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INDIA, THAILAND RAISE TIES TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

‘Waqf Bill will benefit crores of Muslims’

Waqf Bill is about justice, not politics: Kartikeya Sharma

PM Modi:Both countries support a free and open Indo-Pacific

**AGENCIES**  
BANGKOK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a productive meeting with his Thailand counterpart Paetongtarn Shinawatra here on Thursday and the two leaders discussed various areas of bilateral co-operation.

The two leaders agreed to elevate the bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership. India and Thailand also exchanged memorandums across a range of sectors.

The MoUs include Joint Declaration on the Establishment of India-Thailand Strategic Partnership.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted that both the countries support a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based order in Indo-Pacific, and believe in a policy of development, not expansionism.

Modi made the remarks at a joint press event with his Thai counterpart Paetongtarn Shinawatra after holding delegation-level talks during which they held extensive discussions on various areas of bilateral cooperation.

“We have emphasized cooperation in the fields of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus were seated together at the dinner hosted by Thailand Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra for leaders of the BIMSTEC grouping here. Also seen in the picture is Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli

tourism, culture, and education between India's north-eastern states and Thailand. We discussed enhancing mutual trade, investment, and exchanges between businesses,” Modi said about his talks with Shinawatra.

Agreements have also been made for cooperation in MSME, handloom and handicraft, he noted.

India and Thailand signed a Joint Declaration on the

establishment of a Strategic Partnership and five memoranda of understanding in sectors ranging from digital technologies to culture.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar were also present at the bilateral talks where the agencies of the two countries also agreed to collaborate closely to combat human trafficking and illegal migration.

Thailand had recently helped India in the repatriation of 549 Indian nationals who were trapped in a fake jobs racket in Myanmar.

“We thanked the Government of Thailand for their cooperation in facilitating the return of Indian victims of cybercrime. We have agreed that our agencies will collaborate closely to combat human trafficking and illegal migration,” the Prime Minister said.

Modi asserted that Thailand holds a special place in India's ‘Act East’ Policy and the Indo-Pacific vision.

“Today, we have decided to elevate our relations to the level of a Strategic Partnership. Discussions were also held on establishing a Strategic Dialogue’ between security agencies,” Modi said.

He said India fully supports

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday said that the Waqf Amendment Bill will benefit crores of people from the Muslim community and that the property under Waqf has not been properly used in the interest of the poor.

Rijiju, who moved the bill for passing in Rajya Sabha, said the government had strengthened mechanisms under the bill, including tribunals.

“We have included the Right to Appeal in this bill. If you don't get your right in the Tribunal, then you can file a petition in court under this Right to Appeal,” he said.

Rijiju said that Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, will be renamed as the UMEED (Unified Waqf Management Empowerment Efficiency and Devel-



**Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju moves motion for consideration of Waqf (Amendment) Bill in Rajya Sabha**

Some of the opposition MPs in the Upper House were wearing black as a mark of protest against the bill.

The Lok Sabha passed the bill with a 288-232 vote in the early hours of Thursday after over 12 hours of debate.

In the Rajya Sabha, Rijiju emphasised that the bill aims to usher in transparency, accountability and efficiency in the management

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha MP from Haryana Kartikeya Sharma on Thursday extended his support to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Delivering a robust defence of the Bill, he termed it a progressive step towards transparency, accountability and efficient management of Waqf properties for the welfare of the Muslim community and the nation.

He came down heavily on the Congress for opposing the Bill and exposed its “double standards: by citing historical support for Waqf reforms from their own iconic leaders including Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Emphasised on the Bill's alignment with the public good, the MP accused Congress of hypocrisy in rejecting reforms their own leaders once championed. “Nehru himself said in 1954

Dallewal accuses AAP govt of betraying farmers

Vows to revive agitation by farmers

**NEERAJ MOHAN**  
CHANDIGARH

Accusing chief minister Bhagwant Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party government in Punjab of betrayal with the farming community, farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal announced revival of farmer agitation in the state.

Dallewal, who reached his native village Dallewala in Faridkot district after 128-days addressed the Kisan Mahapanchayat and reaffirmed his commitment to the ongoing farmers' movement and vowed to escalate the agitation nationwide.

Dallewal also alleged that



firmed his commitment to the ongoing farmers' movement and vowed to escalate the agitation nationwide.

Dallewal also alleged that

with Punjab and Central government ministers, he was forcibly detained by the police. “I was kidnapped in an ambulance and taken to Bahadurgarh, then moved to Jalandhar under pressure. I refused food and water until all detained farmers were released,” he said, adding that after 10 days of protest, farmers were finally freed on March 29.

“The police can uproot our protest sites, but they cannot uproot our spirit. We will rebuild this agitation stronger than before,” Dallewal added.

Dallewal, was discharged

HC transfers probe in Colonel assault case to C'garh Police

**Punjab SIT dissolved**

**TARUNI GANDHI**  
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has transferred the probe into the brutal assault on Colonel Pushpinder Singh Bath and his son to Chandigarh Police, rejecting the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by Punjab Police. The court directed Chandigarh Police to constitute a new SIT within three days and complete the investigation within four months. It also ruled that no Punjab Police officer on deputation will be part of the new SIT.

The case stems from a shocking incident on



March 14, 2025, when Colonel Bath and his son Angad Singh were allegedly assaulted by Punjab Police officers at a dhaba in Patiala. The officers reportedly dragged the Colonel and beat his son with baseball bats, leaving Col Bath with a fractured arm and his son with serious head injuries. Initially, Punjab Police refused to register an FIR and only lodged a case based on the dhaba owner's statement, excluding the Colonel's

Court annuls appointment of 26k teachers, defiant Mamata blames SC, Oppn

**SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE**  
KOLKATA

On a day when the Supreme Court Division Bench of Chief Justice of India Sanjeev Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar ruled that 25,753 teaching and non-teaching staff recruited in West Bengal through a process “riddled with corruption, manipulation and fraud “would be sacked, State Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee defiantly refused to accept blame for the lapse.

She instead blamed the Supreme Court and the Opposition BJP and CPM for orchestrating the crisis.

“In our opinion, this case is where the entire selection process has been vitiated. Manipulation and fraud on a large scale, coupled with the intention to cover up, have tainted the selection process beyond repair,” observed Chief Justice Khanna. “The legitimacy and credibility of the selection procedure are denuded.”

The Bench upheld the sack-



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses a press conference, at the CM office in Kolkata on Thursday. (ANI Photo)

“This is a case wherein the entire selection process has been vitiated and tainted beyond resolution. Manipulations and frauds on a large scale, coupled with the attempted cover-up, have dented the selection process beyond repair and partial redemption. The credibility and legitimacy of the selection are denuded,

-41-page judgement authored by the CJI.

ing order passed by a Calcutta High Court Division Bench last year which was under challenge in the apex court. “We find no reason to interfere in the HC, since the appointments are by fraud



Charminar waterlogged as heavy rain lashes in Hyderabad on Thursday. ANI

‘Yamuna pact quenches thirst of Shekhawati region’

**NEERAJ MOHAN**  
CHANDIGARH

The water pact between Haryana and Rajasthan will help address the severe water crisis in Rajasthan's Shekhawati region, providing drinking and irrigation water to the drought-hit districts of Jhunjhunu, Churu, and Sikar.

This was claimed by the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti, V Somanna in a reply of to an unstarred question raised in the Lok Sabha.

The Shekhawati region has long grappled with water scarcity, prompting urgent action from both state and central governments. Under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), launched in August 2019, the government of India has been working with Rajasthan to ensure tap water connections for every rural household.

Jhunjhunu now has 51.24% of its 2,72,583 rural households connected, up from 15.74% in 2019; Churu stands at 67.36% of its 3,00,702 households; and Sikar has reached 56.86% of its 2,69,130 households. These gains reflect the addition of 97,511, 1,75,153, and 1,24,535 tap water connections in the respective districts since the mission's inception.

However, the region's needs extend beyond drinking water to agricultural irrigation, a critical concern for its rural economy. Addressing this, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on February 17, 2024, between Haryana's Commissioner & Secretary (Irrigation & Water Resources) and Rajasthan's Additional Chief Secretary (Water Resources Department). The MoU outlines the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for transferring Yamuna water through underground pipelines to Rajasthan during the monsoon months of July to October.

The plan allocates up to 577 million cubic feet (MCB) of water for drinking and other needs in Churu, Sikar, Jhunjhunu, and additional districts, after Haryana utilizes its full 24,000 cusec capacity of the Western Yamuna Canal, including Delhi's share, under Phase-I.

The DPR, to be jointly finalized within four months with technical support from the Central Water Commission and the Upper Yamuna River Board, will pave the way for this ambitious project. A task force comprising



WHO SAID WHAT ON  
WAQF BILL, NOW IN  
RAJYA SABHA

"In such kind of environment, the content and intent of your bill raises questions. If you have put this in the Islamic community, then put this in Hindu, Sikh, Christian also... Or you have decided that all such experiments would be with the Muslim Community. This is not fair"

-Manoj Jha, RJD Member



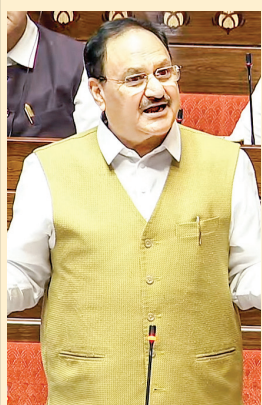
"You do communal polarisation, and then you accuse us of doing polarisation... This bill is based on total falsity, and a misinformation campaign has been built in the last six months. BJP's fake factory is involved in spreading misinformation,"

-Congress MP Hussain in Rajya Sabha



I think the Waqf Bill which has been passed by the Lok Sabha on Wednesday is a violation of the right to religion under Article 25. It is not appropriate to interfere in someone's personal laws," Our Jammu and Kashmir Assembly can't do anything about it as a law passed by the Parliament can only be revoked by the Parliament and can't not be revoked by any assembly. Therefore we have a limited role in it"

-J&K Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather



You made the Indian Muslim ladies second-grade citizens. While triple talaq was banned in Muslim countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Bangladesh, and Syria several years ago, the Congress-led UPA government did nothing for Muslim women while it was in power for a decade. I stand in support of the (Waqf) Bill as its sole purpose is to bring reforms in managing the Waqf properties. We have included the Right to Appeal in this bill. If you don't get your right in the Tribunal, then you can file a petition in court under this Right to Appeal"

-JP Nadda, Union minister

THAKUR SHOULD RESIGN IF HE CAN'T  
PROVE ALLEGATIONS: KHARGE

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday hit back at Anurag Thakur for hurling "wild allegations" at him, and dared the BJP MP to prove the charges or else resign.

Referring to certain remarks made by Thakur in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday during the discussion on the Waqf bill, the Congress president said the remarks have damaged his reputation.

Thakur's remarks have been expunged from the records.

Several opposition parties also staged a walkout from the House on the issue.

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar observed that constitutionally highly positioned persons have been



subjected to insinuations with no remorse. He emphasised that parties have to take responsibility for how to rectify and save their reputations

Raising the issue during the morning session in the Rajya Sabha, Kharge said his life has always been an open book, and he has always upheld the highest values in public life.

"After almost 60 years in politics, I do not deserve this. Yesterday, completely false and baseless charges were hurled at me in the Lok Sabha by Anurag Thakur. When he was challenged by my colleagues, he was compelled to withdraw his defamatory remarks," he said.

"But the damage has been done. All the media (outlets)

have carried (it). Social media is also spreading it. His statements damaging my image and reputation has already been picked up by the social and other media," he said.

A visibly upset Kharge further said that as Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha and as the president of the Indian National Congress, he is forced to stand

up in the House and condemn Thakur's "wild allegations".

"I expect an apology from the Leader of House, that is the very least the ruling party can and must do. If Thakur cannot prove his allegation, he has no right to be in Parliament, he should resign ... And if it is proved, I will resign," Kharge said.

The senior Congress leader also challenged the BJP MP to prove that he or his children have occupied even an inch of Waqf land.

He further said he is a son of a labourer and has worked hard to rise from the post of Congress' block committee president to become the president of the All India Congress Committee (AICC).

He also said that no one has ever pointed fingers at him in his 60-year-long political life.

## Sonia slams govt, says Waqf Bill a 'brazen assault'

ANAND SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Thursday slammed BJP-led NDA government at the Centre saying the discussions on important issues are not allowed in Parliament and also it is shocking to see how the treasury bench members themselves get the house adjourned to not allow the debate in Parliament while describing it as "quite extraordinary and shocking" designed to prevent the Opposition from raising their concerns that would put the government on the spot.

She also said that Waqf (Amendment) Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha and today it is scheduled to come up in the Rajya Sabha and the bill was in effect bulldozed through.

Sonia Gandhi said that Congress party's position is clear that the "Bill is a brazen assault on the Constitution itself" and it is very much part of the BJP's deliberate strategy to keep our society in a state of "permanent polarization".

While addressing the CPP General Body meeting at the Parliament Central Hall, which is now known as Samvidhan Sadan, Sonia Gandhi, who is a Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan said, "Waqf (Amendment) Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha and today it is scheduled to come up in the Rajya Sabha."

Slamming the government, she said, "The bill was in effect bulldozed through. Our party's position is clear. The Bill is a brazen assault on the Constitution itself. It is very much part of the BJP's deliberate strategy to keep our society in a state of permanent polarization."

The former longest serving Congress chief said also highlighted that how the



"Gone are the days when the ruling party was accommodative of the Opposition, when debates and discussion used to take places in both Houses, and as MPs we looked forwarded to them."

-Sonia Gandhi

Leader of Opposition in both the Houses bare not allowed to speak.

"Gone are the days when the ruling party was accommodative of the Opposition, when debates and discussion used to take places in both Houses, and as MPs we looked forwarded to them," Sonia Gandhi said.

She highlighted that Congress have also repeatedly been raising the issue of free and fair elections and the need for Parliament to debate the functioning of the Election Commission and its opaque rules and procedures. "Some of these rules and procedures are presently under challenge in the Supreme Court. Even a short-duration discussion on this subject was also not allowed," she said. "Further, it is a matter of grave concern to our democracy that the LOP in the Lok Sabha (Rahul Gandhi) is not permitted to speak.

Oppn-Treasury benches  
spar over 'pro-Pak  
slogans after Cong win'

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The members of the treasury and opposition benches sparred in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday over allegations made by a BJP MP that pro-Pakistan slogans were raised in Karnataka to celebrate the election of a Congress leader to the Upper House of Parliament.

During a discussion on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Radha Mohan Das Agrawal alleged that such slogans were raised when the Congress member was elected to the House and the workers of the saffron party who had opposed it were sent to jail.

The allegation led to heated exchanges in the House,

with Naseer Hussain of the Congress objecting to the remarks targeted against him. The chair sought to pacify the agitating members to bring the House in order.

Congress member Pramod Tiwari cited Rajya Sabha rules to say that members should refrain from making remarks that lower the dignity of the House.

The issue saw Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stand in support of Agrawal.

Shah said no allegations were levelled at Hussain as Agrawal had said pro-Pakistan slogans were raised by others and not by him when he won the Rajya Sabha election.

"Sloganeering was done by someone else.

Lok Sabha confirms imposition  
of President's rule in Manipur

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha early Thursday adopted a Statutory Resolution confirming the imposition of President's rule in Manipur with members across party lines supporting the decision but slamming the Centre for the situation in the state. Replying to a short debate, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the government has taken all possible steps to bring back normalcy in the restive Northeastern state.

He said there has been no violence in Manipur in the last four months. He said talks were on with both Meitei and Kuki communities for a peaceful solution.

"By and large the situation is peaceful. As long as people are in camps, I would



not say the situation is satisfactory. The government is taking all possible steps to restore peace in Manipur," he said.

The home minister said the ethnic violence in Manipur had started following an order of the state's high court. "The day the order came, we sent the central forces by air. There was no delay on our part (in taking

action)," he said.

He said, so far, 260 people have died in the violence that started in May 2023 and 80 per cent of them lost their lives within the first month.

Shah said he did not want to compare the violence that had taken place during the tenure of the previous governments but wanted to tell the House about the clashes between the Naga and Kuki communities that took place in the 1990s over five years.

"Sporadic violence continued for a decade where 750 people lost their lives. There were Kuki-Paite clashes in 1997-98 when 352 people were killed. In the Meitei-Pangal clashes in the 1990s, over 100 people died. Neither the then prime minister nor the then home minister visited Manipur," he said.

## Rijju attacks Sibal for 'creating confusion'

Union Minister Kiren Rijju on Thursday attacked senior **Rajya Sabha members for for TDG NETWORK**

NEW DELHI

creating confusion and raising issues in the House but not staying back to listen to the replies of ministers concerned.

Rijju was referring to the comments made by independent MP Kapil Sibal who raised to oppose the bill.

The minister said that Sibal has created confusion on the bill by comparing properties of Waqf bodies with those of other religious bodies.

During the discussion on The Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2025, Sibal opposed the proposed legislation and said that there were also rights for non-Muslims to make Waqf.

"When it is my land then

who are you to make law for that," he said.



He mentioned the different high court judgements before independence upheld, making Waqf even by Hindus and in some cases for welfare of Muslims like giving land for graveyard (by Hindus). He noted that there are 32 Waqf boards in different states.

He mentioned that there are

over 10 lakh acres of land in Hindu (religious) institutions in four states. "In Hindu religion, the self-acquired property can be given to sons and not daughters," he said.

He asked to change the law to give rights in self-acquired property to daughters also.

He urged the government to bring law to give effect to this. He told the House that earlier there was unauthorised encroachment on Waqf property and even the government acquired the property.

"You brought the 12-year law (which provides that anybody in possession of property for 12 years or more is the owner)," he said.

Rijju intervened and objected to the wrong comparison of religious land of Hindus in four states with that of Muslims.

He also expressed dismay

over raising issues by senior members in the House who never stay back to listen to the reply on the debate by the concerned minister.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mentioned that the government appoints the officials to manage these religious bodies which manage these properties (Hindu).

Sibal said that he was making the same point that these properties are maintained by the government. "Waqf property belongs to God and cannot be sold.

It can be donated for graveyards, schools etc. Once the land is donated it cannot be taken back," he said.

Addressing Sibal, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said he has given different legal explanations to him.

Dhankhar said that self-acquired property can be given

MEA says Know India  
Programme had over 250  
participants in 2024-25

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

There were 257 participants in the Know India Programme (KIP) in 2024-25 while the number stood at 374 in the previous year, minister of state in the ministry of external affairs Kirti Vardha Singh said on Thursday. The number of participants was 235 in 2022-23

In 2024-25, 51 participants were from Mauritius, the highest among all the countries participated. There were 49 participants from Mauritius. Replying to a question this regard by Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma (in Pic), the minister



said the ministry regularly obtains feedback from all batches of participants and scrutinises them to implement the suggestions for further improving the effectiveness of this diaspora engagement scheme for strengthening ties between

Indian-origin youth and India. Ministry also factors in comments/suggestions from Indian Missions/Posts abroad for increasing the robustness and efficiency of this programme. The feedback from the KIP participants has been positive, the minister added. To a particular question on the measures taken to expand KIP's reach, particularly in countries not currently prioritized, the minister said the government has adopted a multi-pronged approach to increase awareness and outreach of the Know India Programme amongst the youth diaspora by effective utilisation of the social media and digital platforms.

3.50 lakh manuscripts  
digitised: Minister

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The National Mission for Manuscripts has digitized 3.50 lakh manuscripts so far in different repositories, Parliament was informed on Thursday.

Replying to a question in this regard by Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma,

minister of culture and tourism Ganjendra Singh Shekhawat said the Mission is preserving all types of manuscripts across the nation scribed on different materials with the help of its Manuscripts Conservation Centers.

The Mission has uploaded 1,36,490 manuscripts, out of which 77,152

manuscripts are available for public access. These manuscripts can be accessed [www.namami.gov.in](http://www.namami.gov.in).

The ministry under the aegis of Gyan Bharatam Mission is committed to expanding NMM outreach through public exhibitions or digital platform extensively, the minister added.



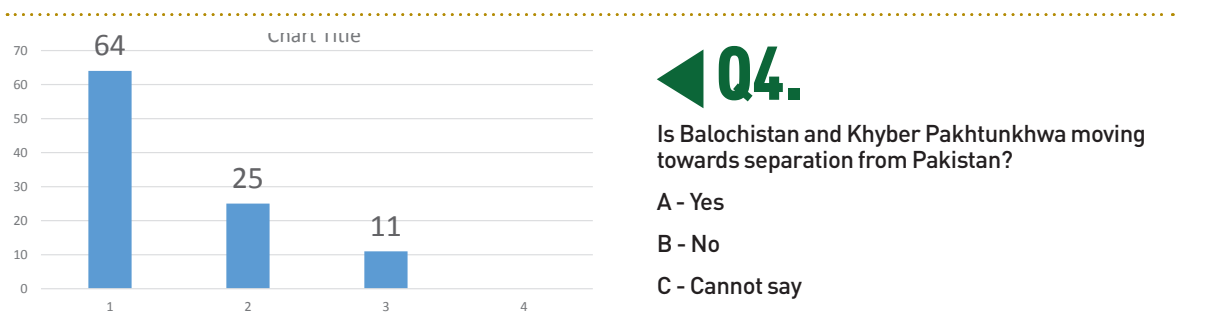
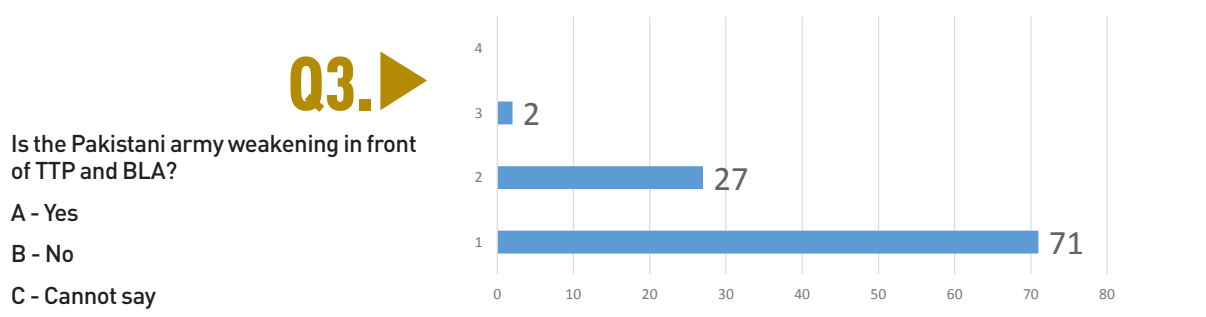
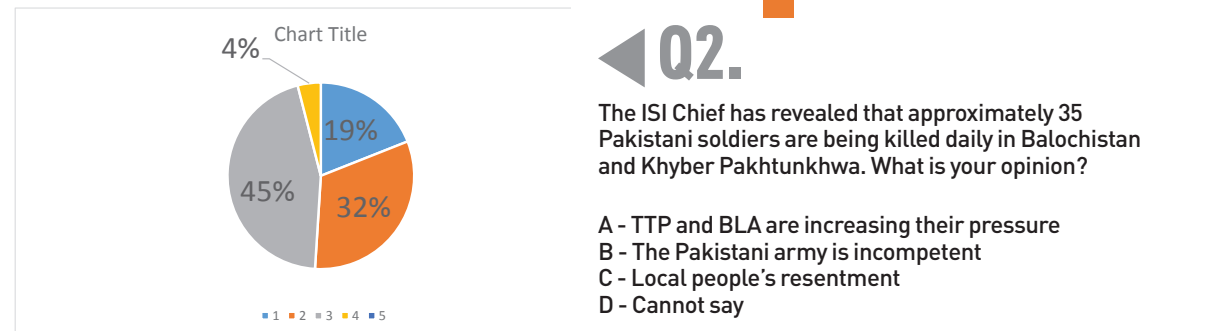
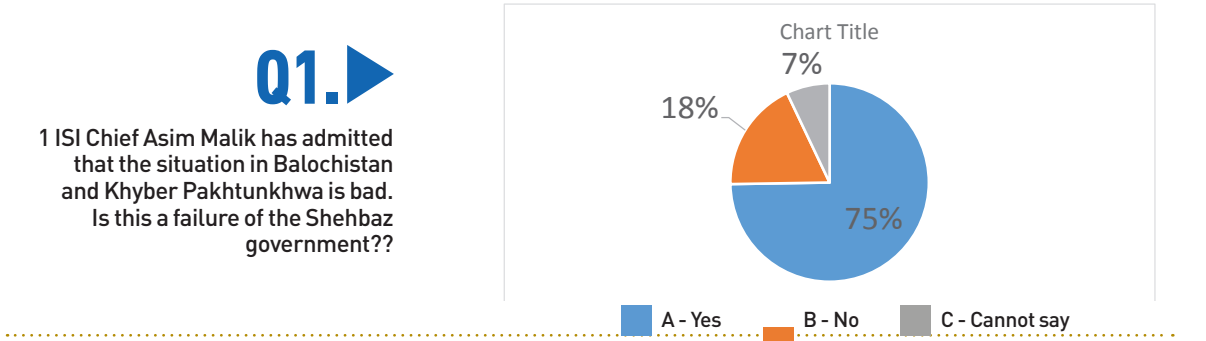
THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON PAKISTAN TALIBAN WAR

71% believe Pak army is weak against TTP and BLA

Pakistani YouTuber Moeed Pirzada revealed that ISI Chief Asim Malik recently met Pakistani expatriates in the US, acknowledging Pakistan's

deepening political crisis and escalating unrest in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Malik allegedly admitted the wors-

ening situation, with Pirzada claiming that around 35 soldiers are being killed daily in these conflict-hit regions.



India-Thailand ties

CONTINUED FROM P1

ASEAN unity and ASEAN Centrality.

“In the Indo-Pacific, we both support a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based order. We believe in the policy of vikaasvaad, not vistaarvaad (development-ism, not expansionism),” Modi said, in an apparent reference to China, which has been flexing its muscles in the strategically vital region and is also engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea (SCS) and the East China Sea (ECS). “I am grateful to the Thai government for issuing a special postage stamp based on the 18th-century ‘Ramayana’ mural paintings on the occasion of my visit,” Modi said. Modi said Prime Minister Shinawatra presented him with “The World Tipitaka: Sajjhaya Phonetic Edition”. The Tipitaka (in Pali) or Tripitaka (in Sanskrit) is a revered compilation of Lord Buddha’s teachings, consisting of 108 volumes and is regarded as the principal

Buddhist scripture. “On behalf of the Buddhist land India, I accepted it with folded hands,” he added. The centuries-old relationship between India and Thailand is tied to their deep cultural and spiritual threads, he said. The spread of Buddhism has connected our people at every level, Modi said. “There has been an exchange of scholars from Ayutthaya to Nalanda. The tale of the Ramayana is deeply woven into Thai folk life,” he said. “And, the influence of Sanskrit-Pali is still reflected in the languages and traditions today,” he said. Modi also conveyed condolences on behalf of Indians on the loss of lives caused by the earthquake on March 28. “We pray for the speedy recovery of those who were injured,” he said. Modi, who arrived here on a two-day visit to attend the 6th BIMSTEC summit, earlier received a Guard of Honour and also witnessed a mesmerising Ramakien -- Thai Ramayana performance.

‘Waqf Bill benefit crores of Muslims’

CONTINUED FROM P1

of Waqf properties, asserting that only a Muslim can become a ‘Waqif’ and said the question of the majority of members on the Central Waqf Council being non-Muslims does not arise. The minister informed the House that there were 4.9 lakh Waqf properties in 2004, which have now increased to 8.72 lakh. Seeking the opposition’s support to pass the bill, Rijju said it aims to accomplish the unfulfilled tasks of the previous governments. He also said Waqf owns the largest chunk of properties in the country, leaving aside those owned by Defence and Railways. He stressed that the entire exercise was aimed at bringing in the three pillars of transparency, accountability and efficiency. “We are not here to damage anybody’s religious affiliation,” Rijju said. Citing a previous court judgment, the minister said it makes it clear that Waqf is a statutory body and not

a representative body of Muslims. “In the amendment, we have made it clear that any person practising Islam for more than five years can dedicate properties to Waqf. There is no iota of doubt in who can create Waqf,” he said. He further said out of 22 members in the Central Waqf Council, not more than four will be non-Muslims including ex-officio members, besides three members of Parliament who can be of any religion. The Council must include two women members, he added. Rijju also accused the Congress-led UPA government of denotifying 123 prime properties on the eve of Lok Sabha polls in 2014 due to “vote bank politics”. “Just before implementation of model code of conduct ahead of 2014 general elections, on March 5, 2014, UPA govt denotified 123 prime properties and handed them over to Delhi Waqf Board. These prop-



A clash breaks out between security forces and protesters during a protest, in Bokaro on Thursday. One protestor died and several security personnel were injured. (ANI Photo)

Exports to take big hit as US slaps 27% tariff

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI

President Donald Trump slapped universal duties on all countries exporting goods to the US and additional steep levies on countries like India, potentially impacting sales of products from shrimp to steel in the world’s biggest economy. The US imposed a steep 27 per cent tariff on all goods, barring pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, energy and certain minerals not available in the United States, that are imported from India, calling the country the “worst offenders” of unfair trade practices. Export of products such as shrimp, carpet, medical devices and gold jewellery to the US will be impacted. On the other hand, exports of electronics, textiles, and pharma will get an edge over its competitor countries.

TRADE MATTERS

- Export of products such as shrimp, carpet, medical devices and gold jewellery to take big hit
- Exports of electronics, textiles, pharma will get an edge over competitors.

Exemption of energy from the tariffs would also mean that India can continue to export fuels like gasoil and gasoline to the US. The goods that were exempted from the tariffs made up for just over 25 per cent of the total exports from India to the US. The Indian government reacted cautiously, saying it is “carefully examining the implications” of the announcements and will also study opportunities that may arise due to this new

development in the US trade policy. Trump announced the imposition of additional ad valorem duties ranging from 10 per cent to 50 per cent on imports from all trading partners. The baseline duty of 10 per cent will be effective on India from April 5 and an additional 27 per cent from April 9. The 27 per cent duty would be over and above any existing levy that Indian products entering the US may currently attract. Though the move is expected to impact India’s exports of certain goods to the US, experts say that India is better-placed than its competitors, including Bangladesh (37 per cent), China (54 per cent), Vietnam (46 per cent) and Thailand (36 per cent) who face increased levies. President Trump, in a historic measure to counter higher duties on American products imposed globally,

announced reciprocal tariffs on about 60 countries. “This is Liberation Day, a long-awaited moment. April 2, 2025 will forever be remembered as the day American industry was reborn, the day America’s destiny was reclaimed, and the day that we began to make America wealthy again. We are going to make it wealthy, good, and wealthy,” Trump said in his remarks from the Rose Garden at the White House on Wednesday. He said that the tariffs imposed on India were half of what New Delhi charged the US -- 52 per cent after factoring in trade and non-trade barriers and currency adjustments. He said that the United States charges other countries only a 2.4 per cent tariff on motorcycles, but Thailand and others are charging much higher rates, like 60 per cent, India 70 per cent, Vietnam 75 per cent, and others charge even higher rates.

Mamata blames SC

CONTINUED FROM P1

and cheating and we see no reason to interfere.” Addressing a press conference in the afternoon after the Supreme Court verdict was announced, Banerjee said: “As a citizen of this country, I have every right to have an opinion. I respect the judge and the judiciary, but I can’t agree with the judgment,” she stated. She blamed the Opposition BJP and the CPIM for “orchestrating a crisis to destabilise the State’s education system”. Mamata Banerjee criticised the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold the Calcutta high court’s order canceling 25,753 appointments made through the School Service Commission (SSC) in 2016, arguing that it could destabilise the State’s education system. She accused the BJP-led Central Government of orchestrating the legal battle to destabilise Bengal’s education system. “This is the target of the

BJP Government — to collapse the education system in Bengal,” she alleged. She also targeted the CPIM MP and lawyer Bikash Bhat-tacharya for waging a legal battle against the State Government on the issue. She also emphasised a key part of the Supreme Court’s verdict that candidates who were already employees need not be asked to refund or make any payment.” Banerjee highlighted that while the appointments were nullified, those who had worked under the scheme would not be required to return their salaries. She also stressed that candidates with disabilities would still have a chance to reapply, with possible relaxations in age and other criteria. Mamata Banerjee also said that she would address a meeting of the sacked teachers on April 8. Opposition leaders called for the resignation of Mamata Banerjee.

‘Yamuna pact quenches thirst’

CONTINUED FROM P1

officials from both states has been established to expedite the process. Furthermore, once three proposed storages—Renukaji, Lakhwar, and Kishau—are constructed in the Upper Yamuna Basin, Rajasthan’s share of water at Hathikund will be extended for drinking and irrigation throughout the year, wherever feasible. The Union government is supervising this interstate collaboration, emphasizing its commitment to supporting states in tackling water scarcity. While drinking water remains a state subject, the Centre continues

to provide financial and technical assistance under JJM and other schemes. Rajasthan has assured that water supply projects are in place to eventually cover all rural households in the affected districts. According to the minister, this agreement marks a promising development for the Shekhawati region, offering a lifeline to communities long burdened by water shortages. As the DPR takes shape, residents of Jhunjhunu, Churu, and Sikar await tangible relief, with hopes pinned on the successful execution of this interstate water-sharing initiative.

HC transfers probe in Colonel assault case to C’garh Police

CONTINUED FROM P1

complaint. The public outrage over police inaction forced SSP Nanak Singh to suspend 12 policemen, but the Bath family accused him of shielding the culprits rather than ensuring justice. Col Bath’s wife, Jaswinder Kaur, moved the High Court seeking a CBI investigation, expressing disappointment with the Punjab government’s failure to order an independent inquiry. On March 31, she met Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who assured her of action, but later she termed it a hollow promise, continuing her demand for

a CBI probe. During the Thursday hearing, the High Court directed the Punjab government to consent to transferring the investigation to Chandigarh Police. The state attorney and the Bath family agreed to the decision. With this ruling, the Punjab Police SIT led by ADGP A.S. Rai stands dissolved, despite having started questioning the accused officers. Under mounting pressure from senior army officials, a new FIR was finally registered on March 21, 2025, at Patiala’s Civil Lines Police Station based

on Col Bath’s statement. The FIR named Police Inspectors Ronnie Singh, Harjinder Singh, Harry Boparai, and Shaminder Singh as accused. Despite this, Jaswinder Kaur continued her protest, insisting on a CBI investigation and holding SSP Nanak Singh responsible for failing to take strict action against the accused officers. With the High Court’s latest order, all eyes are now on the Chandigarh Police SIT to ensure a fair and transparent probe into the assault on the decorated army officer and his son.

Dallewal accuses AAP govt of betraying farmers

CONTINUED FROM P1

from a private hospital in Patiala on Thursday morning and received a warm welcome from farmers at various stops along the way. Addressing the crowd, he condemned the government’s betrayal, alleging that the administration attacked and dismantled protest sites in a shameful act of suppression. He recalled that until January 18, when thousands of young farmers guarded the protest sites day and night, no government dared to challenge them. Dallewal also raised concerns over India’s nego-

tiations with a visiting U.S. trade delegation, alleging that pressure was being exerted to remove import duties on American agricultural products. He warned that if the Indian government succumbs to this demand, it would be equivalent to issuing a death warrant for Indian farmers. Taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s claim of having a “56-inch chest,” he challenged Modi to prove his stance by resisting foreign pressure and safeguarding Indian farmers’ interests. Dallewal, convener of SKM (Non-Political), declared that the farmers’ agitation would soon be revived.

‘Waqf Bill is about justice, not politics’

CONTINUED FROM P1

that religious endowments must serve education and welfare, not vested interests,” Sharma reminded the House and pointed out that the Waqf Act of 1961 under Nehru sought accountability. “Yet, the Congress later allowed decades of corruption and encroachment to fester,” he added. Further, highlighting Dr. Rajendra Prasad’s 1952 warning that unregulated religious trusts become “dens of corruption,” and Sardar Patel’s 1948 call for government oversight of religious properties, Sharma questioned why Congress now resists similar measures. He detailed the Bill’s key reforms: inclusion of non-Muslim members in Waqf Boards and the Central Waqf Council for diverse governance, replacing the Survey Commissioner with District Collectors for efficient dispute resolution, reverting wrongly claimed government properties to the state, enabling High Court appeals against Tribunal orders, and restricting Waqf creation to those practicing Islam for over five years to curb exploitation. “This is about justice, not politics,” the MP stressed. For 70 years, Sharma argued, Congress permitted thousands of crores worth of Waqf land to be illegally occupied or sold, but now opposes the Modi government’s efforts to restore transparency. “Their corrupt ecosystem is under threat,” the MP declared, urging the House to pass the Bill and reject Congress’s divisive tactics. “This historic legislation corrects decades of neglect and ensures Waqf properties uplift the poor, not fill political pockets,” the MP noted, standing firmly in support of the Bill.



# HARYANA TO CRACK DOWN ON FRAUD BPL BENEFICIARIES

## 1,600 families removed from Below Poverty Line list

TDG NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government has taken stringent action against fraudulent beneficiaries by removing around 1,600 families from the Below Poverty Line (BPL) list. As per the officials, these families were found to have illegally obtained BPL status to avail benefits under various government schemes. Even the state government has warned that those who fail to voluntarily remove their names from the BPL category by April 20 will face legal action, including the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs).

The officials said that this decision follows a month-long verification campaign conducted between March 1 and April 1 to identify and remove ineligible beneficiaries. The issue was also



*According to official data, Haryana currently has 51,96,380 families under the BPL category.*

discussed in the recent Budget Session of the Haryana Assembly, where Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini had directed officials to take strict measures against fraudulent BPL cardholders.

According to official data, Haryana currently has 51,96,380 families under

the BPL category. To qualify for BPL status, a family's annual income must be below Rs 1.80 lakh. However, authorities have found that many families manipulated income records or split their households on paper to become eligible for benefits.

The Haryana Parivar Pehchan Authority has identified discrepancies in Family ID records, raising concerns that several families exceeding the income threshold continue to hold BPL status. State Coordinator Satish Khola has stated that those failing to update their income details will face strict action, including removal from the list and potential legal consequences.

Investigations have revealed large-scale misuse of BPL benefits across multiple districts, with the highest number of fraudulent cases found in Hisar and Sonapat. Over 1,000 families have

already been removed from the BPL category. The Food and Supply Department has also started canceling ration cards, and affected families have begun receiving official notifications.

The number of BPL families in Haryana has seen a sharp increase over the past five years. Government data shows that in 2020-21, the state had 8.67 lakh BPL families. This number surged to 32.69 lakh in 2022-23, increased further to 44.91 lakh in 2023-24, and now stands at 51.83 lakh for 2024-25. With an average family size of four, this means that more than two crore people in Haryana are classified as BPL.

To support marginalised communities, the Haryana government has introduced various financial assistance schemes. The BPL beneficiaries got several benefits including free ration.

# Senior leader quits JD(U) over Waqf Bill

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Senior JD(U) leader Mohammed Qasim Ansari has resigned from the party and all his posts on Thursday, citing disappointment over JD(U)'s stance on the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024. In a strongly worded resignation letter to party leader Nitish Kumar, Ansari expressed deep dismay, stating that the party's position had shattered the faith of millions of Indian Muslims.

"I am disheartened that I gave several years of my life to the party," his letter read. Ansari accused JD(U) of betraying its secular principles and criticised JD(U) MP Lalan Singh for the way he supported the bill in the Lok Sabha. "With due respect, I would like to state that millions of Indian Muslims like me had unwavering faith that you were a true flagbearer of secular ideology. However, that belief has

*"The stance taken by the JD(U) regarding the Waqf (Amendment) Act 2024 has deeply hurt millions of dedicated Indian Muslims and party workers like us.*

now been shattered," he wrote. "The stance taken by the JD(U) regarding the Waqf (Amendment) Act 2024 has deeply hurt millions of dedicated Indian Muslims and party workers like us. We are extremely disheartened by the way Shri Lalan Singh presented his statement in the Lok Sabha and supported this bill with such conviction." Calling the bill an attack on Indian Muslims and a violation of fundamental constitutional rights, Ansari argued that the legislation was also

anti-Pasmanda Muslims—something he claimed neither JD(U) nor its leadership acknowledged. "The Waqf Bill is against Indian Muslims. Under no circumstances can we accept it. This bill violates several fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. Through this legislation, Indian Muslims are being humiliated and disgraced. Additionally, this bill is also anti-Pasmanda Muslims—something neither you nor your party seem to realize," he wrote.

Regretting his long association with JD(U), Ansari said, "I deeply regret dedicating several years of my life to this party. I am therefore submitting this letter and resigning voluntarily from the party's primary membership and all other responsibilities." Earlier to the tabling of Bill, JD(U) aligned itself with ally BJP on the Waqf Bill, though party MP Sanjay Jha clarified that JD(U) opposed any retrospective implementation of the law.

# Rahul alleges Waqf Bill weapon aimed at marginalising Muslims

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Even as the Lok Sabha passed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024 after several hours of heated discussion, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi slammed the government saying it is a weapon aimed at marginalising Muslims and usurping their personal laws and the grand old party strongly opposes this legislation as it attacks the Right to Freedom of Religion.

He also targeted the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) saying that the attack on the Constitution by them and their allies is aimed at Muslims today but sets a precedent to target other communities



in the future.

I a post on X, Rahul Gandhi said, "The Waqf (Amendment) Bill is a weapon aimed at marginalising Muslims and usurping their personal laws and property rights."

Slamming the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, the Congress leader said, "This attack on the Constitution by the RSS,

BJP and their allies is aimed at Muslims today but sets a precedent to target other communities in the future.

"The Congress party strongly opposes this legislation as it attacks the very idea of India and violates Article 25, the Right to Freedom of Religion," he added. His remarks came after the Lok Sabha on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday passed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill after fiery discussion for several hours.

The legislation was passed with 288 votes in favour while 232 against it. Now the Bill will be brought in Rajya Sabha on Thursday for discussion and passage, where the BJP-led NDA govern-

ment looks in comfortable position with 126 members in its favour.

Even Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge slammed the government and said that BJP, which has long treated minorities as second-class citizens, "is now targeting their properties through this Bill".

In a post on X, Kharge said, "The Modi Government's Waqf (Amendment) Bill is blatantly unconstitutional, undermining the Right to Freedom of Religion and attempting to bring personal laws under state control."

He said that the BJP, which has long treated minorities as second-class citizens, is now targeting their properties through this Bill.

# Waqf Bill shows decisiveness of PM

AJIT MAINDOLA  
NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister has once again shown his strength and assertiveness by taking a significant decision in the first year of his third term. PM demonstrated his ability to take bold decisions in a coalition government, ensuring that allies were brought on board.

His leadership signalled that he would continue making tough decisions in the future. A significant highlight of this strategy was the passing of the Waqf Bill in the Lok Sabha, where Union Home Minister Amit Shah's pivotal role was evi-

dent.

Shah, known for his political acumen, called 'Chanakya', played a crucial part in the successful passage of the bill. His strategic brilliance, both in and outside Parliament, remains unmatched, leaving little room for the opposition to counter his moves. Shah's approach in managing floor strategy and maintaining a strong front has proven effective, showcasing his meticulous planning. Whether it was the removal of Article 370 in Kashmir during Modi's second term or the passing of the Waqf Bill in the third term, Amit Shah's strong stance shows he

won't tolerate unnecessary opposition when it comes to national decisions. His leadership remains a crucial strength for the government, ensuring important policies move forward smoothly.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, known for his strategic acumen, had earlier warned the opposition about the consequences of Article 370's removal, hinting that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir would eventually be reclaimed.

During the passage of the Waqf Bill in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, Shah once again made it clear to the opposition that everyone must obey the law of the land.

Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, Shah also played a crucial role in managing NDA alliances, ensuring unity despite opposition hopes of a rift.

Parties like JDU and Shiv Sena reinforced the strength of the alliance, sending a clear message that the NDA remains intact.

The passage of the Waqf Bill further strengthened the NDA, while the opposition found itself cornered. With the bill's passage, Modi achieved multiple objectives in one move.

The opposition, particularly Congress, found itself trapped in a dilemma after opposing the bill.

# Tree felling: SC says no activity till further orders

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Telangana government to explain the "compelling urgency" for clearing a large tree cover on a land parcel next to the University of Hyderabad and stayed any future activity till further orders.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih, which took suo motu cognisance of the state's tree-felling drive in Kancha Gachibowli Forest, called it a "very serious" matter.

It said the interim report placed before it by the registrar (judicial) of the Telangana High Court depicted an "alarming picture" as a huge number of trees were being felled aside from the deployment of huge machineries.

"We direct that until further orders, no activities of any sort, except the protection of the trees already existing, shall be undertaken



by the state," the bench said.

The state chief secretary was ordered to answer several of its questions, including, the "compelling urgency" in clearing the green cover for developmental activities from a purported forest area.

The top court cautioned if it found lapses on the part of the state, it would take action against the chief secretary.

"He will go to temporary prison constructed at the same spot near the lake," the bench said, "if your chief secretary wants to enjoy the state hospitality, one can't help it."

The chief secretary was directed to explain whether

the state had obtained the environmental impact assessment certificate for the development activities.

The bench asked whether for felling the trees, requisite permission from the forest authority or any other local statutes was obtained.

In case the state authorities were found in the violation of any of its directions in true letter and spirit, the onus would fall on the state's chief secretary, it added. The court enquired about the status of the felled trees. A central empowered committee was directed to visit the place in question and submit its report prior to April 16, when the matter would be heard again.

# Centre seeks report from T'gana

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav on Thursday said the Centre has sent a notice to Telangana government seeking a factual report on alleged felling of trees on the 400-acre land in Kancha Gachibowli forest area near the University of Hyderabad (UoH) campus.

Responding during Question Hour in Rajya Sabha, the minister said, "In Hyderabad, a very unfortunate incident has taken place. I fail to understand what kind of enmity the state government has with those trees and green areas that they have to conduct an operation during the dark of the night."

"The state government felled more than 400 trees. Wild species like peacock are driven out and you can see that in videos and photos," he said.

"We have sent a notice to the chief secretary and we have also sought a factual report.

# Lord Buddha's relics to travel to Thailand



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented a copy of the Tipitaka in Pali by Thailand's PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra, at the Government House in Bangkok on Thursday. (ANI Photo)

TDG NETWORK  
BANGKOK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a special announcement in Thailand on Thursday, stating that India will send relics of Lord Buddha, discovered in Gujarat's Aravalli in the 1960s, to Thailand so that devotees can pay their obeisance. He made the announcement during his speech with his Thai counterpart, PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra, in Bangkok.

Elaborating on the cultural ties between the two countries, PM Modi shared how India had sent Lord Buddha's relics to Thailand last year. He said, "Last year, holy relics of Lord Buddha were sent from India to Thailand. It is a matter of great joy that over 4 million devotees received the opportunity to have a darshan."

In 2024, the sacred relics of Lord Buddha, along with those of his disciples Arahata Sariputta and Arahata Maha Moggallana, were sent from India and displayed across four cities in Thailand from

“On behalf of the people of India, I express deep sympathies for the loss of lives in the earthquake that hit on 28th March. We pray for the speedy recovery of those who were injured.”

— PM Modi

February 22 to March 18. Typically housed in the National Museum in New Delhi, these holy relics rarely leave India for public exposition.

This occasion marked the first time in recorded history that the relics of Buddha, along with those of Sariputta and Maha Moggallana from Sanchi, were enshrined together, wrote Ambassador Nagesh Singh in an op-ed published by the Embassy of India in Thailand. On Thursday, PM Modi announced, "I am happy to announce that the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives a ceremonial Guard of Honour, in Bangkok on Thursday. Thailand PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra also present. (ANI Photo)

# 'Thailand holds special place in India's 'Act East' policy'

TDG NETWORK  
BANGKOK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reaffirmed India's commitment to ASEAN unity and the Indo-Pacific while strengthening ties with Thailand, stating that Thailand holds a "special place" in India's strategic approach towards the region, playing a key role in both India's Act East policy and the broader Indo-Pacific vision. He also emphasised that India believes in "vikkasvad, not vistarvad" "India fully supports ASEAN unity and ASEAN cen-

trality. In the Indo-Pacific, we both support a free, open, inclusive, and rule-based order. We believe in the policy of developmentism, not expansionism," PM Modi said.

Underlining Thailand's special place, the PM said, "Thailand has a special place in India's 'Act East' policy and our Indo-Pacific vision. Today, we have decided to give our relations the form of Strategic Partnerships. We also discussed establishing a 'Strategic Dialogue' between security agencies.

holy relics of Lord Buddha, which were found in Gujarat's Aravalli in 1960, will also be sent to Thailand for darshan." According to the Gujarat Tourism website, these relics were unearthed from Devni Mori, which contains the remains of a Buddhist monastery dating back to the 3rd- 4th century AD. "Excavation of the stupa

brought to light an inscribed casket which contained relics of Buddha. The inscription clearly mentions that the casket contains bodily relics of Buddha", the website states. Previously, the exposition of Buddha's holy relics from India to Thailand took place in 1995-96 to mark the 50th anniversary of King Rama IX's accession to the throne.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi poses for a picture with artists performing the Thai version of the Ramayana, Ramakien, at a hotel in Bangkok on Thursday. (ANI Photo)



# PARVESH VERMA TO LEAD 8-MEMBER PANEL FOR INFRA PROJECTS

The committee includes senior officials, bureaucrats from DDA, PWD, MCD, NHAI, and CPWD.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

An eight-member high-level committee has been formed in Delhi under the chairmanship of PWD Minister Parvesh Verma to fast-track the infrastructure projects in the national capital, sources said.

The committee also includes senior officials and bureaucrats from Delhi Development Authority (DDA), Public Works Department (PWD), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), and Central Public Works Department (CPWD), among others.

The committee will oversee roads, flyovers, and expressway projects in Delhi to ensure their timely completion. The purpose of forming this committee is to prevent delays and enable simultaneous work



Delhi Water Minister Parvesh Verma inspects the Wazirabad water treatment plant, in New Delhi. ANI

on sewers, roads, flyovers, and other infrastructure. It will also be responsible for maintaining coordination among departments and ensuring accountability.

This will also eliminate overlapping of authorities in developing works. The aim of this committee is to enhance efficiency, prevent any delays to make Delhi into a world class city, "Viksit Delhi".

On Wednesday, Parvesh Verma, who also holds Water Ministry, addressed the

public grievances over inflated water bills and water supply issues, promising corrective action and relief. Speaking to reporters, Verma targeted the former Aam Aadmi Party government over the issue, stating, "The previous government somehow did something, due to which water bills worth lakhs of rupees were sent even to houses of 25-50 yards."

He noted that the issues were being investigated and the inflated price would be

## Inflated bills will be corrected: Verma

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Water Minister Parvesh Verma on Wednesday addressed the public grievances over inflated water bills and water supply issues, promising corrective action and relief.

Speaking to reporters, Verma targeted the former Aam Aadmi Party government over the issue, stating, "The previous government somehow did something, due to which water bills worth lakhs of rupees were sent even to houses of 25-50 yards."

He noted that the issues

were being investigated and the inflated price would be corrected.

"We are getting this investigated. All the inflated bills will be corrected. If a bill is completely wrong, we will waive it too," Verma said, adding that discussions with the Delhi Chief Minister have paved the way for relief on fines, with an announcement expected soon.

"We had a good discussion with our Chief Minister about providing relief on penalties as well, and an announcement on that will be made soon."

corrected.

"We are getting this investigated. All the inflated bills will be corrected. If a bill is completely wrong, we will waive it too," Verma said,

adding that discussions with the Delhi Chief Minister have paved the way for relief on fines, with an announcement expected soon.

## Crime Branch probes student for forging SSC exam

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Crime Branch on Thursday initiated a probe against Mansi Trilok, a 27-year-old student, for allegedly submitting forged documents in the 2022 Combined Graduate Level Examination conducted by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC).

According to an FIR lodged by an SSC representative, the student had claimed that she secured 103.01373 marks in the first stage of the examination, which was above the cut-off score required for qualification. However, official records revealed that she

had actually scored 46.77876 marks, making her ineligible for the second stage.

As per the FIR, the student submitted a representation to the SSC on July 20, 2022, requesting a re-evaluation of her result. During verification, the Commission found that the mark sheet she provided was fabricated, reflecting higher scores than she had actually obtained.

A cross-check of her submitted documents against official records exposed clear discrepancies, leading the Commission to conclude that she had made false claims using forged documents.

## Only Delhi women will get lifetime card for free bus ride

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government's free bus ride scheme for women will only be available to those living in Delhi, with the transport department launching an exercise to introduce a 'lifetime' smart card for availing the benefits, officials said on Thursday.

The BJP government in Delhi will soon launch the registration process for women willing to obtain the smart card for free travel in public buses, they said.

The move comes days after Chief Minister Rekha Gupta in the Assembly alleged corruption in the existing 'pink ticket' system under the



previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

"We are committed to providing this service to women... Corruption will not be tolerated."

We will introduce digital travel cards for women, putting an end to the 'pink corruption' tied to physical tickets," Gupta said. "The card will allow women to

travel freely on public buses anytime, eliminating corruption linked to ticketing," she added, emphasising that the ticketing system will be fully digitised to enhance efficiency.

She also said that the entire system would be modernised, and the flawed existing schemes would be revamped to ensure transparency and efficiency.

"Our goal is to make Delhi's public transport more accessible, reliable and globally recognised," Gupta said during the Budget Session of the Assembly, highlighting the broader efforts to make public transports more inclusive and efficient, particularly for women.

## Chairpersons of financial committees appointed

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta has appointed the chairpersons of the three financial committees for the year 2025-26.

According to an order, Ajay Mahawar will head the Committee on Public Accounts, Gajender Drall has been named the Chairperson of the Committee on Government Undertakings, and Harish Khurana will lead the Committee on Estimates.

Meanwhile, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on 'Prevention of Air Pollution from Vehicles', presented in the Delhi Assembly on Tuesday, has highlighted major irregularities in pollution testing and enforcement measures, raising concerns over the reliability of the system.

According to the report, Pollution Checking Centres (PCCs) in Delhi have been issuing an excessive number of Pollution Under Control Certificates (PUCCs), in-



*This allows PCCs to manually select a vehicle's BS emission standard, increasing the risk of manipulation.*

cluding vehicles that failed to meet emission norms. This has raised serious doubts about the credibility of pollution tests.

Key findings of the CAG report revealed the condition of air pollution in the national capital.

Emission data not recorded in the database: Despite Supreme Court directions,

no link was established between emission data and the National Database of Vehicles--VAHAN. This allows PCCs to manually select a vehicle's BS emission standard, increasing the risk of manipulation.

However, AAP MLA and former environment minister of Delhi Gopal Rai defended the AAP's government in the national capital noting that the recent report from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on the 'Prevention of Air Pollution from Vehicles' did not include any references to "corruption."

"The CAG report on air pollution, which has been presented in the assembly, is being scrutinized by BJP leaders to find corruption, but not a single line of corruption has been found so far."

The report highlights that the AAP government was the only one that successfully curbed air pollution by implementing schemes like the Odd-Even scheme," he said.

## Assembly to install solar panel of 500 kVA capacity

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly is targeting to set up 500 kVA capacity solar panels in 100 days to save a monthly electricity bill of Rs 15 lakh, Speaker Vijender Gupta said on Thursday.

Addressing a press conference a day after the conclusion of the budget session, Gupta said that the Assembly will promote solar energy to send a message to the people to adopt it and ensure zero bills against electricity consumption.

"The Assembly needs around 600 KW of power and it has two solar plants with 100 KW capacity each. The installed solar power capacity will be increased to fulfil our energy needs fully with solar power,"

Gupta said.

The solar panels will be installed on the roof and vacant open spaces at the Assembly, he said.

He said the Assembly has also targeted to go paperless before the monsoon session under the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) project. A media desk will be set up and equipped with 25 computers, an internet connection, and printers.

Gupta said that in the 40 days of the formation of the new government in Delhi, two sessions were held and properly concluded.

The seven-day budget session was conducted for a record 27.56 hours. Gupta said that the budget tabled on March 25 was discussed for 7.13 minutes by 36 members, including those from Opposition AAP.

The only calling attention motion accepted in the session was from the Opposition, he said.

The motion was moved to discuss power cuts.

"It's, however, surprising that despite being on the Assembly premises, they did not attend the discussion on their motion. I want to ask the Opposition why (they) did not attend the discussion while lying that they were stopped from speaking on the issue of power cuts," the Speaker said.

He said the Opposition will have to answer about this in the next session. Gupta asserted that "politically motivated" disruptions by the Opposition were "sternly" dealt with as the last option during the budget session.

## Court junks Cong's defamation plea against AAP leaders

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday dismissed a criminal defamation complaint filed by Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit against former chief minister Atishi and AAP MP Sanjay Singh, underscoring their "legitimate exercise of fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression".

Additional chief judicial magistrate Paras Dalal refused to take cognisance of Dikshit's complaint and said the averments and contentions labelled defamatory by Dikshit were "not imputation" but "political aspirations and assertions". The order said



the statements of the AAP politicians urged the public to make a "wise decision of their precious vote" and couldn't be termed as imputations "worthy of scrutiny" under defamation laws. "This court fails to find that the necessary ingredients of criminal defamation are prima facie

not made out. The press conference and averments made by the respondents is nothing more than political discourse amongst rival and competing parties," it said.

The statements were observed to have done "nothing but cast political aspirations" and "assertions on the complainant" and his party Indian National Congress (INC) without the mental element to cause harm to Dikshit's reputation, the judge said.

"Since no prima facie offence has been made out from the 'complaint of facts', this court declines to take cognisance of the offence," the judge said.



Charred remains at the site after a fire broke out at a vehicle depot, at Nehru Place area in New Delhi. ANI

## 'Absolutely necessary': SC refuses to relax ban on firecrackers in Delhi-NCR

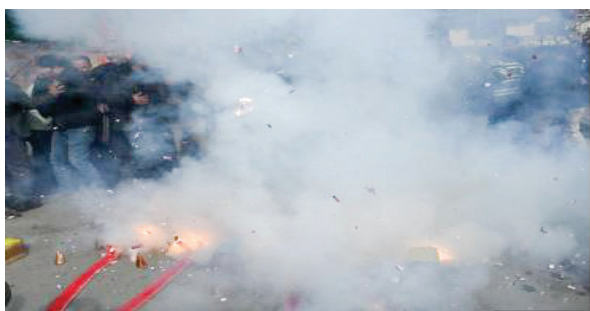
TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to relax the ban imposed on the manufacture, storage and sale on firecrackers in Delhi-NCR noting that air pollution levels remained alarming for a considerable time. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said a large section of the population worked on streets and was the worst affected by pollution. Not everybody can afford

an air purifier at their residence or place of work to fight pollution, the bench said.

"Several orders passed by this court during last six months bring on the record the horrible situation with which prevailed in Delhi due to very high levels of air pollution...Right to health is an essential part of Article 21 of the constitution so is the Right to live in a pollution free atmosphere," the court said.

Unless the court was satisfied that the pollution



due to the "so-called" green crackers was bare minimum, there was no question of reconsidering the previous orders, it added.

The bench said restricting the ban on firecrackers

in the Delhi-NCR region just around Diwali would be meaningless, as it could be purchased and stored in advance.

The top court said the orders passed from time to

time would indicate that the directions and ban on the use of firecrackers was warranted by an "extraordinary situation" created in Delhi.

Senior Advocate Aparajita Singh, who is amicus curiae in the case, informed the bench that all four NCR states had banned firecrackers, but online sale remained an issue in some states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The apex court also raised the issue of noise pollution caused by bursting of fire-

crackers.

The top court was hearing a batch of petitions filed by firecracker manufacturers seeking relaxation of ban and permission to sell green crackers.

The court said manufacturers also have to do their duty towards environment under Article 51A of the Constitution and told them to cooperate.

"We are on whether there is any study on whether any pollution is caused by green crackers. We are appealing to all of you please don't

place these applications. The ban is limited to NCR Delhi. You have the entire India open for sale of firecrackers," the bench said.

The top court had in December directed the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments to impose a complete ban on firecrackers until further orders.

The court had noted the Delhi government had enforced a complete ban on the manufacture, storage and sale, including delivery of firecrackers through online marketing round the

year with immediate effect.

"We are of the view that this ban will be effective only when other states forming part of the NCR region impose similar measures."

Even the state of Rajasthan has imposed a similar ban in that part of State of Rajasthan which falls in NCR regions. For the time being we direct the states of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to impose a similar ban which is imposed by the state of Delhi," the bench had said.



# TN CM STALIN PROTESTS WAQF BILL, CALLS IT 'ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY'

TDG NETWORK  
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, along with other DMK MLAs, wore black badges during the Assembly session on Thursday as a mark of protest against the Waqf Board Amendment Bill passed by the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. Stalin asserted that the bill, despite facing widespread opposition, was passed at 2 AM with the support of alliance parties, calling it an 'attack on Indian democracy.'

Addressing the Assembly, CM Stalin said, "On March 27, we have passed a resolution unanimously, except the BJP, in the Tamil Nadu assembly to take back the Waqf board amendment bill, which is against the integrity of the Indian nation and for minorities."

He further added, "Most political parties in India have opposed the bill. It is severely condemnable that this bill was passed in



parliament despite much opposition. 232 parliament members voted against it, and 288 members voted in favour of it. It's not a normal thing that, despite its passing, 232 is the highest number. Numbers (Against) would have increased. This amendment is not just to be opposed but should be fully taken back is our view. That's what we have passed a resolution in the assem-

bly."

"Despite the majority political parties' opposition, with the help of some alliance parties, passing the bill by early morning 2 AM is a blow against Indian Democracy and an act to disturb religious things," he said while addressing the assembly.

Stalin added, "So considering this, today we wore black badges and came to

assembly session. From DMK, we will approach the Supreme Court on this waqf amendment bill." Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi also criticised the timing and intent behind the Waqf (Amendment) Bill that was passed in the Lok Sabha, stating that the legislation was a ruse of the ruling government to divert attention from the US reciprocal tariff announcement. The Rajya

Sabha will take up the Waqf Amendment Bill for discussion around 1 pm, and eight hours have been allocated for the discussion.

On Wednesday, the Lok Sabha passed the Waqf Amendment Bill 2025 after a marathon and heated debate, during which members of the INDIA bloc fiercely opposed the legislation while the BJP and its allies strongly supported it, saying it would bring transparency and enhance the efficiency of Waqf boards.

The House sat beyond midnight to pass the legislation. Speaker Om Birla later announced the division's result: "Subject to correction, Ayes 288, Noes 232. The majority is in favour of the proposal," he said.

The government introduced the revised bill after incorporating the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, which examined the legislation introduced in August last year.

## All show, no substance: Uddhav opposes Waqf Amendment Bill

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena UBT chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday slammed the "all show, no substance" Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Union government. He said that his party opposed the bill and also the hypocrisy of the BJP and its "plans to give lands to businessmen friends".

Standing firm on his opposition to the Waqf Amendment Bill, which passed in Lok Sabha yesterday, Thackeray acknowledged that a few rectifications were "good". However, he added, the BJP was all show and no substance since they repealed Article 370 and didn't manage to get Kashmiri Pandits their lands.

"There are some corrections (for the Waqf board) in the Waqf amendment bill, which are good. However,



the experience with the BJP till now is that yanche dakhwayeche daant anikhayeche daant vegde ahe (all show, no substance) ...We supported them during the repeal of Article 370...But I want to ask, did the Kashmiri Pandits get their land? We not only opposed the bill but also the hypocrisy and corruption of the BJP and its plans to give land to its businessmen friends," Thackeray, former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, said during a press conference.

He took a dig at Union Parliamentary Affairs Min-

ister Kiren Rijiju, "Just after the Eid government brought the Waqf Amendment bill and told everyone that this would be beneficial for poor Muslims and they would get many things from it, this was said by Amit Shah and all his allies. Unexpectedly, Kiren Rijiju tabled this bill yesterday.... Thackeray said.

Earlier today, All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) member Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahali said that if the Rajya Sabha passed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, they will challenge it in court.

"If this bill is passed in Rajya Sabha, we will challenge it in court. We are confident that we will get justice and relief in this matter based on constitutional facts," Maulana Mahali told ANI.

Meanwhile, Rijiju on Thursday moved a motion for consideration of the

## Legal system must safeguard children, regardless of parental actions: Delhi HC

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court emphasised that victims of sexual assault, especially minor children, possess independent rights under the law that cannot be dismissed simply because their parents have chosen to settle disputes among themselves.

In an order passed recently, the bench of Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma highlighted that the legal system prioritises the rights of every child, ensuring that even when parents fail to support or stand by them, the judiciary has a solemn duty to amplify their voice, safeguard their rights, and deliver justice in accordance with the law.

The court was examining a POCOS case where a minor girl accused her father of sexual assault, and an FIR was filed against the mother for failing to report the in-



cident to the authorities. Meanwhile, the mother had earlier lodged a rape complaint against her husband, which was subsequently settled between them.

The Delhi High Court dismissed the father's bail plea, outright rejecting his argument that the complaint stemmed from a revengeful motive or that the mother had used her daughter to settle marital disputes or extort money. The court observed that the case highlights a deeply distressing and grave situation.

## K'taka CM Siddaramaiah meets Rahul, decides to form Welfare Board for gig workers

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday met Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi at his Delhi residence to discuss the implementation of the Gig Workers' Welfare Act, as promised during the Bharat Jodo Yatra and elections.

The meeting was also attended by Ministers Santosh Lad, Priyank Kharge, and M B Patil.

Key decisions from the meeting include decisions on the Gig Workers' Welfare Board, Funding Mechanism and Legislation.

The Karnataka government has decided to establish a Gig Workers' Welfare Board to ensure the well-being of workers employed by companies like Amazon, Flipkart, Ola, Uber, and others.

A five per cent cess will be collected from concerned companies, while the remaining required funds will be provided by the state government to support welfare



schemes for gig workers.

A comprehensive bill covering all aspects of gig workers' welfare will be prepared and presented before the state cabinet for approval.

Three gig worker representatives, Rakshitha Dev (Karnataka), Salahuddin (Hyderabad), and Nikhil Dev, were also invited to the meeting. They appreciated the government's initiative and expressed hope for better working conditions.

Rahul Gandhi, who had earlier advocated for gig workers' rights during the

Bharat Jodo Yatra, welcomed the eight-point proposal prepared by the Labour Department. He emphasized the need for swift implementation to safeguard gig workers' interests.

The Karnataka Labour Department has already introduced three key bills - covering workers' gratuity, cinema workers' rights, and now, gig workers' welfare. The unorganised workers' sector has lauded the government's efforts and extended full support for this progressive move.

## 10 NCC cadets set to scale Mt Everest as part of Indian expedition

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A team of 10 NCC cadets is set to embark on a challenging expedition to scale Mount Everest as part of a larger mission flagged off by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh from South Block in New Delhi.

The expedition also includes 25 Indian Army climbers aiming to summit Mt Everest and a joint team of the Indian and Nepali

tus/1907710811348287649 Mount Kanchenjunga, at 8,586 meters, is the third highest mountain in the world.

According to a statement released by the Ministry of Defence, the joint Indo-Nepal expedition, which aims to scale Mount Kangchenjunga, will feature 12 mountaineers from the Indian Army and six from the Nepali Army. It will be led by Colonel Sarfaraz Singh of the Indian Army.

The Defence Minister also interacted with the mountaineers, and commended their courage, dedication & determination. He exuded confidence that these expeditions would inspire the youth, and underscore India's leadership in high-altitude mountaineering.

"The expeditions are designed to showcase the exceptional skills, resilience, and indomitable spirit of the Armed Forces while setting new benchmarks in the field



Army set to conquer Mt Kangchenjunga.

"Flagged-off expeditions to Mt Everest & Mt Kangchenjunga from South Block in New Delhi. 25 Indian Army climbers aim to summit Mt Everest and a Joint team of Indian Army & Nepali Army is set to scale Mt. Kangchenjunga. Also, 10 NCC cadets aim to scale Mt Everest. I wish every-one success in their mission and future endeavours," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh wrote on X. <https://x.com/rajnathsingh/sta->

The Indian Army's Mount Everest expedition, comprising 34 climbers, will follow the traditional South Col Route and will be led by Lieutenant Colonel Manoj Joshi. Additionally, a joint NCC expedition to Mount Everest will be led by Colonel Amit Bisht. The team consists of five girl cadets, five boy cadets, four officers and 11 permanent instructors staff. Scheduled to commence this month, the teams aim to reach their respective summits by May 2025.

of high-altitude mountaineering. These are expected to inspire future generations to pursue their dreams with courage, determination, and the spirit of excellence," a MoD statement said.

The event, organised by the Indian Army, was attended by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, Nepal's Ambassador to India Dr Shankar P Sharma, a delegation from Nepal, and other senior civil & military officials.

## 1K anganwadis to come up for better infra

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Around 1,000 Anganwadi centres will be co-located to Delhi government schools within the next three months to improve facilities and infrastructure, an official from the Women and Child Development Department said.

The co-located Anganwadis will be designated as Saksham Anganwadis under Poshan 2.0, an Integrated Nutrition Support Programme.

"This initiative aims to provide better infrastructure and facilities for chil-



dren. Adequate healthcare, nutrition, security, safety, responsive caregiving, and opportunities for early learning are essential for children to achieve their full potential," the official told PTI.

He said these 1,000 Anganwadi centres will be re-located to Delhi government schools, MCD schools, and schools run under the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) within the next three months. "A Mem-

*"A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed with the Asian Development Bank, which will provide financial aid for infrastructural development," he added.*

orandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed with the Asian Development Bank, which will provide financial aid for infrastructural development," he added. "Currently, we have identified 153 MCD schools for relocation and the process of identifying more schools is ongoing," the official said. He explained that developing proper infra-

structure in rented spaces had been a challenge, but after shifting Anganwadis to schools, it will be easier to introduce improvements and develop various facilities for children. "We are identifying schools that are located close to the existing Anganwadi centres so that the transition will be easier for both children and staff," he said.

## SC judges to make declaration of assets public

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a bid to ensure transparency, Supreme Court judges have agreed to make declaration of their assets public on assuming office.

In a full court meeting, the top court judges decided to disclose their assets and the data will be uploaded on the SC website.

Placing the declaration of assets on the Supreme Court website will be on a voluntary basis, the apex court website said.

Thirty judges, including Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, have submitted their declarations of assets.

"The full court of the Supreme Court had resolved that judges should make a declaration of their assets on assuming office, and whenever any acquisition of a substantial nature is made, to the Chief Justice.

"This also includes declaration(s) by the Chief Justice of India. Placing the declaration of assets on the Supreme Court website

will be on a voluntary basis," the SC website said.

The resolution is likely to push high courts to also follow the apex court.

The move comes days after the Law Ministry in the Parliament answered questions on assets owned by judges. The ministry had said that the declaration of assets is completely on a voluntary basis in line with the Supreme Court Constitution bench judgments. However, the government had clarified that no record of the assets of



judges was maintained by the Centre.

A full court resolution

was passed by the Supreme Court in 1997, as per which, the Supreme Court

judges were mandated to disclose their assets to the Chief Justice of India.

On August 26, 2009, the Supreme Court passed another resolution in a full court meeting that the judges would voluntarily declare assets, which would be made public.

Under the disclosure of assets, judges need to disclose their assets and liabilities along with that of their families too.

However, from 2018 onwards, the voluntary declarations of assets stopped

and declarations made by former judges were also removed from the website. At present, there is a list of 30 judges posted in the section related to judges' assets on the website. It says these judges have declared their assets to the CJI.

According to official data, 49 of 763 High Court judges across India publicly declared assets. 29 of the 53 Punjab and Haryana High Court judges have declared their assets, followed by Delhi High Court, where

seven of the 39 sitting judges have declared their assets.

In Madras High Court, five of the 65 sitting judges have declared their assets, followed by three of the 44 judges of the Kerala High Court, three of 12 sitting judges of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, one of 50 sitting judges of the Karnataka High Court and one of 16 sitting judges of the Chhattisgarh High Court. Judges from 18 high courts have not declared their assets.



# INDIAN SHARES ENDURE US TARIFF JOLT; RELATIVELY LOWER DUTIES LIMIT LOSSES

Indian markets saw losses, but not as severe as global markets, amid US recession fears and escalating tariffs.

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Indian stocks end lower post Donald Trump's tariff announcement, but avoid bloodbath seen in global markets Indian stocks retreated on Thursday with the benchmark BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty 50 index declining around 0.4 per cent after US President Donald Trump announced reciprocal tariffs of varying degrees on multiple countries.

Sensex closed 322 points lower at 76,295.36 and the Nifty 50 closed at 23,250.10, down 82 points.

However, the losses on the Indian bourses were a far cry from the bloodbath that was seen in many global markets, amid growing concerns of a US recession and worries that the tariffs would escalate a trade war and disrupt the global economy.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index plunged 2.8 per cent, Hang Seng index in Hong Kong



tumbled 1.5 per cent, the FTSE in London was down 1.2 per cent and the German Dax CAC40 in Paris fell over 2 per cent. Acting on his reciprocal tariff threat, Donald Trump, on Wednesday, announced sweeping tariffs on imports from countries from Asia to Europe and Africa. India has been slapped with tariffs of 26 per cent. A baseline 10 per cent tariff would come into effect on Saturday with the higher reciprocal tariff effective April 9.

The tariffs slapped on In-

dia are more than two and a half times of the existing average tariff differential. However, several Asian peers, who are also big exporters, have been slapped with much higher tariffs. For instance, China has been hit with a 34 per cent tariff, on top of 20 per cent tariffs announced earlier. Vietnam has been hit with 46 per cent tariff. Bangladesh, a major garment exporter, has been levied 37 per cent tariff.

So, in comparison, India finds itself in a relatively

### Slumping dollar supports rupee

MUMBAI: The rupee closed modestly stronger on Thursday, aided by a broadly weaker dollar and inflows as markets grappled with the impact of sweeping U.S. reciprocal tariffs and their impact on global trade and growth dynamics.

India is facing a relatively softer levy of 27% than regional peers such as China, Vietnam and Thailand, which also was a sentimental positive for the currency.

The local unit closed at 85.43 against the U.S. dollar, compared to the close of 85.4975 in the previous session. It had declined to a low of 86.75 in early trading, but broad-based interbank offers, including those spurred by likely custodial inflows, helped it trim losses, an FX trader at a bank said.

Additionally, a more than 1% plunge in the dollar index - the greenback's safe-haven appeal dulling due to concerns about how trade policy may impact U.S. growth - helped out the rupee.

advantageous position and that's why investors appear to have been relieved." The US reciprocal tariff of 26 per cent on India is higher than expected, but this tariff is relatively lower compared to that levied on countries like China, Vietnam, Thailand,

Indonesia and Bangladesh, which compete with India for the export share; thus improving India's potential export competitiveness," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

## US retaliatory tariffs major setback for Indian gems, jewellery exports: Industry

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

The US retaliatory tariffs are a major setback for the Indian gems and jewellery exports, apex industry body GJEPC said on Thursday as it urged the government to take steps to secure the long-term interest of the sector.

The US has announced 27 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India saying New Delhi imposes high import duties on American goods, as the Donald Trump administration aims to reduce US' trade deficit and boost manufacturing.

The Trump administration's announcement of a 27 per cent reciprocal tariff on India would be a significant burden on Indian exporters and American consumers alike, the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said in a statement.

"In the long-term, we foresee a reshaping of global supply chains. In the short-run, we anticipate challenges in sustaining India's current export volume of USD 10 billion to the US market.

"We urge the government of India to progress the Bilateral Trade Agreement



between India and the US, as it would be crucial in navigating the tariff issues and securing long term interest of the sector," GJEPC added. The US imports USD 11.58 billion gems and jewellery from India and exports USD 5.31 billion to the latter. The total bilateral trade between the US and India in the gems and jewellery sector is USD 16.89 billion.

Bilateral trade between India and the US includes natural and lab grown polished diamonds, gold and platinum jewellery, silver jewellery, imitation jewellery, rough diamonds, rough LGD, rough coloured gemstones, gold bar, silver bar and platinum bar, coloured gemstones.

Kama Jewelry MD Colin

Shah said, it's a big setback for India as the US has announced retaliatory tariffs.

"While in the broader sense, it will be 27 per cent, the Gems and jewellery sector will be the most affected as import tariffs may be up to 20 per cent from the current '0' per cent on loose diamonds and 5.5-7 per cent on gold jewellery," Shah said.

Shah further noted that the US is one of India's largest jewellery export markets, accounting for almost 30 per cent of the share. Indian jewellery exports to the US are over USD 11 billion per year.

Experts said the retaliatory tariffs will significantly impact India's diamond and jewellery sector -- a cornerstone of its exports to the US, said the Council.

## Centre allows Assam tea estates to avail support under oil palm mission

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The central government has allowed tea estates in Assam to benefit from the flagship oil palm mission, weeks after an industry body in the region made representations.

Based in Assam, the North Eastern Tea Association (NETA), in its letter dated February 4, 2025, appealed to the central and state governments to extend the oil palm mission scheme to the state's tea estates.

Consequently, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare sent a letter to the Director of Agriculture Assam dated April 1, 2025, stating that it has agreed to extend the scheme



for cultivating oil palm trees in 5 percent of tea gardens in the northeastern state.

"Since, the support under NMEO-OP is per hectare for cultivation of oil palm, in case of utilizing up to 5 per cent tea estate land, the same support can be extended to the landowner/estate for every 143 Oil Palm trees (the expected number

per hectare) Government of Assam should proceed with this, using the number of trees expected in one hectare as unit for assistance," the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare letter to the Assam government read.

The assistance under oil palm mission -- National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil

Palm (NMEO-OP) -- includes planting material, management upto gestation period (4 years), inputs for intercropping, land clearance, bio fencing, drip irrigation, bore well/pump set/water harvesting structure/vermi compost unit, harvesting tools. Additionally, there is also a special package for the northeastern states.

The central government issued operational guidelines for the palm oil mission in April 2022 for availing assistance, which will end in 2025-26. According to NETA, tea estates of Assam could not avail the scheme because of land classification and certain other conditions in the guidelines.

## RBI not to conduct 14-day repo for upcoming fortnight

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI=

India's central bank has decided not to conduct a 14-day variable rate repo auction for the fortnight ending April 17, following a review of liquidity conditions, it said, opens new tab on Thursday.

The Reserve Bank of India infuses liquidity in the banking system using repos and sucks it out using reverse repos.

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India's banking system liquidity surplus is set to widen to five-month high to around 2.5 trillion rupees in coming days amid government spending and the RBI's bond purchase, traders told Reuters earlier in the day.

Banking system liquidity moved into surplus on March 29, after being in deficit since mid-December. The surplus stood at 1.42 trillion rupees, as on April 1.



### RBI maintains FPI investment caps in govt securities, corp bonds

MUMBAI: India's central bank on Thursday kept the investment limits unchanged for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in government and corporate bonds for the fiscal year 2025-26.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) maintained the existing caps of 6% for government securities, 2% for state government securities and 15% for corporate bonds for the current year starting April 1, the central bank said in a press release.

The general limit for foreign investment in government bonds would continue to be 2.79 trillion rupees (\$32.71 billion) for April-September and 2.89 trillion rupees for October-March, the central bank said.

Foreign investments in corporate bonds would be permitted up to 8.22 trillion rupees for April-September and 8.80 trillion rupees for October-March, RBI added.

## Nepal Pavilion inaugurated at Startup Mahakumbh, showcasing 19 new startups

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a significant step towards fostering cross-border innovation and entrepreneurship, the Nepal Pavilion was officially inaugurated at Startup Mahakumbh, India's largest startup event in Bharat Mandapam. The pavilion, established with the support of India's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), showcases the growing collaboration between Nepal and India in the startup ecosystem.

The pavilion was jointly inaugurated by Additional Secretary (North) Anurag Srivastava and Nepal's Ambassador to India Dr. Shankar Sharma. In a post on X, the Embassy of India in Kathmandu said, the Nepal Pavilion at the event features 19 startups from diverse industries, including space technol-



ogy, information technology, artificial intelligence, climate tech, edtech, and agro-processing, offering them a platform to showcase their innovations to a global audience. To encourage young innovators, 10 startup founders from Nepal have received special support from the Embassy of India in Nepal

to participate in the event. This initiative underscores India's commitment to fostering entrepreneurial ties with its neighboring countries. The three-day event is proving to be a crucial opportunity for Nepalese startups to interact with investors, industry leaders, and policymakers from India and beyond.

## No fee to be charged for updating nominees for PPF accounts

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Union Government on Thursday announced that the financial or banking institutions will not charge any fee for updating nominees for Public Provident Fund or PPF accounts.

In an official notification, the Ministry of Finance added that necessary changes have now been made in the Government Savings Promotion General Rules 2018 via Gazette Notification 02/4/25, which will mandate the banking institutions to make changes without any charge.

As widely reported, the financial institutions were charging extra fees for adding nominees.

The rule comes as the Banking Amendment Bill 2025, passed recently, allows the nomination of up to four persons for the payment of depositors' money, articles kept in safe custody and safety lockers.

The order is effective from April 2, as per the official notification.

The notification reads, "In the Government Savings Promotion General Rules 2018, in the Schedule II, under Fee to be charged for services, the word and figures "(b) Cancellation or charge of nomination - Rs 50" shall be deleted."

In a post on microblogging site X (formerly Twitter), Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "Recently I was informed that a fee was being levied by financial institutions for updating/modifying nominee details in PPF accounts."

The post added, "Necessary changes are now made in the Government Savings Promotion General Rules 2018 via Gazette Notification 02/4/25 to remove any charges on the updation of nominees for PPF accounts." PPF is a long-term investment scheme in India, offering tax benefits and guaranteed returns, with a minimum investment of Rs 500 and a maximum of Rs 1.5 lakh annually.

## Clearcals partners with Garmin India to enhance health and fitness tracking

TDG NETWORK  
HYDERABAD

With a growing emphasis on health, fitness, and personalized wellness, the use of supportive devices has become a priority. In response to this, a strategic partnership has been announced between Clearcals, a digital health startup, and Garmin India, along with AMIT GPS & Navigation LLP. This collaboration is intended to provide advanced health and fitness tracking for Hint, Clearcals' nutrition app users by integrating Garmin's wearable technology with Hint's nutrition intelligence.

People with busy schedules often find it challenging to maintain proper nutrition and fitness. Launched in 2021, Clearcals' Hint is a highly rated calorie counter app in India that offers dietitian consultations and personalized diet plans for weight loss, muscle gain, and managing health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, PCOD, and hypothyroidism. The app tracks calorie burn from workouts without requiring a wearable device and offers -- Hint Pro for self-management and Hint Premium for expert dietitian support. Users can also monitor their intake of essential vitamins and minerals, comparing it to the latest RDA recommendations by NIN-ICMR.

To enhance accessibility to fitness and wellness, Garmin's advanced wearables integrate with Hint's nutrition intelligence, allowing users

### STARTUP CORNER



to track workouts and monitor key health metrics. Garmin watches, known for their accuracy, provide real-time data on heart rate, heart rate variability (HRV), stress levels, and VO2 max. Their performance-driven design, extended battery life, and comprehensive health monitoring features make them a valuable tool for fitness management.

Dr. Krishna Athmakuri, Co-Founder and CEO of Clearcals, says, "Our partnership with Garmin and AMIT GPS & Navigation LLP is an

important step in bringing advanced technology and expert-backed nutrition support to Indian consumers. The Garmin x Hint integration will be rolled out in phases. In the first phase, users can sync their Garmin watches with the Hint app to track workouts and calorie expenditure. In the second phase, key Garmin metrics like sleep data, HRV, body battery, VO2 max, and stress levels will be integrated into the Hint Expert app, allowing dietitians to provide more personalized health insights and recommendations."

As part of this collaboration, customers who purchase a Garmin watch from the Clearcals Store will receive a complimentary one-month Hint Premium subscription. This subscription, valued at Rs. 1999, provides unlimited dietitian consultations, personalized diet and workout plans, and advanced calorie and nutrition tracking. The offer is available on select Garmin watches through the Clearcals Store.

About Clearcals Clearcals, a digital health startup based in Hyderabad, is focused on improving nutrition and fitness tracking for Indian users. The Hint app was developed to offer calorie tracking, dietitian consultations, and personalized meal plans to support health goals. In addition, an advanced web application called Hint Expert was developed and launched in 2023 to assist Indian clinical dietitians.



# MODI’S EDUCATIONAL REFORMS AND THE COLONIAL REMNANTS IN THE RECENT CRITIQUE OF NEP

## OPINION

RAGHAVENDRA P. TIWARI

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, in fact delves into the broader vision than thought by some and underpins transformative reforms. While some argue that the policy undermines federalism, public education, and secularism, a closer examination reveals that NEP 2020 is a strategic initiative aimed at revitalizing India’s educational landscape by restoring to its rich intellectual heritage, aligning with global best practices, and fostering self-sustaining institutions. Historically, India had a comprehensive knowledge system that ensured the effective transfer of a holistic episteme from generation to generation. A smooth transition of this tradition to the modern day needs was hampered by successive colonial interferences and colonial remnants even after Independence. This led to several glaring gaps in the modern education systems. Recognizing the urgent need to bridge these gaps, the Modi government introduced several groundbreaking reforms aimed at enhancing the quality, accessibility, flexibility and skill orientation of education across India.

India’s intellectual traditions that were systematically sidelined under colonial rule. However, its opposition comes from intellectual class, long conditioned by Western academic frameworks, who view any effort to decolonize education as a threat to their ideological stronghold. This critique is not just about policy—it is a deeper battle for India’s intellectual sovereignty.

**A BREAK FROM MACAULAY’S CHAINS**

Since the infamous Macaulay education system was imposed in 1835, India’s vast indigenous knowledge traditions—spanning mathematics, yoga, philosophy, metallurgy and linguistics—were deliberately erased in the favor of an English-centric curriculum. NEP 2020 is India’s first major attempt at reversing this historical injustice. The policy introduces a balanced curriculum that integrates modern scientific advancements with the intellectual wealth of India’s past. From the foundational contributions of Aryabhata in astronomy to Charaka’s advances in Ayurveda, the revised curriculum aims to instill pride in India’s knowledge systems while ensuring global competitiveness.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, a visionary educationist and founder of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), strongly advocated for an Indian knowledge system that counters Western dominance. His vision



was rooted in the belief that India’s education should be an amalgamation of modern scientific advancements and the deep-rooted wisdom of ancient texts. NEP 2020 embodies this vision by integrating subjects like Sanskrit, Indian philosophy, and traditional sciences into mainstream education.

However, critics dismiss this initiative as an attempt to “communalize” education. This amounts to their inability to distinguish between nationalism and sectarianism. If China can reintroduce Confucian thought, France can fiercely protect its linguistic and cultural heritage, and Japan can incorporate Bushido ethics in education, why should India’s efforts be labeled as regressive?

Some argue that NEP 2020 isolates India from global education trends, a claim that does not hold up to scrutiny. The policy promotes a multidisciplinary, skill-based,

and technology-integrated education model that mirrors the best global practices. The emphasis on critical thinking, vocational education, and flexibility aligns with education systems in countries like Finland and Singapore. The restructuring of board examinations and introduction of credit-based learning make Indian higher education compatible with international institutions.

Yet, despite these clear global alignments, a few people remain opposed to NEP. The reason? The policy disrupts their monopoly over the academic discourse, which has remained tethered to colonial and Western paradigms.

Another misplaced critique is that NEP promotes “commercialization” by encouraging a mix of public and private investment. However, financial sustainability is key to creating world-class institutions. Universities such as Oxford, Harvard, and MIT

thrive on a hybrid funding model, where government support is complemented by private investments. India’s Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) follows this tested model to ensure financial independence while maintaining academic excellence.

The real concern for detractors is that such reforms reduce dependency on the old networks of patronage that have long controlled Indian academia. For decades, public institutions suffered outdated curricula. NEP 2020 aims to change that by encouraging institutions to innovate, generate revenue, and compete at a global level. It is not privatization—it is empowerment.

A major concern raised by critics is that NEP weakens state control over education. However, this claim overlooks the significant support provided to state education systems through initiatives

like PM SHRI Schools and SSA. These initiatives are designed to enhance school infrastructure, promote innovation, and increase institutional capacity.

PM SHRI Schools aim to create model institutions that embody NEP principles, fostering experiential learning, holistic education, and skill development. Meanwhile, SSA provides states with the financial and technical support necessary to implement quality education reforms. By ensuring accountability and innovation at the grassroots level, these initiatives reinforce, rather than weaken, state education systems.

At its core, the opposition to NEP 2020 is not just about policy disagreements but about an existential crisis within India’s old intellectual elite. This class, deeply influenced by Western scholars, remains uncomfortable with the idea of an India-first education system. For years,

they have dictated academic discourse, dismissing Indian traditions as “mythology” while glorifying Western theories.

A nationalist government committed to reclaiming India’s intellectual identity is naturally seen as a disruptor to their comfortable order. The reintroduction of ancient texts, the emphasis on Sanskrit and regional languages, and the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems challenge their long-held assumptions. Their opposition is not rooted in academic rigor but in ideological resistance to the rise of an independent, self-confident India.

Criticism of NEP 2020 as “commercialization” ignores the necessity of financial sustainability for world-class education. Leading global universities rely on hybrid funding models, and India’s HEFA and ANRF follow this best practice to ensure financial independence without compromising academic integrity.

Opposition largely stems from the disruption of entrenched patronage networks that have long controlled public institutions. NEP 2020 fosters innovation, autonomy, and results-driven funding, freeing institutions from bureaucratic stagnation.

Fears of profiteering are misplaced, as a well-regulated framework with performance-linked funding and transparency ensures accountability. Globally, even public universities generate independent revenue—India’s institutions should not be denied the same opportunity.

Rejecting reforms in the name of “commercialization” risks keeping Indian education stagnant. The

real issue is not private investment but institutional freedom to thrive without bureaucratic constraints—NEP 2020 paves the way for this transformation.

NEP 2020 is not about returning to the past; it is about using India’s intellectual traditions as a springboard for future global leadership. A truly world-class education system does not discard its own roots; it integrates them into a modern framework. The policy is a step towards achieving this balance—ensuring that an Indian student excels in artificial intelligence and quantum computing while also understanding the philosophical depths of the Upanishads and the scientific rigor of Sushruta’s surgical techniques.

Those criticizing NEP 2020 are not protecting education; they are protecting an outdated colonial mindset. If India is to reclaim its rightful place as a Vishwaguru, it must embrace its knowledge traditions with the same confidence that Western nations exhibit in preserving their own. The time for India’s intellectual renaissance has arrived, and no ideological resistance should stand in its way. Aano bhadra krtavo yantu vishwatah — “Let noble thoughts come to me from all directions.” (Rig Veda 1.89.1) This timeless Vedic mantra encapsulates the essence of NEP 2020—a vision not of isolation, but of embracing the wisdom of all civilizations while standing firmly rooted in India’s intellectual legacy, for the welfare of the humanity (Vishw Kalyan).

Raghavendra P. Tiwari  
Vice Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda

# The unwavering voice: Freedom of speech, satire, and the Shifting Sands of Sedition

## BOOK REVIEW

DEEVANSHU SHRIVASTAVA

In the vibrant tapestry of a democracy, the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression serves as the very thread that holds it together. It is the cornerstone upon which dissent is built, ideas are exchanged, and governments are held accountable. Recent events, particularly the ongoing discourse surrounding stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra’s work, once again bring this crucial right into sharp focus, prompting a necessary introspection about its boundaries and the prevailing climate of tolerance. The controversy surrounding Mr. Kamra’s comedic acts, often critical of political figures and government policies, has sparked heated debates. While some view his brand of humour as essential satire, others perceive it as crossing a line, leading to calls for censorship or even legal

action. This situation inevitably draws a parallel to the era of the legendary cartoonist R.K. Laxman. For decades, Laxman’s iconic “Common Man” fearlessly skewered politicians across the spectrum, his sharp wit and insightful observations becoming a mirror reflecting the nation’s socio-political realities. His cartoons were not always flattering, yet they were largely accepted as a vital part of public discourse, often prompting reflection rather than outright condemnation.

The contrast between the reception of Laxman’s pointed critiques and the backlash faced by contemporary satirists like Mr. Kamra raises a crucial question: have our levels of tolerance for dissenting voices diminished? Or perhaps, is there a growing bias based on who the criticism is directed towards? The angle of per-

sonal bias undoubtedly plays a significant role in how we perceive and react to criticism. When a comedian or a cartoonist targets a leader or a party we support, our immediate reaction might be one of offense or defensiveness. Conversely, when the target is someone we oppose, we might be more inclined to see the humour or the validity of the critique. This inherent human tendency towards bias can cloud our judgment and make it difficult to objectively assess the merit of the speech itself. A particularly concerning aspect of the current climate is the perceived difference in reaction when criticism is directed at the government versus when it targets leaders in the opposition. In a healthy democracy, the ruling dispensation, wielding the power of the state, must be particularly open to scrutiny and dissent. Curbing voices that question the government’s policies and actions can stifle accountability and lead to an environment where alternative perspectives are suppressed. While criticism against opposition leaders is also part of the democratic process, the



potential ramifications of silencing voices critical of the government are arguably more profound, as it directly impacts the checks and balances essential for preventing authoritarian tendencies.

The line between legitimate criticism and defamation or incitement to violence is undoubtedly a delicate one. However, this line must be drawn carefully and objectively, based on established legal principles, and not on the subjective sensitivities of those in power or their supporters. The fear of facing legal action or social ostracism for expressing critical views can have

a chilling effect on free speech, leading to self-censorship and a less informed public discourse.

As a nation deeply committed to democratic values, we must strive to cultivate a culture of greater tolerance for diverse viewpoints, even those that make us uncomfortable. The ability to laugh at ourselves, including our leaders and our policies, is a sign of a mature and confident society. While disagreement and debate are inherent to a democracy, the suppression of dissenting voices, regardless of who they target, ultimately weakens the very founda-

tion upon which our freedoms are built. Upholding the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression, in its truest sense, requires us to be vigilant against any attempts to stifle legitimate criticism and to foster an environment where all voices, even those that challenge the status quo, can be heard without fear. This controversy inevitably draws parallels to the iconic work of R.K. Laxman, whose cartoons, published over decades, fearlessly lampooned politicians and societal foibles. Laxman’s “Common Man,” a silent observer of the political circus,

became a symbol of the ordinary citizen’s voice, a voice that often spoke truth to power through biting wit and visual commentary. While Laxman’s work was undoubtedly critical, it was also imbued with a sense of gentle irony, a quality that perhaps mitigated the sting of his satire.

The Indian Constitution, through Article 19(1) (a), guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression, a cornerstone of our democratic fabric. However, this right is not absolute and is subject to reasonable restrictions, including those related to public order, decency,

and morality. The challenge lies in defining these restrictions in a manner that safeguards both individual liberty and societal harmony. Moreover, the discourse surrounding such cases must move beyond partisan rhetoric and engage with the nuanced realities of artistic expression. We must foster a culture of tolerance, where differing opinions are respected, and where satire is recognized as a legitimate, albeit sometimes provocative, form of social commentary.

The Kunal Kamra dispute, like many before it, serves as a stark reminder that the freedom of speech is not a static concept. It is a dynamic and evolving right, constantly tested and redefined by the changing tides of society. As we navigate this complex terrain, we must remember that the true strength of a democracy lies not in suppressing dissent but in fostering a robust and open exchange of ideas, even those that make us uncomfortable.

Prof. (Dr.) Deevanshu Shrivastava, Professor of Law, GL Bajaj Group of Institutions, Greater Noida.



# TRUMP'S RECIPROCAL TARIFFS: IMPACT ON INDIA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

*Trump's reciprocal tariffs aim to reduce the U.S. trade deficit, impacting global trade, especially for countries like India, potentially slowing growth and raising inflation.*

On April 2, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump, as part of his administration's "America First" agenda, made a dramatic move by announcing a new round of tariffs on all major U.S. trading partners. This announcement marked what the president dubbed as "Liberation Day," signifying a fresh wave of protectionism that could reshape global trade. Trump's decision was based on the notion of balancing the scales of trade, particularly in light of the substantial U.S. trade deficit, which stands at approximately \$1.2 trillion. To put this in perspective, the U.S. imports more goods than it exports by a massive \$1.2 trillion, and Trump viewed this imbalance as a critical issue requiring drastic measures. He opted for reciprocal tariffs—charging trading partners equivalent tariffs to those that the U.S. faces when exporting goods to them.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

This article examines the reciprocal tariffs announced by Trump, their impact on India, and how they could affect the broader global economy.

## WHAT WERE THE TARIFFS?

In his speech, Trump unveiled two sets of tariffs. The first was a base tariff of 10% applied universally to all countries. This is a significant increase from the previous tariff rates, which hovered around 2.5%. This base tariff was set to go into effect on April 5, 2025, and was designed to address the trade deficit. The second set of tariffs was country-specific, designed based on the disparity between U.S. tariffs on imports and the tariffs that other countries impose on U.S. goods. These "reciprocal tariffs" were calculated by taking the difference between what the U.S. imposes on imports and what other countries levy on U.S. products, then halving that difference.

Trump's reasoning for these tariffs was straightforward—he believes that the U.S. is treated unfairly in global trade. As a sign of his "generosity," the tariffs

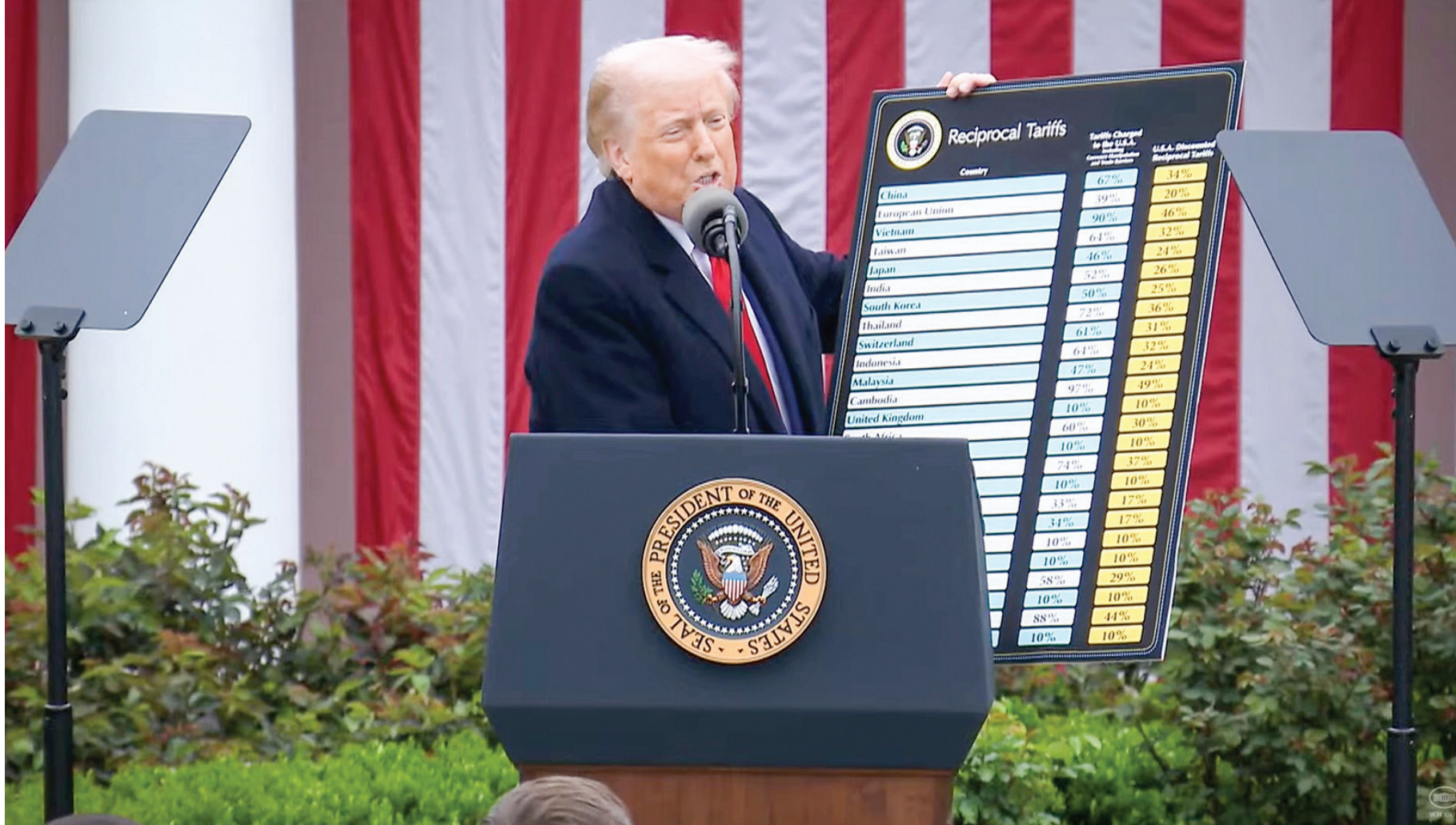
imposed were only half of what he believed countries were imposing on U.S. exports. These country-specific tariffs were set to come into effect on April 9, 2025. Countries like China, the European Union, Vietnam, and others that accounted for a substantial portion of the U.S. trade deficit received the highest rates.

## TRUMP'S STRATEGY: ASSESSING IMPACT

The U.S. trade deficit is a long-standing issue. The U.S. imports more goods than it exports, and Trump, who campaigned on the promise to reduce the deficit, has been pushing for aggressive trade policies to address this imbalance. However, the tariff approach is not without controversy, and its global repercussions are significant. The tariffs, by design, make imports from other nations more expensive, effectively incentivizing the consumption of domestically produced goods. This shift, however, comes with a series of potential economic and geopolitical consequences.

## A GLOBAL TRADE DISRUPTION

Trump's tariffs disrupt the flow of global trade, affect-



President Donald Trump speaks during an event to announce new tariffs in the Rose Garden at the White House on Wednesday. File Photo

ing not only the U.S. economy but also global supply chains. While the tariffs are intended to benefit U.S. manufacturers and reduce the trade deficit, they also create substantial ripples in the global market, particularly for developing economies and emerging markets. The most affected nations are those with which the U.S. has significant trade imbalances, such as China, the European Union, Japan, and India.

The tariffs also expose countries to the risk of retaliation. In the past, trade wars have shown how retaliatory tariffs can harm industries on both sides of the trade divide. For example, if China retaliates by imposing its own tariffs on U.S. goods, it could impact U.S. exporters in sectors like agriculture, automotive, and electronics.

*Supply Chain Disruptions: Many Indian companies that are part of global supply chains may see their costs rise, especially in industries like automotive parts, electronics, and textiles.*

## HOW REASONABLE ARE THESE TARIFFS?

Trump's tariffs, while billed as a "kind" approach to deal with unfair trading practices, have varying levels of severity depending on the country. For instance, Cambodia, a relatively small economy with a per capita income of just \$2,950, faces the highest tariff rates, even though its share of the U.S. trade deficit is minimal. On the other hand, countries like China, which accounts for roughly 25% of the U.S. trade deficit, face a 34% tariff rate, while the European Union, with an even larger share of the deficit, faces

a 20% tariff. Even countries that have traditionally maintained favorable trade relationships with the U.S., such as Singapore, Brazil, and the UK, are subject to increases in tariffs despite running trade surpluses with the U.S.

In contrast, the decision to impose tariffs on smaller economies like Bangladesh and Cambodia, despite their minimal contribution to the U.S. trade deficit, underscores the political rather than purely economic rationale behind the tariffs. For the U.S., this suggests that the goal is not just reducing the trade deficit, but also exerting influence over smaller nations and enforcing a "fairer" global trading environment in line with Trump's vision.

## POTENTIAL IMPACT ON INDIA'S ECONOMY

The U.S. tariffs could create

a variety of challenges for India:

**Higher Import Costs:** U.S. tariffs will likely raise the cost of imports from India, including agricultural products, textiles, and electronic goods. This could strain India's domestic markets and lead to higher costs for consumers.

**Slower Growth in Exports:** India is a major exporter to the U.S., and the imposition of tariffs could significantly reduce the competitiveness of Indian goods in the American market. Exporters will face higher costs, which could lead to a decline in demand for Indian products.

**Supply Chain Disruptions:** Many Indian companies that are part of global supply chains may see their costs rise, especially in industries like automotive parts, electronics, and textiles. This could result in slower production times and higher prices for products in the global market.

**Currency Fluctuations:** The implementation of these tariffs could lead to fluctuations in the Indian rupee. A weakening of the rupee could lead to higher import costs, particularly for oil, which is India's

largest import. This, in turn, could exacerbate inflationary pressures within the country.

**Impact on FDI:** India's increasing tariff rates and protectionist policies could discourage foreign investment, particularly from countries like the U.S. This could hinder India's long-term economic growth prospects and reduce the flow of capital into the country.

## INDIA'S POLICY RESPONSE

India's leadership now faces a critical decision: should it maintain its current protectionist policies, or should it use the external pressure from the U.S. tariffs as an opportunity to liberalize its trade policies? If India continues its protectionist stance, it risks exacerbating tensions with the U.S. and facing more trade barriers in the future. However, if India opts for reforms, it could use these tariffs as a catalyst for policy changes that align with global trade norms, potentially opening up new economic opportunities.

## BROADER GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES

The impact of Trump's tariffs will not only be felt by

India but will reverberate across the global economy. Higher tariffs and retaliatory measures could lead to slower growth, especially in emerging markets. The U.S. itself could see inflation rise as import costs increase, and in a worst-case scenario, the global economy could face a stagflationary scenario—an economic condition where growth stagnates while inflation continues to rise.

The global economic slowdown could have significant political fallout as well. Countries in Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world may find themselves reevaluating their economic relationships with the U.S. Depending on how Europe and other major global players respond, the U.S. might either face greater isolation or find itself in new trade alliances.

## CONCLUSION

Trump's reciprocal tariffs represent a bold attempt to correct global trade imbalances, but their impact on the U.S. and the global economy remains uncertain. While India's tariff rate of 26% might seem moderate compared to other countries, it signals broader tensions over protectionism, regulatory uncertainty, and trade imbalances. India's response will likely shape its future economic trajectory. Whether India chooses to liberalize its policies or double down on protectionism, it faces significant challenges in a changing global landscape. Ultimately, the world will have to navigate the complex and evolving consequences of Trump's tariff policies, which could usher in a new era of global trade disruption.





# HYDRATION DURING NAVRATRI FASTING: AYURVEDA'S NATURAL SOLUTIONS



DR. KAMLA. R NAAGAR

Navratri, one of the most significant festivals in India, is celebrated with immense devotion and fervor. During this time, many devotees observe a fast to purify their body and soul. While fasting is spiritually enriching, it also poses the challenge of maintaining hydration, especially when the weather is hot or the fasting period extends for several days. Ayurveda offers valuable insights on how to keep the body hydrated during fasting, ensuring both physical well-being and spiritual growth.

### IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION IN AYURVEDA

According to Ayurveda, the balance of the water element (ap) is vital for good health. Water helps regulate body temperature, supports digestion, and assists in eliminating toxins. During fasting, if the water balance is disrupted, it can lead to fatigue, dizziness, headaches, and digestive issues. Therefore, staying hydrated during this period is essential for maintaining energy levels and a clear mind.

### 1. CHOOSING THE RIGHT WATER DURING FASTING

Ayurveda emphasizes that the type of water consumed during fasting plays a significant role in maintaining hydration. While plain water is the most common choice, some specific types of water can help maintain hydration and balance energy levels:

**Warm Water:** Drinking warm water before and after fasting aids digestion and helps flush out toxins from the body.

**Lemon and Salt Water:** A pinch of Himalayan salt and a few drops of lemon juice in warm water help maintain the balance of electrolytes, which is crucial during fasting.

**Coconut Water:** Known as a natural hydrating agent, coconut water is rich in potassium, sodium, and magnesium—key minerals that the body loses during fasting.

### 2. AYURVEDIC HYDRATING DRINKS

Ayurveda suggests various natural drinks that not only quench thirst but also keep the body nourished and balanced during fasting:

**Fresh Coconut Water:** This drink cools the body and helps prevent dehydration.

**Amla Juice:** Rich in Vitamin C, amla juice improves digestion and keeps the body hydrated.

**Tulsi Water:** Adding basil leaves to water can boost immunity and help balance the water element in the body.

### 3. HYDRATING FOODS FOR FASTING

Certain foods are particularly helpful for hydration during fasting. These foods not only provide water but



also keep the digestive system healthy:

**Fruits:** Watermelon, papaya, cantaloupe, oranges, and seasonal fruits are packed with water and help keep the body cool and hydrated.

**Cucumbers and Tomatoes:** These vegetables have high water content and help maintain freshness during fasting.

**Curd and Buttermilk:** These fermented dairy products aid digestion and provide cooling effects to the body.

### 4. AYURVEDIC TIPS FOR STAYING HYDRATED DURING FASTING

Ayurveda offers several practical tips to ensure adequate hydration during fasting:

**Sip Water Throughout the Day:** Rather than drinking large amounts of water at once, sip water in small

quantities throughout the day. **Avoid Cold Water:** Extremely cold water can weaken the digestive system. Room temperature or warm water is considered ideal for better digestion. **Listen to Your Body:** If you feel thirsty, dizzy, or have a headache, it could be a sign of dehydration. It is important to respond quickly by drinking water.

### 5. COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID DURING FASTING

While fasting, people often make mistakes that can lead to dehydration:

**Excessive Salt Consumption:** Consuming too much salt during fasting can cause the body to lose water.

**Drinking Too Little Water:** Some people forget to drink enough water during fasting hours, leading to dehydration.

**Caffeine Consumption:**



Beverages like tea and coffee, which contain caffeine, can contribute to dehydration. It's better to avoid them during fasting.

### 6. IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION AFTER FASTING

Hydration remains crucial even after breaking the fast. After the fast is broken, it's essential to start with small amounts of water and gradually move to hydrating foods and drinks to support the digestive system and sustain energy levels. This approach ensures that the body does not experience shock and recovers smoothly.

### AYURVEDIC HYDRATING RECIPES FOR NAVRATRI FASTING

Here are some Ayurvedic recipes that can help maintain hydration during the Navratri fast. These drinks not only quench thirst but also support digestion and overall well-being.

- 1. Tulsi and Mint Water**  
**Ingredients:**  
1 liter of water  
10-12 fresh basil leaves (tulsi)  
5-6 mint leaves  
A pinch of Himalayan salt (optional)  
Few slices of lemon (optional)

**Method:**  
Warm the water slightly. Add the basil and mint leaves to the water.

Add a pinch of salt and lemon slices if desired. Let it steep for a few hours and drink it throughout the day.

**Benefits:** This water provides cooling effects, improves digestion, and balances the water element in the body.

### 2. Amla Infused Coconut Water

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup fresh coconut water  
½ teaspoon amla powder or fresh amla juice  
A pinch of black salt  
1 teaspoon honey (optional)

**Method:**  
Mix the amla powder into the coconut water. Add black salt and honey. Stir well and chill before drinking.

**Benefits:** This drink helps balance electrolytes, boosts immunity, and provides energy.

### 3. Watermelon and Cucumber Juice

**Ingredients:**  
2 cups fresh watermelon chunks  
1 cucumber (peeled)  
A pinch of salt  
Mint leaves (optional)

**Method:**  
Blend the watermelon and cucumber together. Add a pinch of salt and mint leaves if desired. Blend again and strain before drinking.

**Benefits:** This juice is hydrating and offers cooling properties, perfect for hot weather.

### 4. Lemon and Honey Water (Seasonal Detox Drink)

**Ingredients:**  
1 glass warm water  
Juice of ½ lemon  
1 teaspoon honey  
A pinch of black salt

**Method:**  
Mix the lemon juice, honey, and black salt in the warm water.

Drink this first thing in the morning to detoxify the body and aid digestion.

**Benefits:** This drink helps detox the body, balance digestion, and keeps the body hydrated.

### 5. Chia Seeds and Coconut Water

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup coconut water  
1 tablespoon chia seeds  
1 teaspoon honey (optional)

**Method:**  
Soak the chia seeds in coconut water for 30 minutes.

Add honey and lemon juice, mix well, and drink.

**Benefits:** Chia seeds absorb water, keeping the body hydrated for a longer period.

### 6. Buttermilk (Chaas) Refreshment

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup fresh buttermilk  
½ teaspoon roasted cumin powder  
¼ teaspoon black salt  
Fresh coriander leaves (optional)

**Method:**  
Add roasted cumin powder and black salt to the buttermilk.

Whisk well and garnish with fresh coriander leaves.

**Benefits:** This drink aids digestion, keeps the body cool, and hydrates effectively.

### 7. Orange and Mint Juice

**Ingredients:**  
Juice of 2 large oranges  
10-12 mint leaves  
A pinch of black salt  
1 teaspoon honey (optional)

**Method:**  
Extract the juice from the oranges.

Add mint leaves, black salt, and honey to the juice. Stir well and chill before drinking.

**Benefits:** This juice is rich in Vitamin C and helps maintain hydration.

### CONCLUSION

During Navratri fasting, staying hydrated is essential for maintaining energy and ensuring that your body functions optimally. Ayurveda offers simple yet effective ways to keep your body hydrated, from choosing the right water to consuming hydrating foods and beverages. By following these practices, you can ensure a smooth and healthy fasting experience while also reaping the spiritual benefits of this auspicious festival.

Stay hydrated, stay healthy, and enjoy the spiritual journey of Navratri! The author is Associate Professor (Department of Ayurveda Diet and Nutrition)

*National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur.*

# Traditional Delights: Navratri Food Festival Celebrating Culture

TDG NETWORK  
JAIPUR

Navratri is a time of fasting, devotion, and celebrating the divine feminine energy. During this period, many people follow specific dietary guidelines, consuming only sattvic (pure) and vrat (fasting) food that aligns with the spiritual and religious significance of the festival. These dishes are usually free from grains, garlic, onions, and certain spices, focusing on fresh fruits, vegetables, and dairy products.

Here are some popular dishes for Navratri:

**1. Sabudana Khichdi**  
Sabudana (tapioca pearls) is a staple during Navratri fasting. Sabudana khichdi is a light and delicious dish made with soaked sabudana, potatoes, peanuts, and mild spices. It's easy to digest and provides a good energy boost.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup sabudana  
2 medium potatoes (boiled)  
1/4 cup roasted peanuts (crushed)  
Cumin seeds  
Green chilies (optional)  
Rock salt (sendha namak)  
Fresh coriander leaves  
Ghee (clarified butter)

**2. Kuttu Ka Paratha (Buckwheat Flour Paratha)**  
Buckwheat flour (kuttu ka atta) is commonly used during Navratri fasting to make gluten-free parathas. It is paired with yogurt or a cooling chutney to enhance the flavor.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup kuttu ka atta  
1 boiled potato  
Rock salt

Water (for kneading)  
Ghee or oil (for cooking)  
**3. Singhara Atta Halwa (Water Chestnut Flour Halwa)**

Singhara (water chestnut flour) is another key ingredient during fasting. This halwa is made with water chestnut flour, ghee, sugar, and cardamom, offering a rich and satisfying treat.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup singhara atta  
2 tablespoons ghee  
1/4 cup sugar (or as per taste)

1/2 cup milk or water  
Cardamom powder  
Chopped dry fruits (optional)

### 4. Aloo Tikki (Potato Cutlets)

Aloo Tikki is a popular snack during Navratri, made with mashed potatoes, boiled and mixed with a variety of spices and herbs, then shallow fried in ghee.

**Ingredients:**  
2 large boiled potatoes  
Rock salt  
Green chilies (finely chopped)

Fresh coriander leaves  
Cumin powder  
Ghee (for frying)

### 5. Fruit Chaat

A fresh and tangy fruit chaat is perfect for the festive season. It is made with a mix of seasonal fruits, a sprinkle of black salt, and a dash of lemon juice.

**Ingredients:**  
1 apple  
1 banana  
1 orange  
Pomegranate seeds  
Black salt  
Lemon juice  
Fresh mint leaves  
**6. Rajgira Paratha (Amaranth Flour Paratha)**  
Rajgira (amaranth flour)



is commonly used during Navratri fasting. Rajgira paratha is simple to make and can be enjoyed with a yogurt dip or chutney.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup rajgira atta  
1 boiled potato  
Rock salt  
Water (for kneading)  
Ghee (for cooking)

### 7. Vrat Ki Puri (Fasting Puri)

Vrat ki puri is made using buckwheat or water chestnut flour and is deep-fried to golden perfection. It is commonly served with a simple potato curry or yogurt.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup kuttu ka atta or singhara atta  
1/4 cup water  
Rock salt  
Ghee or oil (for frying)  
**8. Pumpkin Curry**  
This simple and nutritious

pumpkin curry is made with minimal spices and is often served as a side dish during fasting. Pumpkin is naturally sweet and is easy to digest.

**Ingredients:**  
2 cups pumpkin cubes  
1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds  
1/2 teaspoon rock salt  
Ghee

Fresh coriander leaves for garnish

### 9. Dahi Aloo (Yogurt Potato Curry)

Dahi Aloo is a simple, flavorful dish made with potatoes, yogurt, and mild spices. It's perfect for a quick lunch or dinner during Navratri.

**Ingredients:**  
4 medium potatoes (boiled and cubed)  
1 cup yogurt (whisked)  
Rock salt  
Cumin powder



Fresh coriander leaves  
Ghee

### 10. Makhana Kheer (Fox Nut Pudding)

Makhana kheer is a popular dessert during Navratri. It is made using fox nuts (makhana), milk, sugar, and cardamom. This pudding is rich, creamy, and naturally gluten-free.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup makhana (fox nuts)  
2 cups full-fat milk  
1/4 cup sugar  
1/4 teaspoon cardamom

powder  
Ghee (for roasting makhana)

### 11. Sabudana Vada

Sabudana vada is a crispy, fried snack made from soaked sabudana, mashed potatoes, peanuts, and mild spices. It's a great accompaniment for a Navratri meal.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup sabudana  
2 medium potatoes (boiled and mashed)  
1/4 cup roasted peanuts (crushed)

A gluten-free dosa made using water chestnut flour or buckwheat flour is a unique twist on the traditional dosa. It's served with yogurt or chutney.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup singhara atta or kuttu ka atta  
Water (for batter consistency)

Rock salt  
Ghee (for cooking)

### 15. Carrot and Cucumber Salad

A fresh salad made with carrots, cucumbers, and lightly spiced with salt and lemon juice is a cool and healthy option for Navratri fasting.

**Ingredients:**  
2 carrots (grated)  
1 cucumber (diced)  
Black salt  
Lemon juice  
Fresh coriander leaves

### 16. Coconut Ladoo

Coconut ladoos are sweet balls made from grated coconut, sugar, and cardamom. They are simple to make and serve as a healthy dessert during Navratri.

**Ingredients:**  
1 cup grated fresh coconut  
1/2 cup sugar (or as per taste)  
1/4 teaspoon cardamom powder

So, it can be said that Navratri is a festival of culture, happiness, spirituality and an occasion to rejoice and come together. The food of our country is prepared in different ways all across the length and breadth of the country, so on Navratri becomes that time of the year where all the people come in unity to eat, drink, and enjoy the delicacies and reiterate the traditions, rituals and beauty of the festival.



# INDIA VS. CHINA: THE STARTUP REALITY CHECK – ARE WE CHASING THE WRONG GOALS?

*India must prioritize deep-tech investment, enhance government support, foster STEM education, reduce foreign tech reliance, and build globally competitive companies to match China's startup success.*

## TDG NETWORK

Startups are widely recognized as the backbone of innovation and economic growth. However, a stark contrast exists between the startup ecosystems of India and China. India's startup landscape leans heavily towards consumer-driven services, focusing on convenience and digital applications. Meanwhile, China is aggressively advancing in deep tech, manufacturing, and infrastructure, positioning itself as a dominant global force. The pressing question is: Are Indian startups focusing on the right priorities, or are we being left behind?

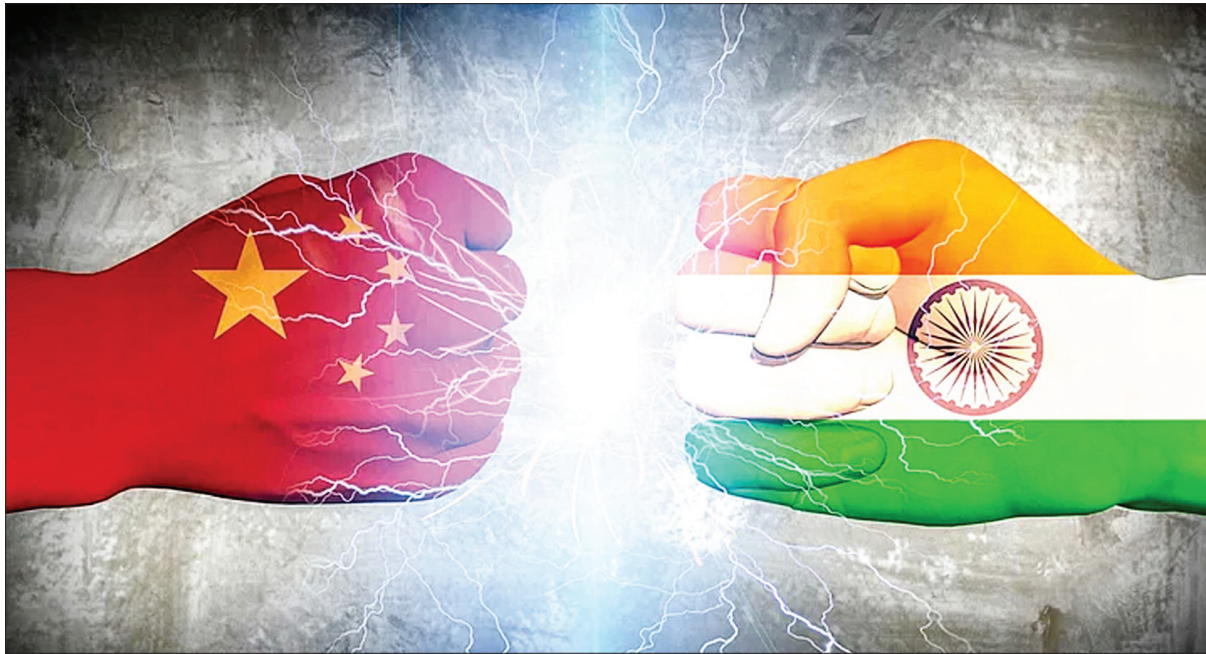
### THE CURRENT STATE OF INDIAN STARTUPS

#### FOOD & GROCERY DELIVERY APPS

India's startup boom has seen a surge in hyper-fast food and grocery delivery services, led by companies like Zomato and Swiggy. While these platforms provide consumers with quick service, critics argue they exploit a vast, underemployed workforce, paying low wages with minimal benefits. The emergence of 10-minute grocery delivery services has further raised concerns regarding efficiency and unnecessary logistical strain. Instead of fostering long-term innovation, such businesses focus on short-term convenience with questionable sustainability.

#### FANCY ICE CREAMS & SNACKS

The Indian market is flooded



ed with startups promoting 'healthy' ice creams, cookies, and sugar-free treats. While this sector caters to urban lifestyle trends, it does little to contribute to meaningful industrial or technological progress. In contrast, China is channeling its resources into core industries such as energy, semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing. The question arises: Should Indian startups redirect their focus toward sectors that have a lasting impact on the economy?

#### BETTING & FANTASY SPORTS APPS

Platforms like Dream11 and MPL have turned fantasy sports into a lucrative industry. However, these platforms arguably encourage gambling tendencies rather than fostering real economic productivity. While they generate revenue and create employment opportunities, the broader concern is their limited contribution to technological advancement or industrial growth. Compared to China's investment in artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, India's fixation on gaming apps highlights a misalignment in priorities.

#### THE REELS & INFLUENCER ECONOMY

With the rise of Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, content creation has become a mainstream career path for India's youth. While the influencer economy generates income and employment, it does not equate to sustainable technological progress. In contrast, China and the United States are prioritizing advancements in AI, space exploration, and biotech. If India aims to compete on the global stage, it must shift its focus from entertainment-driven startups to research and development.

#### LACK OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

China's government aggressively funds deep-tech sectors such as AI, semiconductors, and electric

vehicles (EVs). India, on the other hand, focuses primarily on digital payments and consumer services. Without significant governmental backing, India's deep-tech sector struggles to take off, leaving the country dependent on foreign technologies. A stronger commitment to R&D investment is essential for India to close the gap.

### WHAT CHINA IS DOING RIGHT

#### ELECTRIC VEHICLES & BATTERY TECHNOLOGY

China is at the forefront of the global EV revolution, with companies like BYD and CATL dominating the market. India, despite its potential, is still in the early stages of setting up a viable EV manufacturing ecosystem. Without major investment and policy support, India risks falling further behind in the transition to sustainable energy.

#### SEMICONDUCTORS & AI – ENSURING SELF-RELIANCE

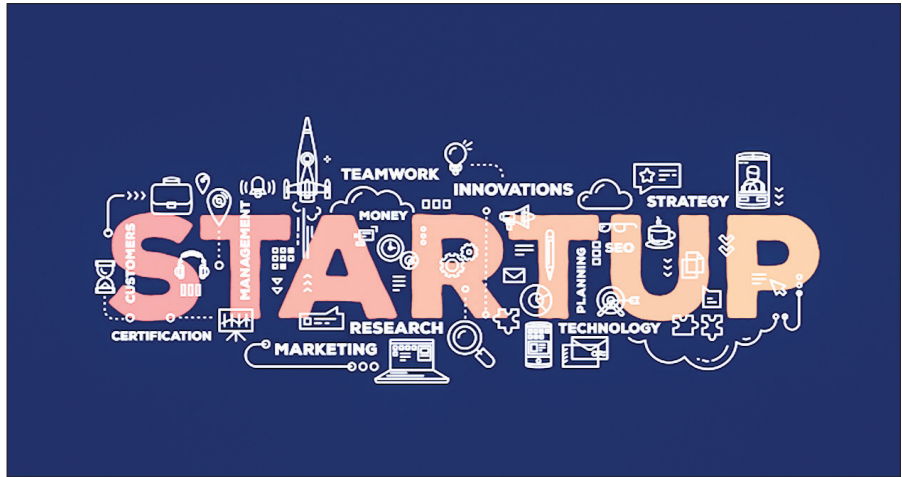
China's aggressive investments in semiconductor manufacturing and AI have reduced its dependence on Western technology. Meanwhile, India is still struggling to establish a robust semiconductor industry, despite recent government incentives. Developing domestic chip production is critical for India's technological sovereignty.

#### ROBOTICS & AUTOMATION

China's manufacturing sector is rapidly adopting robotics and AI-driven automation to enhance efficiency. In contrast, India remains largely dependent on traditional, labor-intensive methods, slowing industrial progress. To compete globally, India must invest in next-gen manufacturing technologies.

#### GLOBAL LOGISTICS & TRADE

Chinese companies like Shein, DJI, and Alibaba have established themselves as global market leaders. India, despite a



## TDG EXPLAINER

vast consumer base, has yet to produce a company with similar international influence. A shift towards building globally competitive businesses is necessary for India to establish itself as a major player in the global economy.

#### DEEP-TECH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

China's investments in space technology, high-speed rail, and renewable energy highlight its long-term vision. While Indian startups focus on short-term consumer conveniences, China is laying the groundwork for dominance in future industries. India must adopt a forward-thinking approach, prioritizing innovation in core technological sectors.

#### LESSONS FROM OTHER GLOBAL LEADERS

United States: Silicon Valley leads in AI, biotech, and space technology, with giants like Tesla, Google,

and SpaceX setting global benchmarks.

Germany: Known for precision engineering, Germany dominates the automotive and industrial tech sector, ensuring long-term economic resilience.

South Korea & Japan: These nations invest heavily in robotics and semiconductor production, securing their position in the global innovation race.

### WHERE DOES INDIA GO FROM HERE?

The difference in startup priorities between India and China is evident. While India focuses on services that offer immediate consumer convenience, China is preparing for leadership in industries that will define the future. If Indian startups aim to compete on the world stage, the focus must shift from entertainment and quick-delivery services to deep tech, infrastructure, and manufacturing. How Can India

Catch Up? Increase Government Support for Deep-Tech Startups – The Indian government must offer more funding and incentives for semiconductor, AI, and EV sectors.

Encourage STEM & Innovation in Education – Schools and universities should emphasize research and engineering over influencer culture. Build Global-Scale Companies – Indian startups should aim to create world-class brands that compete internationally. Reduce Dependence on Foreign Tech – Strengthening domestic R&D in deep-tech industries is crucial for self-reliance.

### THE BIG QUESTION

India's startup ecosystem has immense potential, but the current trajectory may not be sustainable for long-term global competitiveness. Prioritizing deep-tech innovation over short-term consumer trends will be key to India's success. The conversation must now shift from immediate conveniences to long-term technological leadership. What do you think India needs to do to match China's startup success?

## ICC role as Netanyahu defies arrest warrant: Test for global justice & diplomacy

## TDG NETWORK

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is often regarded as a pillar of global justice, established to hold individuals accountable for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. However, its authority and effectiveness are frequently questioned when high-profile political figures, such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, defy arrest warrants issued against them. This defiance raises significant questions about the ICC's jurisdiction, the global repercussions of non-compliance, and the broader implications for international diplomacy.

### ICC'S MANDATE & ITS ENFORCEMENT

Founded by the Rome Statute in 2002, the ICC was designed as an independent body capable of prosecuting individuals accused of severe international crimes. However, a fundamental weakness of the ICC is its lack of an independent enforcement mechanism. Unlike national judicial systems that have law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance, the ICC relies entirely on its member states to execute arrest warrants and enforce its rulings. This dependency becomes problematic when

political considerations influence a state's willingness to cooperate. Many states, particularly powerful or strategically important ones, selectively enforce ICC mandates based on their national interests, thereby undermining the credibility of the court. This selectivity has led to accusations that the ICC disproportionately targets leaders from certain regions while being unable to prosecute figures from more influential countries.

### NETANYAHU'S ARREST WARRANT

In November 2024, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on charges of alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza conflict. The charges included accusations of using starvation as a weapon of war and deliberately targeting civilians. However, Israel, which is not a signatory to the Rome Statute, immediately rejected the ICC's jurisdiction and dismissed the accusations as politically motivated.

Despite the arrest warrant, Netanyahu continued to engage in international diplomacy. In April 2025, he traveled to Hungary, where Prime Minister Viktor Orbán not only



welcomed him but also announced Hungary's withdrawal from the ICC, citing the court's actions as politically biased. This move demonstrated the challenges in enforcing ICC mandates and showcased how political alliances can override legal obligations. Netanyahu's ability to travel freely without the threat of arrest highlights the ICC's limitations in holding world leaders accountable.

### DISREGARDING ICC WARRANTS

When political leaders defy ICC arrest warrants, several significant consequences emerge:

#### 1. Erosion of International Law

Defying ICC warrants weakens the legitimacy of

international legal institutions and sets a precedent for future non-compliance. If prominent figures repeatedly evade justice, it diminishes the deterrent effect of international law, potentially fostering a culture of impunity for war crimes and human rights abuses.

#### 2. Diplomatic Strain and Political Realignments

Countries that ignore ICC rulings may face diplomatic repercussions, including strained relations with nations that support the court's mandates. However, as seen in Netanyahu's case, defiance can also lead to strengthened political alliances among like-minded governments. This polarization can reshape global

diplomatic ties and alter the balance of international influence.

#### 3. Undermining the ICC's Credibility

Repeated instances of non-compliance weaken the ICC's credibility. If leaders know they can ignore warrants without facing consequences, the court risks being perceived as ineffective. This could discourage victims from seeking justice through international mechanisms and erode public confidence in the ICC's ability to uphold human rights.

#### GLOBAL DIPLOMACY AND THE ICC'S ROLE

The ICC's actions significantly impact international relations. When the court

issues warrants for sitting heads of state, especially those from non-member countries, it complicates diplomatic negotiations. While some nations view the ICC as a crucial tool for justice, others see it as an infringement on sovereignty or a politically biased institution. This division hampers international cooperation and weakens collective efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.

For example, the United States, Russia, and China have not ratified the Rome Statute and often criticize the ICC's actions when they affect their allies. This selective engagement undermines the court's universal authority and makes enforcement highly dependent on political will.

### STRENGTHENING THE ICC

To enhance its effectiveness, the ICC must address several key challenges:

#### 1. Expanding Enforcement Mechanisms

The ICC could work towards establishing international partnerships with regional organizations such as the African Union and the European Union

to strengthen enforcement capabilities. Increased cooperation with Interpol and other law enforcement agencies could also improve compliance.

#### 2. Enhancing Political Neutrality

To counter accusations of bias, the ICC must ensure that its investigations and prosecutions are seen as impartial. This could involve broadening its focus to include cases involving powerful nations and their allies, rather than predominantly targeting leaders from weaker states.

#### 3. Strengthening Member State Commitment

Encouraging more countries to ratify the Rome Statute and reinforcing legal obligations for existing members can improve adherence to ICC rulings. Economic or diplomatic consequences for non-compliance could serve as additional incentives for cooperation.

#### 4. Public Awareness and Advocacy

Greater public awareness and support for the ICC

can pressure governments to comply with its rulings. International human rights organizations and civil society groups play a vital role in holding states accountable and advocating for justice.

### CONCLUSION: A TEST FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE

The defiance of ICC arrest warrants by leaders like Benjamin Netanyahu underscores the challenges facing international justice institutions. While the ICC remains a crucial mechanism for accountability, its effectiveness is hindered by its reliance on state cooperation and the politicization of global justice. Strengthening the ICC's authority requires a concerted effort by the international community to prioritize legal obligations over political considerations.

Ultimately, the future of global justice depends on the willingness of nations to uphold the principles of international law. Without stronger enforcement mechanisms and global commitment, the ICC risks becoming a symbolic rather than a functional institution.

The question remains: Can the world move beyond political interests to ensure that justice is truly served?



# CHINA CRITIQUES US RECIPROCAL TARIFFS, VOWS COUNTER-MEASURES

AGENCIES  
BEIJING

China's commerce ministry on Thursday said that it will take "resolute counter-measures" against the "reciprocal tariffs" announced by United States President Donald Trump on all US trade partners, Global Times reported.

The ministry further urged Washington to cancel the unilateral tariff measures.

"There is no winner in a trade war, and protectionism leads nowhere. China urges the US to immediately remove unilateral tariffs and resolve differences with trade partners through dialogue," a ministry spokesperson said as cited in the Chinese State-owned Global Times.

Amid worldwide criticism, Trump declared a national economic emergency and announced tariffs of at least 10 per cent across all countries, with rates even

KEY POINTS

- India faces a 26% levy, while China, Vietnam, Japan, and the EU are also heavily impacted.
- Beijing argues the move violates trade rules and threatens global economic stability.
- Claims they counter unfair trade practices and illicit fentanyl imports.

higher for 60 countries.

"China urges the United States to immediately cancel its unilateral tariff measures and properly resolve differences with its trading partners through equal dialogue," CNN quoted the spokesperson as saying.

The tariff plan imposed high levies on many countries, including 26 per cent on India, 49 per cent on Cambodia, 46 per cent on Vietnam, 34 per cent on

China, 24 per cent tariff on Japan, 20 per cent on the EU, US media reported, noting that more than 180 countries and regions will face tariffs.

The US claims that it has suffered losses in international trade and is using so-called "reciprocity" as a justification to raise tariffs on all its trading partners. This approach disregards the balance of interests achieved through years of

multilateral trade negotiations and ignores the fact that the US has long reaped substantial benefits from international trade, the Chinese commerce ministry (MOFCOM) spokesperson said, Global Times reported.

"The so-called 'reciprocal tariffs,' determined based on unilateral and subjective assessments, violate international trade rules, severely undermine the legitimate rights and interests

of relevant parties, and represent a typical act of unilateral bullying. Many trading partners have already expressed strong dissatisfaction and clear opposition to this move," the spokesperson said.

History has proven that raising tariffs does not solve US' own problems -- it harms US interests while also threatening global economic growth and the stability of industrial and supply chains, the Chinese spokesperson was cited as saying in the Global Times.

Trump's announcement adds 34 per cent "reciprocal" tariffs to existing 20 per cent duties on all Chinese imports to the US. Since returning to power in January, Trump had already levied two tranches of 10 per cent additional levies on all Chinese imports, which the White House said was necessary to stem the flow of illicit fentanyl from the country to the US as per a report in the CNN.

## US, EU reaffirm opposition to China's military escalation in Taiwan

AGENCIES  
TAIPEI

The US and the EU have restated their disapproval of any unilateral alterations to the "status quo" in the Taiwan Strait following China's military's recent series of joint drills around Taiwan, which concluded last night, according to a report by Taipei Times.

US President Donald Trump "emphasizes the significance of upholding peace in the Taiwan Strait, advocating for a peaceful resolution to cross-strait issues, and reiterating our disapproval of any unilateral attempts to modify the status quo through force or coercion," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt was quoted by Taipei Times.

US Department of State spokeswoman Tammy Bruce told the Central News Agency that China's confrontational military actions and rhetoric "only escalate tensions and jeopardize the security of the region as well as global prosperity," as reported by Taipei Times.

"The United States champions peace and stabil-

*"The EU has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. We oppose any unilateral actions that shift the status quo through force or intimidation," an EEAS spokesperson was quoted by Taipei Times.*

ity throughout the Taiwan Strait and opposes any unilateral alterations to the status quo, particularly through force or intimidation," she stated, according to Taipei Times.

In the meantime, the EU's foreign policy body, the European External Action Service (EEAS), expressed its apprehension regarding the Chinese exercises, indicating that the drills were "heightening cross-strait tensions," as reported by Taipei Times.

"The EU has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. We oppose any unilateral actions that shift the status quo through force or intimidation," an EEAS spokesperson was quoted by Taipei Times. "We urge all parties to exercise restraint and avoid actions that could

escalate tensions, which should be settled through cross-strait dialogue," the EEAS spokesperson stated, as cited in the Taipei Times report.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said on Tuesday that the government has expressed its concerns to Beijing regarding a Chinese military exercise near Taiwan, according to Taipei Times.

"Peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are exceedingly vital to the entire global community, including our nation," the top government spokesperson remarked during a press briefing, noting that Tokyo will "employ all necessary measures for vigilance and monitoring" in light of increased Chinese military operations near Taiwan recently.

## Netanyahu faces scandal over advisers' alleged Qatar ties

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office is once again ensnared in scandal after police arrested two of his close associates this week on suspicion of accepting money from Qatar to promote a positive image of the Gulf Arab state in Israel.

The affair has gripped Israelis because Qatar, a country that many view as a patron of Hamas, and which has no formal diplomatic ties to Israel, appears to have penetrated the highest corridors of power.

Qatar, which is a key mediator for Hamas in its ceasefire negotiations with Israel, denies backing the militant group. Netanyahu has given a statement to po-



people protesting against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government outside the Knesset, Israel's parliament in Jerusalem, Monday, March 31, 2025. The investigation is just the latest scandal to roil Netanyahu, who is the subject of a long-running corruption trial and regularly rails against a "deep state" that is out to get him.

Critics say Netanyahu, the country's longest-serving prime minister, has worked in recent years to undermine Israel's state institutions, including its judiciary. Most recently, they point to his attempt to dismiss the head of Israel's domestic security agency, which is also investigating his office's alleged links to Qatar.

lice on the matter but is not a suspect in the case, which he says is baseless and meant to topple his rule.

Israeli police drag away people protesting against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government outside the Knesset, Israel's parliament in Jerusalem, Monday, March 31, 2025. Israeli police drag away

## Rubio reassures allies on NATO amid Trump's uncertainty

AGENCIES  
BRUSSELS

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the Trump administration's new envoy to NATO are seeking to reassure wary members of the U.S. commitment to the alliance.

Rubio on Thursday decried "hysteria and hyperbole" in the media about U.S. President Donald Trump's intentions, despite persistent signals from Washington that NATO as it has existed for 75 years may no longer be relevant.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio makes statements during his meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on the sidelines of a NATO foreign ministers meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Thursday, April 3, 2025.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, Pool)

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio makes statements during his meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on the sidelines of a NATO foreign ministers meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Thursday, April 3, 2025. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, Pool)

Rubio and newly confirmed U.S. ambassador to NATO Matt Whitaker are in Brussels for a meeting of alliance foreign ministers at which many are hoping Rubio will shed light on U.S. security plans in Europe. "The United States is as active in NATO as it has ever been," Rubio told reporters as he greeted NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte before the meeting began.

## Violent storms cut through South and Midwest

AGENCIES  
LAKE CITY, ARK

Tornadoes and violent winds flattened homes and ripped apart buildings from Oklahoma to Indiana in the first round of storms that are expected to bring record-setting rains and life-threatening flash floods across the nation's midsection in the coming days.

At least six people were killed in western Tennessee, Missouri and Indiana in the first wave on Wednesday and early Thursday that spun off powerful tornadoes — one launching debris nearly 5 miles (8 kilometers) above the ground in Arkansas.

## IDF strikes Syrian bases in Hama, Damascus

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched airstrikes on Wednesday targeting remaining military capabilities at Syrian bases in Hama and T4, as well as additional military infrastructure sites in the Damascus area.

Sharing a post on X, the IDF wrote, "The IDF struck military capabilities that remained at the Syrian bases of Hama and T4, along with additional remaining military infrastructure sites in the area of Damascus in the past few hours."

It added, "We will continue to operate to remove any threat to Israeli civilians." <https://x.com/IDF/status/1907521357333819550> Citing the state-run Syr-



ian Arab News Agency (SANA), Al Jazeera reported that the attacks on Wednesday targeted the vicinity of the scientific research centre in the Barzeh neighbourhood of the capital, as well as the airport in the Syrian city of Hama.

Since the ousting of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in December 2024, Israel has conducted hundreds of airstrikes across Syria.

In the aftermath of al-Assad's removal on December 8, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a UK-based monitoring group, reported that Israeli forces targeted the Barzeh research facility, which Israel claims was involved in the production of guided missiles and chemical weapons.

Between December 8 and December 31, 2024, SOHR reported over 500 air-

strikes on Syrian targets by Israel. Additionally, Israel has carried out at least 43 attacks in Syria so far this year, Al Jazeera reported.

The Israeli strikes come after Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa announced the formation of a transitional government and appointed 23 ministers to a diverse new cabinet.

According to Al Jazeera, the government, which was revealed on Saturday, includes Yarub Badr, an Alawite, as transport minister, while Amgad Badr from the Druze community will oversee the agriculture ministry. Since the fall of former Bashar al-Assad in December, Syria has been governed by a caretaker cabinet under al-Sharaa. After being named interim president in January.

## Pollution worsening in Kathmandu

AGENCIES  
KATHMANDU

The Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) has urged the public to take strict precautions as air pollution in the Kathmandu Valley reaches alarming levels, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) entering the "hazardous" category. In a press release issued today, the ministry warned that Nepal has been ranked among the most polluted countries globally in recent days. The AQI in Kathmandu was recorded at 348 on Thursday, far exceeding safe limits.

Dr. Prakash Budhathoki, MoHP spokesperson, advised children, elderly citizens, pregnant women, and individuals with respi-



ratory illnesses to take extra precautions, as they are at higher risk. The Ministry has urged the public to: Avoid going outdoors unless necessary.

Wear masks while traveling and steer clear of highly polluted areas.

Meanwhile, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) has called for

collective efforts to control air pollution and remain vigilant about health risks. The Authority attributed the worsening air quality to forest fires, road construction, and industrial activities. Industries, factories, and construction-related businesses have been instructed to take necessary measures to minimize pollution.

NSC officials and multiple lower-ranking aides.

Loomer, who has promoted 9/11 conspiracy theories, was a frequent presence on the campaign trail during Trump's 2024 successful White House run. More recently, she's been speaking out on social media about some members of Trump's national security team that she insists can't be trusted.



"It was an honor to meet with President Trump and present him with my research findings," Loomer said in a posting on X. "I will continue working hard to support his agenda, and I will continue reiterating the importance of, and the necessity of STRONG VETTING, for the sake of protecting the President of the United States of

America, and our national security."

Trump has a long history of elevating and associating with people who trade in falsehoods and conspiracy theories, and he regularly amplifies posts on his social media site shared by those like Loomer, who promote QAnon, an apocalyptic and convoluted conspiracy theory centered on the be-

lief that Trump is fighting the "deep state." The move by Trump to push out staff comes at a moment when his national security adviser Mike Waltz is fighting back criticism over using the publicly available encrypted Signal app to discuss planning for the sensitive March 15 military operation targeting Houthis in Yemen.

## Trump to fire security officials over loyalty concerns

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has moved to fire several White House National Security Council officials taking action soon after he was urged by a far-right activist to purge staffers she deemed insufficiently committed to his Make America Great Again agenda, several people familiar with the

matter said Thursday.

Laura Loomer presented her research to Trump in an Oval Office meeting on Wednesday, making her case for the firings, the people said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive personnel matters. Vice President JD Vance, chief of staff Susie Wiles, national security adviser Mike Waltz and

Sergio Gor, the director of the Presidential Personnel Office, took part in the meeting, the people said.

NSC spokesman Brian Hughes declined to comment on the meeting or the firings, insisting that the White House does not discuss personnel matters.

The Presidential Personnel Office has moved to dismiss at least three senior



# 'KESARI CHAPTER 2' TRAILER HIGHLIGHTS PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Actors Akshay Kumar and Ananya Panday, unveiled the much-anticipated trailer for 'Kesari Chapter 2' in the national capital on Thursday, offering a powerful glimpse into a poignant chapter of Indian history. The historical drama, which delves into the aftermath of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, features a gripping courtroom showdown between Akshay Kumar and R. Madhavan, highlighting the fight for justice against the British Empire. The makers of the movie, including Karan Johar also shared the trailer on their social media handles.



his words - that shook the entire empire. Uncover the most shocking lie ever told. Uncover the darkest chapter of our history. Uncover the truth behind Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. #KesariChapter2 - TRAILER OUT NOW. In cinemas, April 18," the caption read.

Set against the backdrop of the tragic events of April 13, 1919, the trailer introduces

Akshay Kumar as C. San-karan Nair, a courageous lawyer who challenges the British colonial regime in a legal battle for the victims of the massacre. The film's narrative unfolds with haunting visuals of the massacre, showing the devastation that followed, and the ripple effects it had across India.

In the courtroom, Kumar's character faces off

against Madhavan, portraying Neville McKinley, a lawyer defending the British Crown. The trailer also features Ananya Panday, a law student.

Sharing her look on March 28, the makers on Instagram wrote, "Embraced by compassion, fuelled by justice. Introducing Ananya Panday as Dilreet Gill in Kesari - Chapter 2. In cinemas worldwide, 18th April."

The film sheds light on the untold story of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, offering a fresh perspective on a tragedy that shaped India's struggle for independence. 'Kesari Chapter 2' is set to release on April 18, 2025, following the success of its predecessor, which focused on the Battle of Saragarhi in 2019.

## 'Chhorii 2' trailer unveiled, promising intense horror and suspense

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

The highly anticipated sequel to the 2021 horror hit 'Chhorii,' titled 'Chhorii 2,' has unveiled its gripping trailer, promising an even more intense supernatural experience. Starring Nushratt Bharuccha in a fierce new role, the film explores the dark depths of folklore, gender disparity, and a mother's unyielding devotion to her daughter.

The trailer opens with a chilling narrative as Bharuccha's character tells her daughter a haunting tale of a vast kingdom



where a king, enraged by the birth of a daughter, orders his daasi to kill her. The storyline quickly shifts to nerve-wracking visuals, showing Bharuccha's relentless struggle to protect her child from the evil daasi, played by

Soha Ali Khan, and other paranormal forces that threaten their lives. Khan's menacing transformation in the trailer has already captured the audience's attention, with fans praising her intense performance and expressing excitement

over her return to the horror genre.

Directed by Vishal Furia, who also helmed the original film, 'Chhorii 2' promises to elevate the horror experience with a riveting blend of fear, suspense, and social commentary. The film is set to premiere worldwide on April 11, 2025, under the banners of T-Series, Abundantia Entertainment, Psych, and Tamarisk Lane Production. The sequel also features a supporting cast, including Gashmeer Mahajani, Saurabh Goyal, Pallavi Ajay, Kuldeep Sareen, and Hardika Sharma.

## 'Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale' trailer teases goodbye to the British drama



AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Focus Features presented an emotional first look at the trailer for 'Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale' at CinemaCon, marking the final installment in the trilogy of big-screen continuations of the beloved British TV drama. Written by series creator Julian Fellowes and directed by Simon Curtis, the trailer offers a glimpse into the lives of the Grantham family and their loyal servants as they bid farewell to an era.

As per Deadline, the title card reads, 'It's time to say goodbye,' as Hugh Bonneville's Earl of Grantham is seen patting the facade of the manor house.

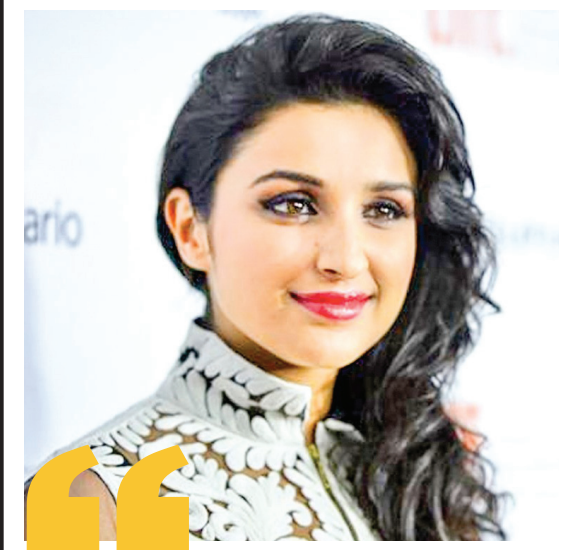
*As per Deadline, the title card reads, 'It's time to say goodbye,' as Hugh Bonneville's Earl of Grantham is seen patting the facade of the manor house.*

The trailer also includes stunning scenes of the family at the races, Dominic West's Guy Dexter performing in London's West End, and Michelle Dockery's Lady Mary ascending a grand staircase in a breathtaking red gown.

A poignant tribute to the late Maggie Smith's Dowager Countess is also featured in the trailer, Deadline reported. The film, set to release domestically on September 12, promises to pay hom-

age to the "end of an era" with the loss of the Dowager Countess, a storyline that has taken on greater significance following Smith's passing last September. The main cast, including Bonneville, Dockery, Laura Carmichael, and Jim Carter, returns for the final installment. Newcomers Joely Richardson, Alessandro Nivola, Simon Russell Beale, and Arty Froushan are also featured.

### BRAIN PICKING



I will act and give my best with all my dedication.  
— PARINEETI CHOPRA  
(Indian Actress)

## Paramvir Cheema discusses 'Border 2', upcoming projects and theatre

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Actor Paramvir Cheema is all set to share screen space with Sunny Deol and Varun Dhawan in 'Border 2' and for him it is nothing less than a "dream role".

In a conversation with ANI, Cheema said, "Sharing screen space with Sunny paaji (Sunny Deol) is a dream



## 'Panchayat' makers announce Season 4 as series turns five

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

The much-loved web series 'Panchayat' turned five. The show, which first premiered on Prime Video on April 3, 2020, has won the hearts of viewers ever since its release. As the series marks its fifth anniversary, fans have received the news they were eagerly waiting for: 'Panchayat Season 4', which is set to release on July 2 this year.

Prime Video, on Thursday, took to its Instagram account to share a promotional video featuring actors Jitendra Kumar, Giaa Manek, and internet sensation Darshan Magdum. 'Panchayat Season 4', produced under the ban-



ner of The Viral Fever (TVF), is created by Deepak Kumar Mishra, written by Chandan Kumar, and directed by Deepak Kumar Mishra and Akshat Vijaywargiya.

The series stars Jitendra Kumar in the lead as the endearing Sachivji, alongside an ensemble cast including Raghubir Yadav, Neena Gupta, Sanvikaa, Chandan

Roy, Faisal Malik, Durgesh Kumar, Sunita Rajwar, and Pankaj Jha in pivotal roles.

Earlier this year, in May, the third season was released on OTT. 'In Panchayat Season 3', the story delves deeper into village politics and corruption, focusing on elections and the struggles of the villagers, particularly the lack of a proper road.

## Resham Kaur Hans, wife of singer Hans Raj Hans, passes away

TDG NETWORK  
PUNJAB

Resham Kaur Hans, the wife of renowned Padma Shri awardee singer and former Member of the Lok Sabha, Hans Raj Hans, passed away on April 2, afternoon. She was around 60 years old and had been battling illness for an extended period. The news of her demise has cast a shadow of grief over her family, friends, and admirers.

Sources confirm that Resham Kaur Hans had previously undergone a stent



procedure due to a heart condition. Despite medical intervention, her health continued to deteriorate, leading to her untimely

passing. The family has yet to release an official statement regarding her death.

Meanwhile, Gurpreet Singh, the Sarpanch of

*Meanwhile, Gurpreet Singh, the Sarpanch of Shafipur, who visited Hans Raj Hans's residence to pay his respects, expressed his condolences.*

Shafipur, who visited Hans Raj Hans's residence to pay his respects, expressed his condolences.

He said, "My name is Gurpreet Singh, I am Sarpanch of Shafipur, and it is a very sad news. Mr Hans Raj Hans's wife has passed

away. We are deeply saddened by this loss. Tomorrow, around 12 in the afternoon, she will be cremated in the village of Shafipur. Some of their relatives are arriving from abroad, which is why there is a slight delay."

## Prime Video releases Lexi Minetree's look in 'Legally Blonde' prequel

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Prime Video has released the first image of Lexi Minetree as Elle Woods in the upcoming 'Legally Blonde' prequel series, 'Elle.' The photo shows Minetree as the iconic character in her teenage years, sporting a pink hoodie and surrounded by pink bedding, while using a clear phone to talk to her friends on a landline.

Reese Witherspoon who played the OG Elle Woods



in the 2001 series 'Legally Blonde', also shared the first look on her social media handle.

"Harvard was hard. High School was harder. Our new

series, Elle, is now in production! Couldn't be more excited to introduce you all to @leximinetree as Elle Woods," she captioned the post.

The series, which has begun production, follows the life of high school student Elle Woods and explores the experiences that shaped her into the young woman audiences know from the original film. The show is created by Laura Kittrell and executive produced by Kittrell, Caroline Dries, Witherspoon, and Lauren Neustadter.



Ananya Panday poses for her social media. (Instagram)



# Impressive Red Traditional Looks of Bollywood Divas for Navratri

TDG NETWORK

Navratri, the festival of devotion and dance, is incomplete without the vibrant color red, symbolizing power and energy. Bollywood divas have often set major fashion goals in red traditional ensembles, making them the perfect inspiration for this festive season.

## DEEPIKA PADUKONE – THE REGAL GODDESS

Deepika Padukone is synonymous with grace, and her red saree looks are breathtaking. Whether it's a classic Banarasi drape or a heavily embroidered Sabyasachi creation, she exudes regal charm. Her signature kohl-rimmed eyes, nude lips, and sleek bun adorned with a garra complete her traditional Navratri look effortlessly.

## ALIA BHATT – THE ETHEREAL BEAUTY

Alia Bhatt often embraces simplicity with elegance. Her red lehenga with intricate chikankari work or a minimalist anarkali proves that less is more. She pairs her outfits with jhumkas, dewy makeup, and soft curls, making her look dreamy yet festive-ready.

## KATRINA KAIF – THE TIMELESS DIVA

Katrina Kaif stuns in red lehengas, especially when styled with intricate zardozi embroidery or floral motifs. Her effortless styling, often with loose waves and minimal accessories, enhances her



natural charm, making her Navratri look classy and sophisticated.

## KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN – THE ROYAL ICON

Kareena's red traditional outfits reflect her larger-than-life persona. Be it a silk saree with a bold bindi or an intricately designed sharara, she owns every look with confidence. Her kohl-laden eyes, statement jewelry, and sleek hairstyles make her an epitome of elegance.

## JANHVI KAPOOR – THE MODERN-DAY TRADITIONALIST

Janhvi Kapoor's love for traditional silhouettes is evident. She rocks a red saree with delicate sequin work or a heavily embellished lehenga with sheer dupattas, adding a

contemporary twist. Her fresh makeup, soft curls, and playful attitude make her the perfect inspiration for younger Navratri enthusiasts.

From classic sarees to heavily embellished lehengas, Bollywood divas redefine festive fashion in red, making them the ultimate style icons for Navratri. Whether you prefer a regal look like Deepika or a minimalist charm like Anushka, there's a red outfit to suit every Navratri celebration.



# Glow like never before: How botox, fillers and facials can transform you?

DR. SHWETA MISHRA

The wedding season is the perfect time to radiate confidence and charm. Every bride and groom dreams of looking their best, and with advancements in aesthetic treatments, achieving a flawless glow is more accessible than ever. Dr. Shweta Mishra, a renowned facial cosmetic and aesthetic surgeon at Sharva Clinic, Pitampura and Rohini, New Delhi, emphasizes that modern cosmetic procedures such as Botox, fillers, and facials offer transformative results with minimal downtime, making them ideal for pre-wedding preparations.

## The role of botox in enhancing facial beauty

Botox is a trusted solution for reducing fine lines and wrinkles, giving the skin a smooth, youthful appearance. It works by relaxing the muscles that cause expression lines, such as crow's feet, forehead creases, and frown lines.

Botox is a wonderful tool to refresh your face without altering its natural expressions. For brides and grooms, I recommend starting Botox treatments at least three to four weeks before the wedding to ensure optimal results" suggested Dr. Mishra.

Botox is quick, nearly painless, and requires no recovery time. With proper application by an experienced professional, it delivers a radiant and polished look that enhances natural beauty.

## Dermal Fillers: sculpt and define

Dermal fillers are another popular choice for pre-wedding transformations. These are gel-like substances that restore volume, smoothen



wrinkles, and enhance facial contours. From plumping the lips to sculpting the cheeks and jawline, fillers can create a harmonious and balanced facial structure.

Fillers are highly customizable and can address a variety of aesthetic concerns. For those preparing for their big day, fillers can be used to subtly enhance features and restore youthful fullness, ensuring a picture-perfect look. Dr. Shweta Mishra recommends "scheduling filler treatments at least six weeks before the wedding. This allows time for any minor swelling to subside and ensures the results are settled and natural-looking"

These aesthetic treatments are not just for special occasions like weddings; they are perfect for enhancing everyday beauty as well. Botox, fillers, and cosmetic facials provide a quick and

effective way to maintain a youthful, refreshed look, reduce signs of aging, and promote healthy skin. Whether you're preparing for a big event or simply want to feel confident every day, these treatments can effortlessly integrate into your skincare routine, offering long-lasting, natural-looking results.

## Skin boosters: glow and lip lightening procedure

Skin booster therapy is an advanced treatment designed to deeply hydrate and rejuvenate the skin, providing a radiant, youthful glow. By injecting micro-doses of hyaluronic acid into the skin, it helps restore moisture, smoothen texture, and enhances overall skin quality. Additionally, lip lightening treatments can address darkened lips, promoting a natural, pinkish hue. Both procedures offer subtle yet noticeable improvements, leaving you with hydrated skin and lighter, more youthful-looking lips.

Skin booster therapy and lip lightening are fantastic treatments for anyone looking to enhance their natural beauty. "The boost in hydration from skin boosters gives the skin a fresh, glowing appearance, while lip lightening brings out a natural, pink tone, making these treatments perfect for



everyday radiance" said Dr. Shweta Mishra.

## The magic of cosmetic facials

While Botox and fillers work on enhancing facial features and texture, cosmetic facials rejuvenate and brighten the skin. Advanced treatments like hydrafacials, chemical peels, and laser facials are tailored to individual skin needs, ensuring a smooth, radiant complexion.

Cosmetic facials are the foundation of a perfect glow," notes Dr. Mishra. They not only improve skin health but also prepare the skin for makeup application, which is crucial for weddings.

Dr. Mishra highlights the benefits of treatments like hydrafacials, which cleanse, exfoliate, and hydrate the skin, leaving it fresh and glowing. For deeper skin concerns such as pigmentation or acne scars, laser treatments or chemical peels can work wonders.

## Crafting a Pre-Wedding Treatment Plan

To achieve the best results, it's essential to consult with a qualified cosmetic professional well in advance of the wedding. A personalized treatment plan can address individual concerns and ensure that every bride and

groom feels confident on their special day.

"I always recommend starting consultations six months before the wedding," advises Dr. Mishra. "This allows us to create a comprehensive plan, combining treatments like Botox, fillers, and facials, while leaving enough time for the skin to heal and glow naturally."

The perfect wedding glow is no longer a distant dream. With professional cosmetic treatments by experienced doctors you can achieve a radiant, youthful appearance that will make your wedding memories even more beautiful. "When done correctly, aesthetic treatments enhance your natural beauty without making you look overdone," concludes Dr. Shweta Mishra. "The key is to work with a trusted professional who understands your unique needs and goals". As the wedding season approaches, take the first step toward a stunning transformation by consulting a skilled aesthetic physician. After all, your wedding is a celebration of love, and you deserve to shine your brightest.

The author is the Cosmetic and Aesthetic Surgeon from Sharva Clinic in Pitampura, New Delhi.

# Summer skincare for oily & acne-prone skin: A holistic approach

DR. YOGESH SURAAADKAAR

Summer skincare has long been about quick fixes; foaming soap-based cleansers that strip moisture, chemical sunscreens that clog pores, and harsh treatments that do more harm than good. But what if skincare wasn't just about what you put on your skin, but also how you nourish it from within? What if beauty could be pure, potent, and planet-friendly?

The real key to balancing oily and acne-prone skin in summer is a holistic inside-out approach using 100% natural, organic, and sustainable ingredients that work in harmony with your skin's microbiome.

## Cleanse without stripping

Many people make the mistake of over-cleansing using soap-based cleansers with alkaline pH, thinking it will remove excess oil. In reality, it disrupts the skin barrier, triggering more oil production. Instead, a pH-balanced (5.5) gel cleanser infused with Willow Bark Extract (a natural source of salicylic acid) gently unclogs pores, removes excess oil, and prevents breakouts, without irritation.

## Hydration beyond water

Hydration isn't just about drinking water; it's about holding onto it. Enter Tremella Mushroom, nature's answer to hyaluronic acid. This super-hydrator locks in moisture, keeping the skin plump, fresh, and non-greasy. Unlike synthetic moisturizers, a plant-based gel with Tremella mushroom, Aloe vera, and Niacinamide gives hydration without clogging pores.

Rethink sunscreen; protect, don't suffocate



Hydration isn't just about drinking water; it's about holding onto it. Enter Tremella Mushroom, nature's answer to hyaluronic acid. This super-hydrator locks in moisture, keeping the skin plump, fresh, and non-greasy.

Most sunscreens are packed with harmful UV filters that interfere with hormones, damage coral reefs, disrupt marine ecosystems, and leave an unappealing white residue on the skin. The solution? A 100% mineral-based sunscreen with non-nano zinc oxide, red raspberry seed oil, and carrot seed oil, offering broad-spectrum protection (SPF 30+)) without suffocating the skin.

## Feed your skin from within

No skincare routine is complete without inside-out nourishment. A diet rich in omega-3s, turmeric, probiotics, and herbal teas balances oil production, soothes inflammation, and heals the skin at its core. Think gut-loving fermented foods, antioxidant-rich berries, and green leafy vegetables; what you eat reflects on your skin.

A new era of beauty-conscious, sustainable, effective

Skincare shouldn't be about harsh chemicals and empty promises. It should be pure, potent, and purposeful; good for you and great for the planet. This summer, move beyond quick fixes. Choose clean, organic, and sustainable skincare that protects, heals, and enhances your natural beauty; from the inside out. Because beauty isn't just about what you see in the mirror; it's about how you care for yourself and the world around you.

Dr. Yogesh Suradkaar  
Founder & CEO, YOGEE Beauty & Wellness Pvt Ltd



# POETRY IS THE REPLICAS OF MY MOODS: NIGAMA RV



PROF SHIV SETHI

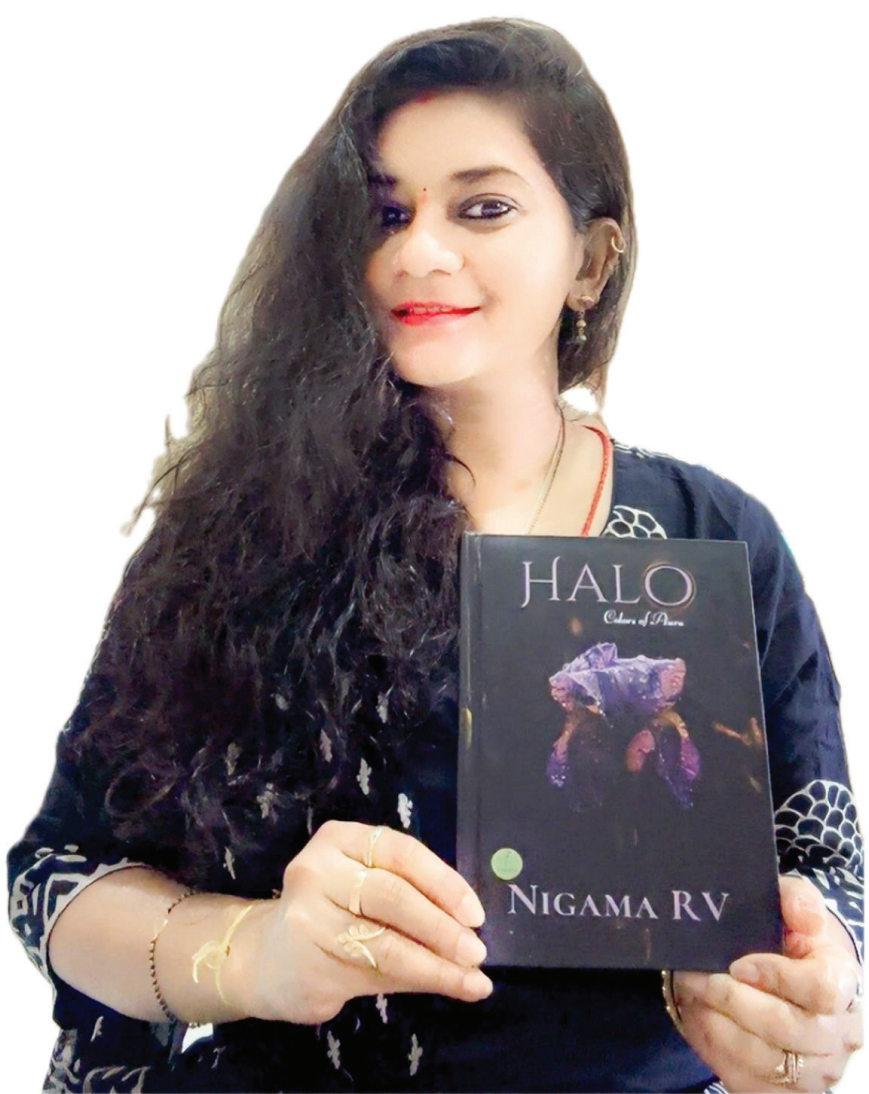
Nigama RV is an award-winning author known for her evocative storytelling and lyrical poetry. Her work explores love, loss, nature, and identity, blending tradition with modern expression. She captures fleeting emotions in vivid imagery, creating deeply personal yet universally resonant pieces. Beyond poetry, she writes fiction, essays, and literary criticism, offering insightful reflections on relationships and society. Featured in literary journals and anthologies, she has earned critical acclaim. An active literary voice, she mentors writers and inspires through workshops and discussions. Prof Shiv Sethi had a conversation with the author. Here are a few excerpts.

Q. How do you define poetry?

A. Poetry is all about how I play with the words, sculpt the thoughts and structure the feelings; I believe that poetry for me is the replica of my moods ever changing and swinging. Putting in the words of Wordsworth, Poetry is the bliss of solitude for me that I cherish with utmost delight.

Q. Author dwell in their dreamy world. Your take on it.

A. Dreams weave fleeting yet profound stories. Some fade, others linger, begging to be written. I embrace them, shaping their surreal echoes into poetry—where reality bends, and magic finds life in verses filled



*Nigama RV is an award-winning author known for her evocative storytelling and lyrical poetry. Her work explores love, loss, nature, and identity, blending tradition with modern expression.*

with possibility. Dreams are my reality recreated in my writings.

Q. How do you handle moments when inspiration seems hard to find?

A. When inspiration hides, I don't chase it. I let it flow. I read, listen, observe and revisit old words. Some-

times, I wait, trusting creativity's rhythm. Patience often brings the best stories alive.

Q. How has your concept of literary inspiration evolved throughout your writing career?

A. I once saw inspiration as rare, but it's everywhere—in

the mundane, in silence, in emotions. It's always present. The key is observing, listening, and letting it shape my words with intention.

Q. How do you handle writer's block?

A. I'm a true pantser—outlining feels unnatural. My characters lead, and I follow. Forcing them is Impossible for me. They rebel, so I surrender, chasing their voices across the page, trusting the journey wherever it goes. When writer's block hits, I step away—read, watch and wander. Anxiety only makes it worse. Instead, I give creativity

space to breathe, trusting that words will return to me when they're ready.

Q. How do you deal with the pressure of meeting deadlines?

A. Deadlines and I don't get along. Creativity resists timers. The moment I see one, my brain does everything but write. I need freedom—pressure stifles me. So, I trust my own rhythm. Creativity cannot be shackled in the fetters of deadlines.

Q. What is unique about your writing style?

A. In fact all writers have their own uniqueness. I think I am blessed with a special knack of transforming abstract ideas into tangible experiences, shaping emotions and thoughts through metaphors. My goal is not just understanding but resonance—crafting words that don't just exist on the pages but linger in the heart.

Q. How do you hope your work will impact your readers?

A. I want my writing to offer comfort, understanding, or reflection to my readers. If my words make my readers experience the intensity of emotions and shift a perspective, I think I have succeeded in creative pursuit. The impact of my books can be only indelible when they resonate well with readers.

Q. Can you share any upcoming projects or plans for your future books?

A. I have several projects ready for publication—Soliloquy 4, a deep dive into emotions; Destiny Awaits, a paranormal YA novel; and Reverie, a collection of one-liners. Each holds a piece of me, waiting to be shared. More beans I cannot spill at the moment.

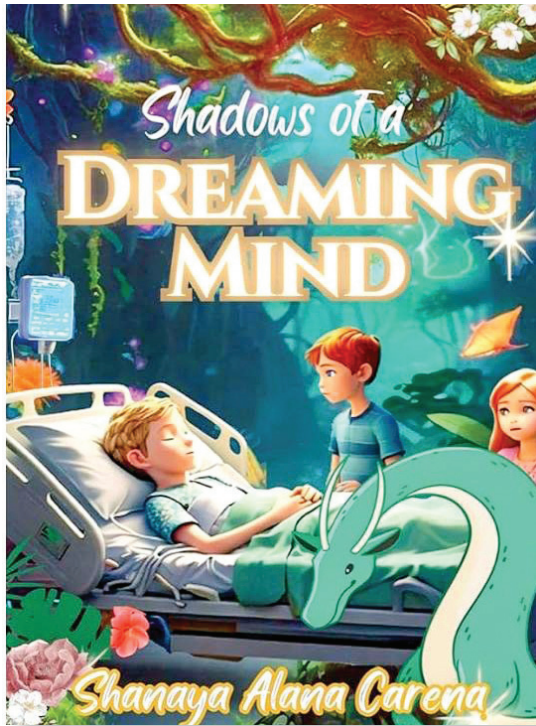
## A Unique Blend of Reality and Fantasy

BY RUPALI SETHI

Shanaya Alana Carena's book, *Shadows of a Dreaming Mind*, is a magical and captivating fantasy that leads readers on a rollercoaster ride into the innermost regions of a dreamscape where reality and fantasy merge. Surprisingly, the author spins a spellbinding narration weaving adventure, friendship, and discovery in her book that will captivate readers of every age.

The story revolves around Dondan, a boy who is lying unconscious in a hospital bed in the real world but sets out on a fantastic adventure in his mind. Carried into a magical world where dreams have life, Dondan and his best friend Kaller enter the kingdom of Frzhodon. Their journey takes them to the Canton of Luck, a land of fortune, magic, and hidden perils. Along the way, they find themselves facing mythical beasts, ancient mysteries, and two enigmatic children who become crucial to their mission. As Dondan explores this magical world, he is challenged by obstacles thus challenging his bravery, wit, and the very fabric of his existence. The question that looms large is: will he ever go back to the waking world, or will he stay in this dream world forever?

Worthy of note are the rich details of *Shadows of a Dreaming Mind*, notably its world-building where Shanaya Alana Carena brings dreamland alive and makes readers immerse in it. Old-world Eveande Carlin's cobblestone streets, old-fashioned buildings, and misty dawn mornings have the vintage vibe that



is the perfect starting point for the adventures of Dondan. Mythical creatures and other-worldly beings such as dragons and mysterious leaf-man Bob are integrated into the narrative, adding depth and fantasy to the story.

The novel is enhanced by its characterisation. Dondan's and Kaller's friendship is warm and realistic, their association the emotional kernel of the novel. Their fascination, humor, and encouragement for each other establish them as natural heroes. The picture of the two mysterious boys creates an aura of suspense, heightening curiosity among readers about their identities and purpose.

What makes *Shadows of a Dreaming Mind* so special is its use of fantasy to explore existential themes. The novel raises questions about the lines between reality and dreams, making the reader wonder if our dreams contain a deeper truth than just imagination.

The beautiful poetic prologue perfectly establishes this introspection with a focus on the blurred boundaries between dreams and reality, question and answer.

Piled on top of the book's appeal are the gorgeous illustrations preceding each chapter. Not only do the illustrations add depth to the reading experience, but they also bring visual shape to the magical world Shanaya Alana Carena has crafted with such tender care. Overall, *Shadows of a Dreaming Mind* is a dazzling first effort by a talented new author. It is a fast-paced blend of adventure, mystery, and philosophy, and for that reason, it is a compelling novel for children as well as adults.

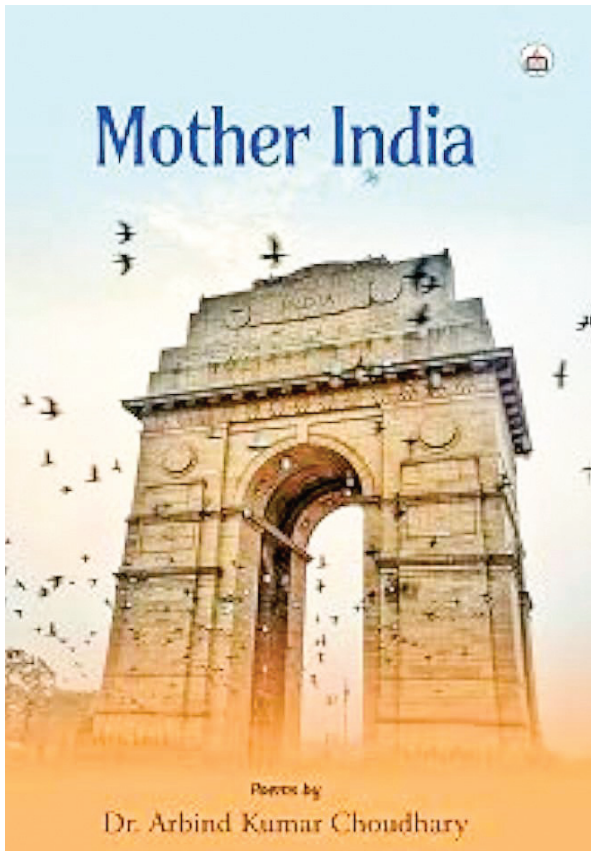
The book is available globally, and the readers are sure to wait in curiosity for Shanaya's next venture. *Rupali Sethi is an eminent literary critic who reviews books for the most prestigious media houses.*

# THE MANTRA OF MOTHER INDIA

PROF DR NAVNEET KAUR

Book *Mother India* that has been remarkably authored by the phrasal monarch Arbind Kumar Choudhary which consists 99 Indianised Version of Arbindonean Sonnets. In this breathtaking anthology the cultural culmination, mythical monarchy, patriotism, spiritual sanctity and lyrical outburst bloom and zoom from one sonnet to another with great poetic perfection and vision. Most of these Arbindonean Sonnets contain three rhymed quatrains and one rhymed couplet that brings to light the junction of the phrasal words wreathed artistically just like the beads of a garland.

When we read this engaging work, we find that the painterly painting of the strife-stricken society created by the poet brings to light the greatness of mother India while the cluster of the mythical gods and goddesses prepares a fertile literary ground for the mythical monarchy of India across the globe. The friendly relation, cultural culmination and above all, Vashudhev Kumbhakam makes India the superpower of the humanity. In the book, our father of nation, Mahatma Gandhi has been presented just like the messiah of the downtrodden and deprived voices while Sardar Patel has been depicted as the master of the unification of India. Vinoba Bhavé's



Bhudan Movement is not less than any other movements in Indian history while Subhash Chandra Bose has been given the title of the man of iron with great might and mane.

India that has been heralded and addressed by a number of names such as Hindustan, Aryavarta, Jambudweep and many others. It has remained a land of gods, goddesses, saints, messiahs, gurus and incarnations from times immemorial. The rhymed passages, various examples of personifications, alliterations and assonances, striking imagery, phrasal clusters, and sensational presen-

tation are the prime poetic qualities of the book *Mother India* that make it a great work of art in Indian English poetry. Buddha has been presented like the celestial Sultan of Hindustan while Mahavir enlightens the intellectual knight for the sound sight of the society. Indians have been reflected as witty as Vidur amidst many a Bhasmasur.

As a social critic, the socialists have been presented as selfish as Dhritrashtra. This couplet contains a cluster of the phrasal words—The merchant of doom is he/Who breaks a butterfly on the wheel for the so-

cial butterfly?/ Here lies another couplet that is the best example of alliteration—Pitambar of Porbander/Perfumes the passage for the pauper./ These fruits—Ramphal, Sitaphal, Hanumanphal, Amritphal and several others enliven the cultural messiahs time and again.

India has been referred as the mythical capital, cultural capital, historical capital, religious capital, and Yoga capital in one Arbindonean sonnet with great poetic beauty. Life is the treasury of misery on this virgin territory. Shravan Kumar's parental love, Modi's diplomacy, Vibhishan's dedication to Janakiraman, Ambedkar's pang of untouchability, Savitri's supreme sacrifice for Satyavan, the cultural river Ganga, Kashinath dynasty and many others leave behind a sense of fragrance for one and all. The uncompromising approach of Vajpayee with corruption makes him the king of morality in the history. Horse trading is a curse for Vajpayee like bird of passage/Who embraces defeat from one vote for morality purpose? The concept of love has been caged in the couplets of this book—What the eye does not see/The heart does not miss?/

Indian cultural heraldry is the artillery of his poetry amidst many a starry territory. A must read!

POEM

## Beauty in ordinary



DR HASEENA KABEER

There is beauty in the quiet moments,  
In the way sunlight filters through the trees.  
In the hum of a busy street,  
The sound of footsteps blending with the rhythm of life.  
A cup of tea, warm in your hands,  
The laughter of friends in a room full of comfort.  
It's in the crack of dawn,  
When the world is just waking up.  
The ordinary holds magic in its simplicity,  
A glance shared, a word unexpressed.  
In the small things, we find peace,  
Like the steady beat of our own heart.  
Beauty is not always grand,  
Sometimes it's found in the stillness of the day.

## An inspiring book offers a glimpse into the struggles, breakthroughs, and dedication of women who have redefined success

TDG NETWORK

*Sheroes Amongst Us- Real Women, Real Stories* an inspiring anthology co-authored by Falguni Desai and Dr. Amit Nagpal featuring extraordinary stories of 32 trailblazing women such as Preeti Vyas, Gauri Devidayal, Ritu Mathur, Arpita Pal, Kirti Makhija, Divya Momaya, Reina Shah and others, who have broken barriers and redefined success.

With stories spanning leadership, entrepreneurship, technology, and social impact, this book offers inspiration, guidance, and reassurance to anyone seeking mentorship or navigating uncharted paths.

*Sheroes Amongst Us* introduces readers to women not all of whose journeys may be in the limelight but some of these unknown unsung stories, are immensely impactful and motivating for many other women who may be facing similar challenges at home, with health and in society. Their experiences remind us that success is not just about fame but about making a real difference in our own and others' lives.

This book covers not only their achievements but also the difficulties they encountered, their tenacity, and the roads they took. The authors have done a great job of capturing the spirit of each woman's journey, and the storyline is captivating. The book moves away

## SHEROES AMONGST US

*Real Women Real Stories*

Falguni Desai | Dr Amit Nagpal

Foreword by  
Shradha Sharma  
Founder & CEO, YourStory Media

Afterword by  
Sachin Karnik  
Founder & CEO, The Great Unicorn Hunt

from superficial notions of empowerment, instead delivering authentic stories of women who've overcome adversity to achieve remarkable feats.

Through inspiring stories, "*Sheroes Amongst Us*" dismantles stereotypes, challenges norms, and creates space for others to dream. The book is a testament to the fact that change is not only possible but inevitable when women lead the charge.

The authors' thoughtful research brings to light some lesser-known figures, offering fresh perspectives on women empowerment that emphasize hard work and determination over superficial trends. The authors have done an outstanding job of weaving together stories

that are not just inspiring but transformative.

"*Sheroes Amongst Us*" is a powerful tribute to women changemakers who have defied the odds to leave an indelible mark across industries. This book is a celebration of resilience, vision, and the unyielding spirit of women who have broken barriers while lifting others along the way.

This book is a reminder that great storytelling has the power to drive widespread change. The stories in "*Sheroes Amongst Us*" are a call to action, inspiring readers to tap into their own potential to create change.

Overall, "*Sheroes Amongst Us*" is a must-read for anyone looking for inspiration, motivation, and transformation.



# KKR DOMINATE SRH WITH 80-RUN WIN AT EDEN GARDENS

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) put up a powerful performance at Eden Gardens, crushing Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) by 80 runs in their latest IPL 2025 clash. The defending champions showcased their all-round excellence, as a stellar batting display from Venkatesh Iyer, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, and Rinku Singh, followed by a clinical bowling effort led by Varun Chakravarthy and Vaibhav Arora, secured their second win of the tournament.

Opting to bat first, KKR got off to a shaky start, losing Quinton de Kock (1) and Sunil Narine (7) in the powerplay. Both fell early to Pat Cummins and Mohammed Shami, leaving KKR in trouble at 16/2 within 2.3 overs. However, a steadying partnership between captain Ajinkya Rahane and young Angkrish Raghuvanshi helped revive the innings.

Rahane played a captain's knock, scoring 38 off 27 balls, which included four sixes and a boundary, before being dismissed by Zeeshan Ansari. Raghuvanshi, on the other hand, impressed once again, bringing up his second IPL fifty. His 50 off 32 balls included five fours and two sixes, helping KKR reach 106/4 in 12.4 overs after his dismissal.

Despite the solid founda-



Kolkata Knight Riders captain Ajinkya Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi run between the wickets during the Indian Premier League 2025 match against Sunrisers Hyderabad, at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Thursday. (ANI Photo)

## Brief Scores

**KKR:** 200/6 (Venkatesh Iyer 60, Angkrish Raghuvanshi 50, Mohammed Shami 1/29)

**SRH:** 120 all out (Heinrich Klaasen 33, Kamindu Mendis 27, Varun Chakravarthy 3/22)

tion, KKR needed a strong finish to post a formidable total, and Venkatesh Iyer and Rinku Singh delivered

in style. Iyer, who initially struggled, quickly found his rhythm and played a game-changing knock. The left-hander hammered a blazing 60 off 28 balls, marking his third consecutive fifty against SRH. His innings featured seven boundaries and three sixes, ensuring KKR gained momentum in the final overs.

At the other end, Rinku Singh played the perfect finisher's role, remaining unbeaten on 32 off 17 balls with four boundaries and

a six. The duo's 91-run partnership for the fifth wicket turned the game in KKR's favor, propelling them to a strong total of 200/6.

Although Iyer was dismissed by Harshal Patel in the last over, his knock had already done the damage, ensuring that SRH would face a challenging chase of 201 runs.

In response, SRH had a horrendous start, losing three key wickets inside the first three overs. Their top order crumbled under

pressure, with Travis Head (4), Abhishek Sharma (2), and Ishan Kishan (2) falling cheaply. The early breakthroughs by Vaibhav Arora and Harshit Rana left SRH reeling at 9/3 in 2.1 overs, making a successful chase unlikely.

Nitish Kumar Reddy and Kamindu Mendis tried to rebuild the innings, with Reddy taking on Vaibhav Arora with a couple of boundaries and a six. However, Andre Russell struck soon after, dismissing Reddy for 19 off 15 balls, pushing SRH further into trouble at 44/4 in 6.4 overs.

Mendis provided some resistance with 27 off 20 balls, but his dismissal in the ninth over further dented SRH's chances. As wickets continued to fall, Aniket Verma (6) and Heinrich Klaasen (33 off 21) were left to salvage the innings. Klaasen showed some fight, smashing two fours and two sixes, but he too fell to Varun Chakravarthy, ending SRH's hopes of a comeback.

KKR's Bowling Master-classThe KKR bowlers ensured that there was no way back for SRH, dismantling their batting lineup within 16.4 overs for just 120 runs. Varun Chakravarthy (3/22) and Vaibhav Arora (3/29) were the standout performers, while Andre Russell (2/21) and Harshit Rana (1/16) chipped in with key wickets.

# Iyer's blazing knock lifts KKR to 200

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) put up a commanding total of 200/6 against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) at Eden Gardens on Thursday, thanks to a strong finish from Venkatesh Iyer and Rinku Singh. Their crucial 91-run partnership propelled KKR past the 200-run mark after a shaky start.

Batting first, KKR had a rocky beginning as Quinton de Kock fell early for 1, dismissed by SRH skipper Pat Cummins. Sunil Narine followed soon after, managing 7 runs before being sent back, leaving KKR at 16/2 within the first 2.3 overs.

However, captain Ajinkya Rahane and youngster Angkrish Raghuvanshi steadied the innings with a crucial 81-run partnership. Rahane played an aggressive knock of 38 off 27 balls,

striking four sixes and a boundary before being dismissed by Zeeshan Ansari.

Raghuvanshi, continuing his fine form, registered his second Indian Premier League (IPL) fifty, scoring 50 off 32 balls with five fours and two sixes. His dismissal at 12.4 overs left KKR at 106/4, putting pressure on the middle order.

With KKR looking uncertain to reach 200, Venkatesh Iyer and Rinku Singh took charge. Iyer, who initially struggled, found his rhythm and hammered a 28-ball 60, marking his third consecutive fifty against SRH. His innings included seven boundaries and three maximums, ensuring momentum for the hosts.

Rinku Singh provided solid support with an unbeaten 32 off 17 balls, smashing four boundaries and a six. Their 91-run stand shifted the tide in KKR's favour, helping them accelerate in the death overs.

Iyer's blistering knock ended in the final over when Harshal Patel dis-

missed him, but by then, KKR had already ensured a competitive total. Andre Russell had minimal impact with the bat, but his contribution wasn't needed, given the explosive finish by Iyer and Rinku.

SRH's bowlers had a mixed outing, with wickets spread unevenly. Pat Cummins, Mohammed Shami, Zeeshan Ansari, Harshal Patel, and Kamindu Mendis

*Raghuvanshi, continuing his fine form, registered his second Indian Premier League (IPL) fifty, scoring 50 off 32 balls with five fours and two sixes. His dismissal at 12.4 overs left KKR at 106/4, putting pressure on the middle order.*

each picked up a wicket but struggled to contain KKR's late onslaught.

With 201 runs required for victory, SRH now faces a challenging chase to secure their second win in IPL 2025.

## Argentina Shooting World Cup: Opening shots set to be fired on Day 1

AGENCIES  
BUENOS AIRES

Competitions for the international season's first International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun, are set to commence in the Argentine capital Buenos Aires and taking aim first-up will be the men's pistol and the men's and women's skeet shooters at the Tiro Federal Argentino de Buenos Aires shooting range, come Thursday.

Day one of the competitions will also see the first of 15 finals with a top-class men's 10m air pistol field including three Indians, Saubh Chaudhary, Ravinder Singh and Varun Tomar, looking to give their respective countries a golden start to the tournament and in fact, the year.

Meanwhile, the men's and women's Skeet competitions will have only the first two qualifying rounds comprising 25 targets each played out on day one. All 15 finals



can be streamed live on the official ISSF YouTube channel. Over 400 shooters, including a galaxy of reigning and former Olympic and World champions from as many as 45 countries, will compete for 15 gold medals on offer, looking to begin the year on a high. This includes a block of 23 athletes who will be participating as Individual Neutral Athletes (AIN). The ISSF World Cup stages, after the Olympics and the World Championships, are the highest level of competition in the sport. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) had an-

nounced a 35-member team for the Argentina World Cup with double Olympic bronze medalist Manu Bhaker competing in two individual and one mixed team event. Nine of the 35 will be in action on Thursday. The qualifications begin at 5.45 pm IST and the final will start at 8 pm IST.

The men's air pistol field is 40-strong and is probably the only one having all three Paris medalists listed to start in China's Olympic Champion Xie Yu and Italians Federico Maldini and Paolo Monna who won silver and bronze respectively.

## Kavin, Aadithya, Aakansha shine bright in shooting

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Empowered by the Gagan Narang Sports Foundation's Para Project Leap, three talented shooters-Kavin Kengnalkar, Aadithya Giri, and Aakansha-accomplished remarkable achievements at the Khelo India Para Games 2025. The event occurred from March 20-27 in New Delhi, with the shooting competitions conducted at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range from March 21-25, according to the SAI Media press release.

Kavin Kengnalkar and Aadithya Giri demonstrated exceptional talent in the R1 10m Air Rifle Standing Men SH1 competition, earning silver and bronze medals, respectively. In addition, Aakansha secured a bronze medal in the R2 10m Air Rifle Women Standing division, further enhancing her accomplishments. Aadithya Giri, a 25-year-old shooter from Chennai, has battled



Spina Bifida since birth and underwent surgery on the day he was born.

Reflecting on his journey and the impact of the Para Project Leap, Aadithya said, "I have been associated with the Gun for Glory Academy and Para Project Leap from the start. It has provided me with everything—from training to personal growth. It is a great initiative for para athletes and shooters, motivating us to improve and perform better. Gagan Narang, sir, who is also my idol, is an incredible mentor for every shooter out there and not just para-athletes." Aadithya Giri said as per the SAI Media press release. He

further lauded the Khelo India initiative and shared how it has helped the athletes gain recognition: "Khelo India Para Games is a great step toward making the Indian sports culture more inclusive. It has provided us a platform where both top-tier and junior athletes can compete together and polish their skills by learning from each other," he added. Aakansha, originally from Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, encountered a transformative event when she lost her left leg above the thigh in a train accident in 2008. Committed to reconstructing her life, she discovered comfort in sports, taking up shooting in 2016.

## 17-year-old Kriish Tyagi gears up for Junior Grand Slams

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU

Kriish Tyagi is on the brink of a defining year in his young career. India's number one ranked junior tennis star has been steadily making strides across both junior and senior circuits.

Tyagi, 17, is now preparing for a crucial stretch of tournaments, including the Junior Grand Slams, that could shape his future in the sport.

Most recently, he was in action at the ongoing SM Krishna Memorial Open in his hometown of Bengaluru, where he lost to SD Prajwal Dev in the opening round. However, the teenager is far from disheartened.

Reflecting on the match, he highlighted the adjustment to conditions as a challenge. "It's always nice to play at home but I'm coming from Ahmedabad, where the conditions were different. When I played today, I felt like the



balls were flying out even when I was timing them. In Ahmedabad, it wasn't the same, and I think the altitude change had an effect." He also admitted that he struggled to find his rhythm early on. "I felt like he started very well, and I wasn't into the game as much as he was. I didn't start that well, I was very rough in the beginning." Before the SM Krishna Memorial Open, Tyagi made an impressive run at the ITF M25 Ahmedabad Open, where he progressed to the semifinals but lost to eventual champion Aryan Shah.

## Manisha Bhanwala wins gold in Jordan, sets sights on Olympics

MANOJ JOSHI  
NEW DELHI

Indian wrestler Manisha Bhanwala has brought glory to the country by securing a gold medal at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Amman, Jordan. This victory marks India's first gold in the tournament since Navjot Kaur's triumph in 2018. The Rohtak-based wrestler returned home to a hero's welcome, proudly wearing her hard-earned medal.

Manisha's final bout was a test of both skill and resilience. Facing a North Korean opponent, she initially struggled to adjust to the fabricated wrestling style and found herself trailing



by five points—a significant disadvantage in modern wrestling. However, she maintained her composure and executed a stunning comeback in the final 18 seconds, securing crucial points to claim victory.

Crediting her coach Virender Dahiya, who has been training her for 14 years, Manisha highlighted the importance of his guidance during criti-

cal moments. She also acknowledged the support of fellow wrestler Mandip and the rigorous training at Chhotu Ram Stadium in Rohtak, which helped her prepare for high-pressure matches.

Reflecting on her journey, Manisha recalled several turning points in her career, including winning gold at the World Cadet Championship, competing

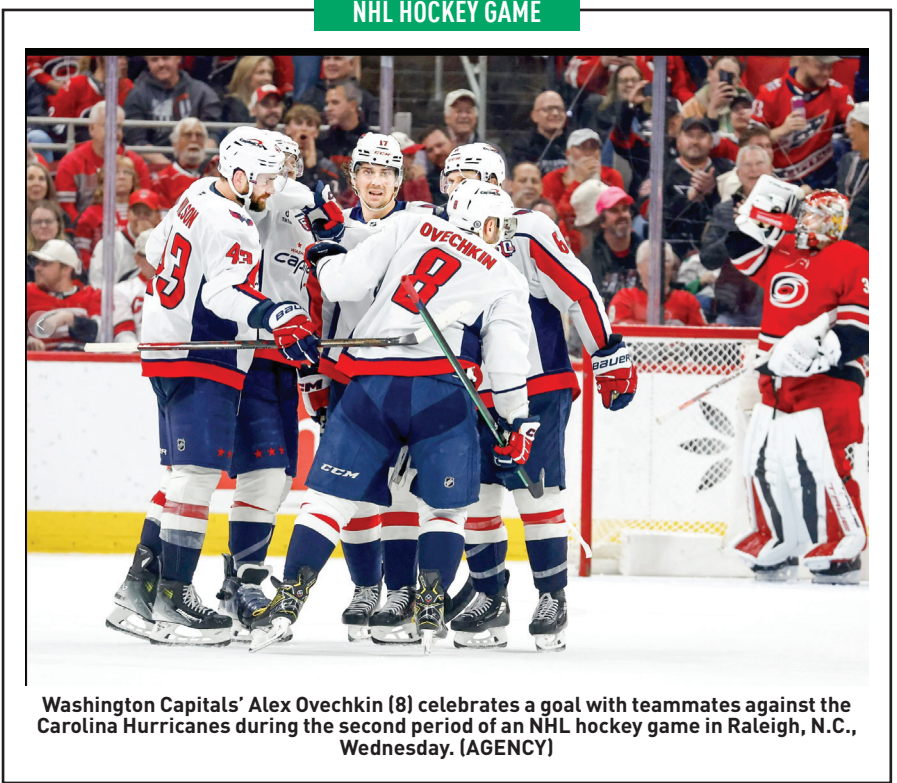
in the Pro Wrestling League against international opponents, and securing gold at the Bishkek Ranking Tournament. However, she believes that each competition contributes uniquely to her growth, building confidence and refining her techniques.

The triumph in Jordan comes after a personal tragedy that tested her resilience. Just before the Asian Championship two years ago, Manisha lost her father, an emotional setback that she struggled to accept. She credits her family's support for helping her stay focused on her wrestling career, emphasizing that her father's encouragement continues to inspire her.

With this victory, Manisha now shifts her focus to the World Wrestling Championships, which she considers her next big challenge. She believes that training camps play a crucial role in refining her skills, as they provide opportunities to practice with the country's top wrestlers.

Beyond the World Championships, she has set her sights on competing at the Asian Games and ultimately, qualifying for the Olympics.

As she looks ahead, Manisha remains determined to bring further glory to India, confident that this gold is just the beginning of her journey toward even greater achievements.



Washington Capitals' Alex Ovechkin (8) celebrates a goal with teammates against the Carolina Hurricanes during the second period of an NHL hockey game in Raleigh, N.C., Wednesday. (AGENCY)