diagrams, they pulse with a radiant energy, connecting land, people, and memory.

“The threads are not decorative,” Samarawickrema explains. “They are like veins—carrying blood, history, and the warmth of the human hand. I wanted to make work that could be touched, that could belong

to a house, a temple, a body.”

Gallery Ragini, long known for showcasing artists who blur the boundaries between art, craft, and design, considers these tapestries a vital part of the global textile-art movement. “At a time when handwork is disappearing or being commodified, Tilak’s collaboration with artisans stands as a beacon of what slow, sustainable, ethical artmaking can look like,” the gallery writes in its note.

Curator Ina Puri has envisioned the exhibition not as a chronological retrospective, but as a constellation of experiences. Visitors are invited to move freely between intimate drawings and vast textile surfaces, between black-and-white linework and bursts of colour. Quotes from the artist, photographs from his workshops, and materials from his archives are woven into the gallery space, offering both intellec-

tual context and emotional texture.

“This is an exhibition that must be felt,” says Puri. “There is philosophy here, yes. But more importantly, there is humanness—desire, devotion, humour, solitude. And it is expressed not in grand statements, but in small, precise, powerful gestures. Each line is a breath.”

Tilak Samarawickrema’s work has been exhibited and collected internationally—from Milan to Melbourne, from Tokyo to Colombo—and has been featured in major design and textile biennales. Yet his commitment has remained local and intimate. A strong advocate for the preservation of Sri Lankan craft traditions, Samarawickrema has also worked with NGOs, educational institutions, and rural design initiatives to empower artisan communities through design innovation.

There is so much art in science and science in art: Shantanu Moitra

TDG NETWORK

Recently The World-Wide Fund for Nature - India (WWF-India) celebrated the convergence of Earth Hour 2025 with World Water Day with a vibrant festival that brought together music, art, and architecture to create a wave of change with the theme #BeWater-Wise. As part of this festival, celebrated musician Shantanu Moitra shared stories from his 2,700-km journey along the Ganga River and performed alongside Nyishi singer-songwriter Taba Chake, highlighting the connection between music, communities, and environmental awareness.

Namrata Kohli caught up with Shantanu Moitra, who is also the WWF-India’s Hope & Harmony Ambassador, on the sidelines of this event ‘WWF-India’s Earth Hour Festival 2025’ in New Delhi

1. *Climate and Music – a few decades ago, one wouldn’t imagine a musician talking of climate. Can you tell us more about the ‘sangam’ or confluence of climate meeting composition?*

Actually, this confluence was always there. In school, one of the biggest mistakes we make is we create separate sections- arts and sci-

ence. I don’t think it’s correct. There is so much art in science and science in art.

Also, I feel that music is a gift. You have to work on it and hone your skill with experience but primarily it’s a gift. But then what are we doing with this gift? Are we only making lots of money, traveling in big cars, owning lavish houses, and going around the world? Yes, we can have personal gain and benefits with this gift. But what difference can we make to this world? And I think that realization was very strong, very early on, in my life. Whenever I am doing Bollywood, it gets me name and fame like nothing else. I realize that the branding I get from Bollywood helps me talk to people about serious issues. That’s a formula I cracked. I think that my role is primarily as an ambassador to raise certain issues to people through my songs, through my stories and help leave a better world. My father always used to tell me - “When you’re crossing the road, see if any elderly needs help. Crossing the road is moving ahead and progressing but holding the hand of someone who can’t cross by himself - that is roots.”

I am not saying we should not progress- but growth is



real only when you keep in mind everyone’s interest.

2. *You have supported quite a few social causes and your music highlights them. Can you share anything that left an impact on your mind?*

There was a true story of an empowered woman from Gujarat- a lady who was abused at home by her husband and one night he beat up this lady and threw her out of the home along with seven-year-old daughter. She walked out on the highway, reached a dhaba. The dhaba vala gave them shelter. She stayed at the dhaba observing people for three days but realized how these highways/trucks were such a male dominated world. It’s very awkward for girls to even stand there. That’s when she decided - she will take a loan, buy a truck, and have only women sitting in that truck. And that’s how

my composition took birth and was picturized - this was “Mann ke Manjeere” by Shubha Mudgal

This is the power of art. It’s like a Brahmastra. A two-hour presentation versus a song - there is no comparison how a song makes an instant connection with people. That’s how I started doing more and more of this. I have also worked for Save the children foundation.

I am also WWF-India’s Hope & Harmony Ambassador. As an artist and environmentalist, I carry many stories and tunes from my journey along the River Ganga, and there could not have been a better time and stage to deliver them than WWF-India’s Earth Hour Festival 2025.

3. *Please tell us about Songs of the River.. You went on a long journey along the Ganges. In a nutshell what was the essence of*



your experiences?

Once I finished Three Idiots which was supremely loved by people, I switched off my phone for 100 days and travelled across the Himalayas, above 14,000 feet to discover this land that we live in. It’s one thing to create and compose, and another thing to see and hear the stories of people and explore who they are. What they do. I found that the beauty of India is not in the land, but the people who inhabit that land. It’s people who make stories, not mere mountains or seas. I saw two pahadi people fighting and when I inquired I was amazed at the reason for their dispute... They were fighting over which mandir to donate- the one next door or

a few metres away. That’s the simplicity of hill people who embody the concept of “Finders Are Not Keepers” - which means just because you find something, it doesn’t belong to you. And these hills are the place where we actually got our first lessons of conservation, sustainability, even Earth Hour.

4. *It’s World Water Day and you composed many songs on water. What does water mean to you?*

I will reply to this with a small story. When I was cycling down alongside Ganges, I saw a newlywed couple arrive in a scooter. They stopped, got down and sat down in front of the river. But not together

- there was a gap of at least 50 metres between them. Then both came back and went back on the scooter. I asked some village folks why they were not sitting together even though they were a couple, and they told me that the lady was communicating with the river. The couple got married just before the pandemic and staying in a joint family. So where will the woman find answers to her many questions puzzling her mind? And the answer is the river which drowns her woes. She asks questions to the flowing river and doesn’t feel judged. And she doesn’t want him to be part of this exercise. So water is mental health for India. The rivers play a humongous role in preserving peace, sanctity, sanity of relationships and individuals.

5. *Let’s take a look at Bollywood. And the degenerating quality of lyrics and the general lack of meaning and depth in today’s compositions. You have been a disruptor of sorts as your music stirs people and yet your songs are popular like in Three Idiots or 12th fail. In your opinion, how difficult is it to combine meaning with music in mainstream cinema and why are people not doing it?*

It’s a very good question. We as human beings love short-

cuts. Some shortcuts work but most shortcuts don’t work. When we would cry as children, our mothers would tell us a story or sing a lullaby. Today’s mother replaces this with her mobile and engages with her other work and puts the song on I-pad. But when the mother was singing, she was conscious and responsible for what she was saying or singing. I feel that Technology is great - but we have to use technology with responsibility, and that is the biggest crisis we are facing at the moment.

Today if a person goes to a forest, he asks his guide - “Tiger dikhega. If you are not able to show me one, then I will not pay you money.” Now look at the ecosystem. He has no interest in the other species. He feels his trip would have been a big failure if he did not see the tiger. This has all come from the communication we have created in the world.

So we have created the Frankensteins? And then we complain about the Frankensteins. I think my job, my songs, my creations are all about making melodies. Whatever technology you get, AI you get, but if my melody can put a tear in your eyes or put a smile on your face, my job is done.

Ritika Aurora’s a force of nature

Celebrating women and nature through art



RITIKA AURORA

Ritika Aurora, an accomplished artist and mentor at the Milan Art Institute USA, will be showcasing her solo exhibition ‘A Force of Nature’ that redefines the artistic landscape with evocative works celebrating the transformative power of women and nature. Curated by

Georgina Maddox, the exhibition harmoniously blends figurative and semi-abstract styles, radiating hope, positivity, and feminine energy. The works inspire viewers to embrace their inner strength and authenticity. The exhibition is from 25th to 30th April at Kalamkaar Gallery, Bikaner House.

Reflecting on her work, Ritika Aurora shares, “Through my paintings, I explore themes of independence, self-actualization, and authenticity. My art serves as a voice that speaks to the transformative power of embracing one’s true self.”



Maalyada – Andal’s sacred garland

A spellbinding fusion of bhakti poetry and dance

TDG NETWORK

Experience an enchanting evening that bridges the realms of literature, devotion, and art—as HCL Concerts presents Maalyada – Andal’s Sacred Garland, a breathtaking adaptation of the book by Jeysundhar D, comes alive through the timeless art of Bharatanatyam by Rama Vaidyanathan and music composition by Sudha Raghuraman on Saturday, 26th April at Kamani Auditorium, New Delhi at 6.30pm.

Choreographed by the eminent Bharatanatyam dancer Rama Vaidyanathan, this performance offers a unique visual and musical interpretation of the bhakti poetry of Andal, the revered 8th-century Tamil saint-poet. Andal’s poignant expressions of love and devotion for Krishna, penned in one of the most cherished works of Vaishnava literature, transcend linguistic barriers and touch the soul of all who encounter her work.

Rama Vaidyanathan, alongside four of her disciples, Sayani Chakraborty, Reshika Sivakumar, Vaishnavi Dhore and Shubhamani Chandrashekar will bring Andal’s poetry to life, embodying the spiritual essence of Maalyada – Andal’s Sacred Garland. The original musical score for the production, composed by Sudha Raghuraman, will be performed live by an ensemble of talented musicians, Raghuraman Govindarajan, Sumod Sreedharan, Himanshu Srivastava and Sannidhi Vaidyanathan adding depth and soul to this visionary adaptation. Gaurav Sharma expertly designed the lighting for the performance, enhancing its visual brilliance.

Sharing her excitement on the dance adaptation, Ms Rama Vaidyanathan says, “For the first time I am adapting a book into a dance performance, and I am totally excited about it”

The evening will commence with author Jeysund-



har D speaking about the book, offering insights into his exploration of Andal’s poetry. Following the talk,

the dance performance will unfold, creating a seamless connection between literature and art.

OFFBEAT TRAVEL IN INDIA: PLACES THAT ARE NOT ON THE USUAL TOURIST MAP

TDG NETWORK

India is a treasure trove of hidden gems waiting to be explored. While popular destinations like Goa, Jaipur, and Manali are crowd favorites, the real charm of India often lies in its lesser-known corners. Offbeat travel offers a more authentic experience, away from tourist crowds and commercial setups. Here are a few hidden destinations that promise soul-stirring beauty, unique culture, and unforgettable adventures.

1. GUREZ VALLEY, JAMMU & KASHMIR

Tucked away in the Himalayas, near the Line of Control, Gurez Valley is a stunning slice of paradise. With snow-capped peaks, gushing rivers, and wooden houses, it feels like a world untouched by time. The hospitality of the local Dard people and the breathtaking views of Habba Khatoon peak make it a must-visit for peace seekers and photographers.

2. MAJULI ISLAND, ASSAM

The world's largest river island, Majuli sits on the Brahmaputra River and is a hub of neo-Vaishnavite culture. With satras (monastic institutions), mask-making art, and traditional Mishing tribal villages, it offers a serene blend of spirituality and simplicity. It's best explored on a bicycle, with homestays adding to the experience.



3. TAWANG, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Although gaining popularity, Tawang is still blissfully less crowded. Home to the second-largest monastery in the world and dotted with glacial lakes like Shonga-tser (Madhuri Lake), the town is a haven of Buddhist spirituality, alpine beauty, and

Indo-Tibetan culture. The drive to Tawang itself is an adventure, with snow-lined roads and dramatic mountain passes.

4. HALEBIDU, KARNATAKA

Often overshadowed by Hampi and Mysore, Halebidu is a forgotten gem of Indian temple architecture. Once the capital of the Hoysala Empire, it boasts in-

tricately carved temples that rival those in Khajuraho or Belur. Quiet and meditative, it's a paradise for history lovers and architecture enthusiasts.

5. ZIRO VALLEY, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Rolling green hills, rice fields, and Apatani tribal culture make Ziro a perfect blend of nature and tradi-

tion. Known for the Ziro Music Festival, it offers a great escape into the heart of Northeast India. Stay in bamboo cottages, interact with the locals, and take long treks through pine forests.

6. CHAUKORI, UTTARAKHAND

Skip the popular Nainital or Mussoorie and head to Chaukori, a tiny hamlet in

Kumaon offering panoramic views of Nanda Devi and Panchachuli peaks. It's ideal for stargazing, meditative retreats, and birdwatching. The silence is so pure, it almost feels like time has stopped.

7. PATAN, GUJARAT

Patan is steeped in heritage yet hardly ever on mainstream itineraries. The ancient stepwell Rani ki Vav,

now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the rich Patola sari weaving tradition make it a cultural delight.

It's perfect for travelers who love art, craft, and history.

GO BEYOND THE BEATEN PATH

Traveling off the tourist

map in India isn't just about finding quieter places—it's about discovering new perspectives, connecting with local communities, and experiencing India in its rawest, most beautiful form.

These lesser-known destinations promise more than just pictures—they offer stories worth remembering.

Traveling with grandparents: Multi-generational travel tips

TDG NETWORK

Family vacations are always special, but traveling with grandparents adds an extra layer of bonding, storytelling, and nostalgia. Multi-generational trips can be incredibly rewarding if planned thoughtfully, ensuring everyone—from toddlers to seniors—has a great time. Here are some essential tips to make your family adventure smooth, safe, and full of happy memories.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT DESTINATION

The key to a successful trip with grandparents is picking a destination that suits all age groups. Avoid locations with extreme climates or high altitudes if health is a concern. Look for places that offer a mix of leisure and light activity—think beach towns, heritage sites, nature retreats, or cruise holidays. Destinations like Kerala, Jaipur, Rishikesh, or even short international trips to Sri Lanka or Dubai work well.

Keep the Itinerary Flexible While you might be tempted to pack in a lot of sightseeing, remember that seniors and children may not be able

to keep up with a tight schedule. Avoid rushing from one attraction to another. Instead, focus on quality experiences over quantity. Include ample rest time between activities and avoid back-to-back travel days.

ACCOMMODATION MATTERS

When traveling with elderly family members, your stay should be comfortable, easily accessible, and preferably located near the major attractions. Choose hotels or homestays with elevators, accessible bathrooms, minimal stairs, and in-house dining. Resorts with walking paths, gardens, and quiet spaces are a bonus for seniors who enjoy calm surroundings.

PLAN FOR HEALTH & SAFETY

Before the trip, ensure that all prescriptions are filled, and carry a small travel medical kit with essentials like medicines for digestion, cold, pain, or minor injuries. Carry important medical documents and insurance details. If grandparents have specific health needs like diabetic-friendly meals or mobility aids, plan ahead accordingly.

TRANSPORT SHOULD BE COMFORTABLE

Whether it's a road trip or a flight, comfort should be the top priority. Avoid long drives without breaks. Choose trains with comfortable seating or book flights with minimum layovers. Wheelchair assistance at airports and special seating requests can usually be arranged in advance—don't hesitate to make use of these services.

INVOLVE EVERYONE IN THE PLANNING

Let grandparents have a say in the travel plan. They may suggest visiting places that hold sentimental value or experiences they've always wanted to try. Including them in the planning makes them feel involved and excited. It's also a good time for younger members to hear family stories connected to certain destinations or past vacations.

GO TECH-SAVVY (BUT KEEP IT SIMPLE)

Help grandparents stay connected by teaching them basic smartphone functions—Google Maps, emergency calling, or translation apps

if traveling internationally. You can also show them how to use photo-sharing apps so they can enjoy looking back at the memories you're creating together.

CREATE MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

Opt for experiences that everyone can enjoy together—like a boat ride, a cooking class, cultural performances, or visiting museums. Simple joys like a family picnic in a park or a sunset walk can create lifelong memories. Let the grandparents pass on stories and values while the younger ones add energy and fun to the mix.

CAPTURE THE MOMENTS

Don't forget to click plenty of pictures and take videos. Create a shared family travel album or a printed photo book post-trip. These shared memories can become cherished keepsakes for every generation. Traveling with grandparents isn't just about going places—it's about bridging generations, sharing wisdom, and deepening family ties. With a little planning and a lot of heart, a multi-generational vacation can become one of your most cherished adventures.



Insta-worthy spots that deserve the hype

TDG NETWORK

In the age of social media, travel is no longer just about ticking destinations off a bucket list—it's also about capturing picture-perfect moments that tell a story. While some Instagram-famous spots feel overrated once you get there, others genuinely live up to the hype. These photogenic places across India (and a few global picks) aren't just camera-friendly—they're packed with experiences that are as vibrant and layered as the photos you'll take home.

1. SANTORINI, GREECE: WHITE WALLS AND BLUE DOMES

No list of Insta-worthy destinations is complete without Santorini. With its whitewashed buildings, iconic blue domes, and stunning sunsets over the caldera, this Greek island is a visual masterpiece. Every corner is postcard-perfect—ideal for those sun-kissed, windswept shots. What makes it truly deserving of the hype? The sheer romance in the air and a history-rich island culture beyond the filter.

2. HAWA MAHAL, JAIPUR: THE PINK MARVEL

The honeycomb-like structure of Hawa Mahal in Jaipur is an Instagram favorite—and rightly so. The intricate latticework, historical allure, and royal pink backdrop make for mesmerizing photos, especially during golden hour. But there's more to Jaipur's pink city charm—explore hidden bazaars, rooftop cafes, and restored havelis for content that blends culture and color.



3. BANARAS GHATS, VARANASI: TIMELESS AND SPIRITUAL

Varanasi's ghats offer raw, real, and strikingly beautiful scenes. Sunrise boat rides on the Ganga, sadhus in saffron robes, and floating diyas during Ganga Aarti create a magical frame that feels both ancient and eternal. For photographers and storytellers, this city is a spiritual goldmine of Instagram content with soul.

4. CAPPADOCIA, TURKEY: THE BALLOON FANTASY

Few images are as dreamy as hundreds of hot air balloons rising above Cappadocia's surreal, rocky landscape.

Whether you're in a balloon or watching from a rooftop, the moment is straight out of a fairytale. Add to that cave hotels and sunrise views, and you have a destination that is as magical as it looks on Instagram.

5. PANGONG LAKE, LADAKH: BLUE THAT BREAKS THE INTERNET

The ever-changing shades of blue at Pangong Lake

are mesmerizing in real life and even more dramatic in photos. Framed by stark mountains and vast skies, it's no wonder this spot became famous after 3 Idiots. But don't just rush in and out—take time to soak in the silence, the stars, and the stillness that your phone can't quite capture.

6. AUROVILLE'S MATRIMANDIR, TAMIL NADU: GOLDEN AND GROUNDING

The futuristic golden sphere at the heart of Auroville is Insta-fabulous, but the philosophy behind it is even more intriguing. Symbolizing universal harmony and spiritual focus, the Matrimandir glows in the sunlight, surrounded by peaceful gardens. It's not just a photo op—it's an invitation to reflect and reset.

7. POSITANO, ITALY: CLIFFSIDE CHIC

With pastel houses cascading down to the sparkling Mediterranean, Positano is elegance in every frame. Whether you're sipping coffee at a café or posing on a sce-

nic staircase, this Amalfi Coast gem offers timeless glamour. It's touristy, yes—but every cobblestone and color burst makes it worth the hype.

8. VALLEY OF FLOWERS, UTTARAKHAND: NATURE'S OWN FILTER

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this Himalayan valley blooms with more than 500 species of wildflowers. From July to early September, the valley turns into a living canvas of purple, yellow, pink, and white. It's a natural wonder that doesn't need editing—just a good pair of hiking boots and a charged camera.

FINAL FRAME: WORTH IT BEYOND THE LIKES

While social media may draw us to these destinations, what truly makes them special is how they make us feel when we're there. These Insta-worthy spots deserve the hype not just for their aesthetic appeal but for the stories, sensations, and soul they carry. So snap your shots—but don't forget to pause and truly experience the moment.

ROHIT, SURYAKUMAR SIZZLE AS MI BEATS CSK BY 9 WICKETS

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Skipper Rohit Sharma (76 not out) and Suryakumar Yadav (68 not out) tore apart Chennai Super Kings to hand Mumbai Indians a commanding nine-wicket win in an one-sided Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

Chasing a below-par target, the hosts faced absolutely no difficulties on a batting-friendly surface in swatting away the challenge as they went over the line making 177 for one to win by more than four overs to spare, and take a leap to sixth spot in the points table.

Rohit capitalised on anything short from the pacers in the powerplay and swept with command against the CSK spinners to notch up his maiden fifty of the season, which came off 33 balls.

On a six-hitting spree, Rohit finished at 76 not out off 45 balls with four fours and six hits over the fence.

MI's impact substitute Rohit laid the foundation with a robust 63-run stand for the first wicket in the powerplay -- their best start undoubtedly in this IPL -- and ensured the hosts remained on track for a big win keeping them at a scoring rate of 10 per over.

For CSK, it was a challenge stopping the former MI skipper in his tracks es-



Rohit Sharma.

pecially with their seamers failing to make any impact and seasoned spinners in Ravichandran Ashwin (0/25) and Ravindra Jadeja (1/28) not able to extract anything off the surface either.

CSK also introduced their most successful bowler Noor Ahmad (0/36) as late as in the 10th over, by which MI were nearing the 100-run mark with consummate ease.

The writing was on the wall when Noor was hammered for 15 runs with Suryakumar hitting three fours in a row off the left arm spinner in the 14th over.

A few narrow escapes notwithstanding, Rohit's blitz innings gave MI their most convincing win and finally a big score to the right-handed batter after

a string of ordinary scores.

Suryakumar (68 off 30 balls, 5x4s, 6x6s) produced the most fluent knock in this season with the No. 3 batter being immaculate in clearing the leg-side boundaries as well as with his compelling sweep shots against the spinners.

His second fifty of the season came off 26 balls as Suryakumar forged a match-winning stand with Rohit for the second wicket to add 114 unbeaten runs off only 54 balls, finishing the game with two consecutive sixes.

Earlier, Shivam Dube and Ravindra Jadeja struck vital half-centuries while 17-year-old debutant Ayush Mhatre dazzled to guide Chennai Super Kings to 176 for five.

Sent in at No. 4 as early as in the seventh over,

Jadeja (53 not out off 35 balls, 4x4s, 2x6s) hit his maiden fifty of the season alike Dube (50 off 32 balls, 2x4s, 4x6) to lift CSK after the five-time champions appeared to have lost their way.

Mhatre gave CSK the impetus early on with a 15-ball 32, studded with four boundaries and two sixes, to make an impact in his maiden outing but MI got things under control with some disciplined bowling.

But CSK, who appeared to be buckling under pressure, were rescued by Jadeja and Dube, whose fourth-wicket stand gave them a strong footing in the second half of the innings.

The limelight, however, was hogged by the young Mhatre who hit the second ball he faced past the

His second fifty of the season came off 26 balls as Suryakumar forged a match-winning stand with Rohit for the second wicket to add 114 unbeaten runs off only 54 balls, finishing the game with two consecutive sixes.

non-striker for a four. He flicked the third delivery for a six over deep mid-wicket and pulled the fourth powerfully into the stands for another maximum off Ashwani Kumar.

MI had done well until the 13th over with CSK crawling to 92 for three, but Dube took charge thereafter. After smacking Hardik Pandya for a six over midwicket, Dube smashed Trent Boult (0/43) for a four and a six over fine leg to collect 15 runs off his third over even as the MI pacer erred with his line and length.

But it was Ashwani Kumar who bore the brunt of CSK's counterpunch in the 16th over, with Dube and Jadeja smacking the left-armer for 24 runs, including three sixes and a four. They added 79 runs for the fourth wicket.

Virat, Padikkal star in RCB's 7-wicket win

TDG NETWORK
MULLANPUR

Half centuries by Virat Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal helped Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) continue their brilliant away run, registering their fifth successive win away from home after beating Punjab Kings (PBKS) by seven wickets at Mullanpur on Sunday.

With this win, RCB has managed to avenge their five-wicket loss to PBKS at their home stadium of M Chinnaswamy Stadium and secured their fifth win of the season. They are in third spot, with five wins, three losses and 10 points. With a same win-loss ratio, PBKS is at fourth spot.

During the run chase of 158 runs, RCB was off to a poor start as Arshdeep Singh removed Phil Salt for one run in three balls. RCB was 6/1 in one over.

In the next few overs, Virat Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal stitched a partnership, collecting boundaries against pace and spin alike. RCB reached the 50-run mark in 5.5 overs.

At the end of the powerplay in six overs, RCB was 54/1 in six overs, with Virat (31*) and Padikkal (22*) unbeaten.

The duo reached the 50-run partnership in 31 balls.

At the end of 10 overs, RCB looked right on track, at 88/1 with Padikkal (49*) and Virat (37*) unbeaten.

Padikkal reached his first fifty of IPL 2025 in just 30



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal during an Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 T20 cricket match between Punjab Kings and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, at Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium, in New Chandigarh.

BRIEF SCORES

PBKS: 157/6 (Prabhsimran Singh 33, Shashank Singh 31*, Krunal Pandya 2/25) lost to **RCB:** 159/3 in 18.5 overs (Virat Kohli 73*, Devdutt Padikkal 61, Harpreet Brar 1/27).

pick apart pacers, bringing up the 100-run stand in 65 balls.

However, the 103-run stand between Padikkal and Virat was ended by Harpreet Brar, with Nehal Wadhwa getting a safe catch at long-on. The left-hander departed for 61 in 35 balls, with five fours and four sixes. RCB was 109/2 in 12.3 overs.

Next up on the crease was skipper Rajat Patidar. He carried the chase forward with Virat, who reached his 67th IPL fifty and fourth this season, in 43 balls, with five fours.

balls, with four boundaries and three sixes, and he continued his streak of fine attacking knocks in the tournament. Padikkal continued to

Eden showdown: KKR fights on, GT eyes playoffs

SUNIL YASH KALRA
NEW DELHI

The iconic Eden Gardens in Kolkata is all set to host a blockbuster IPL 2025 clash as the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) lock horns with the Gujarat Titans (GT) in Match No. 39 of the tournament. While Gujarat sits comfortably at the top of the points table with 10 points, KKR finds itself in a tricky spot with just 6 points from 7 games, currently placed sixth. For Kolkata, this isn't just another game—it could be a turning point to keep their playoff dreams alive.

Both teams have played 7 matches each so far this season. Gujarat has looked solid, winning 5 of them, while Kolkata has managed victories in just 3. GT enters this contest on the back of a clinical win against the Delhi Capitals, whereas KKR will be desperate to bounce back after a loss to the Punjab Kings in their last outing.



When it comes to head-to-head stats, the scales slightly tilt in Gujarat's favour. Out of 4 encounters between these two sides in IPL history, GT has won 2, KKR has claimed 1 victory, and 1 match ended as a washout. Interestingly, the only match played between these two at Eden Gardens also saw GT emerge victorious by 7 wickets under the leadership of Shubman Gill.

The Eden Gardens surface is known for its good bounce and true pace, making it a paradise for batters. However, early swing with the new ball keeps pacers in the game during the first few overs. As the match progresses, spin-

ners come into play—especially under lights. The average first-innings score here hovers between 160 and 170, but totals often go well beyond that. No wonder most captains prefer to bowl first on this pitch.

Cricket analyst Taus Rizvi, speaking on a special segment of Cricket Predicta presented by IxBAT, weighed in on the contest:

“Right now, Gujarat Titans look like the most balanced and in-form team in the league. But KKR has the home advantage. If they strike early with the ball, this match could swing dramatically.

Abhishek Nayar rejoins KKR's support staff

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Abhishek Nayar has rejoined Kolkata Knight Riders' support staff. The development comes the day after it emerged that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided not to renew his contract as an assistant coach of the national team. “Abhishek Nayar has rejoined our support staff. He is likely to be at training at Eden today,” a franchise statement said on Saturday (April 19). Curiously, his appointment - or rather, reappointment - comes even before the BCCI has formally announced his departure from the national team setup. It is, however, evident that the BCCI has chosen not to continue with several support staff members, including Nayar, who served as deputy to head coach Gautam Gambhir for nearly 10 months. Alongside him, fielding coach T Dilip and strength and conditioning trainer Soham Desai have also been relieved of their duties.

Arya 5th in Women's Air Rifle; India second in medal tally

AGENCIES
LIMA (PERU)

Arya Borse finished a good fifth in the 10m Air Rifle Women event, shooting a first-ever final of an International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup stage in her rookie international season. At the Las Palmas range in Lima, Peru, where the second leg of the ISSF World Cup circuit is being held, Arya shot a superb 633.9 on Saturday, to qualify for the final, finishing only behind the reigning junior world champion and eventual gold medalist Wang Zifei of China, who set three world records on the day.

Arya bowed out after the 18th shot of the 24-shot final, her score reading 188.1, just 0.1 behind silver-winning reigning world champion Han Jiayu of China, who was fourth at that stage.



Wang also led a Chinese sweep of the medals in the event as another upcoming young talent Fan Xinyi, took bronze. She set a new junior qualification record (635.9) as well as the new junior and senior final world records (254.8) in a stunning display of air rifle shooting throughout the day.

That consolidated China's position at the top of the charts with three gold, three silver and four bronze medals.

India, with Arjun Babuta's silver earlier in the day, is in third with two golds, two silvers and one bronze, putting them a gold behind the USA, who are in second.

Till she shot a 9.9 for her 17th shot, Arya had shot almost the perfect final, doing ever so well to maintain second position despite a rampaging Wang and strong challenges posed by world class shooters like Han, Jeanette Hegg Dues-

tad (a multi-format ISSF World Champion in rifle) of Norway and Eunji Kwon of Korea.

She led after the first five shot series, was behind by 0.6 to Wang after the second and after momentarily going down to third, found herself back in second after the 16th single shot, 1.2 behind Wang and tied with Jeanette, who finished fourth eventually.

The 17th took the Indian down to fourth, and as Han and Jeanette fired high 10s for their 18th, Arya's 10.4 left her just short of Han.

Over at the Shotgun ranges where the Trap competitions also got underway, two Indian trap shooters, veteran Zoravar Sandhu in the men's trap and Pragati Dubey in the corresponding women's event, began with flawless first rounds of 25 each.

Odisha inaugurates Khelo India Centers in every district

TDG NETWORK
BHUBANESWAR

In a significant step towards strengthening grassroots sports infrastructure, Khelo India Centers have been inaugurated across all districts of Odisha under the joint support of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, and the State Sports and Youth Services Department. The initiative, launched under the guidance of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, aims to develop world-class sports infrastructure and nurture young talent across the state. These centers are de-

signed to provide athletes with access to quality training and modern facilities for a range of sports, including football, volleyball, hockey, athletics, kho-kho, kabaddi, and more. All essential amenities required for athletes' development will be made available.

To ensure efficient operation and management, each center will receive an annual grant of Rs. 5 lakh from the government.

Marking the occasion, Odisha Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj told the reporters, “In every district of Odisha, Khelo India Centers have been established.

ENDURANCE GLORY



(From L) Yart-Yamaha Formula EWC N°7 riders Britain's Jason O'Halloran, Germany's Marvin Fritz and Czech Republic's Karel Hanika celebrate on the podium with their trophies after winning the after the 48th Le Mans 24-hours endurance moto race, in Le Mans, northwestern France. Agencies

Junior National Athletics coach suspended for aiding dope test evasion

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A slew of dope cases rocked Indian athletics with junior national team chief coach Ramesh Nagpuri suspended by the NADA for “complicity” in doping while seven athletes were also in dock for “evading” tests.

Two more coaches -- Karamveer Singh and Rakesh -- were also suspended for “complicity” and “administration of prohibited substances” respectively.

The seven athletes suspended for “evasion” in the latest list of dope offenders



published by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) were Paras Singhal, Pooja Rani, Nalubothu Shanmuga Sreenivas, Chelimi Pratusha, Shubham Mahara, Kiran and Jyoti.

The 19-year-old Singhal had won the boys 2,000m steeplechase for Haryana

at the Khelo India Youth Games in 2024. Sreenivas won a silver each in 200m in the Federation Cup, National Inter-State Championships and National Open in 2024.

Nagpuri, based at the Sports Authority of India Centre in Hyderabad and appointed junior chief coach by Athletics Federation of India (AFI) in 2023, is a renowned Dronacharya Awardee coach.

He has been suspended under Article 2.9 of the NADA Anti-Doping Rules of 2021, which deals with ‘Complicity or attempted complicity by an athlete or other Person’.