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STALIN HOLDS MLAS' MEET TO DISCUSS TAMIL NADU'S EXEMPTION FROM NEET



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US-IRAN INDIRECT TALKS: CAN DIPLOMACY PREVENT THE NEXT MAJOR WAR?



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ARSENAL THRASH REAL MADRID, INTER EDGE BAYERN IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTERS

TRADE WAR ESCALATES AS CHINA RETALIATES WITH 84% TARIFF ON US

Beijing files a lawsuit against US with the WTO

AGENCIES
BEIJING

In a retaliatory move, China on Wednesday announced it will increase its tariff on US goods from 34 per cent to 84 per cent starting April 10, Al Jazeera reported.

The decision comes after the United States increased tariffs on China to a whopping 104 per cent, following US President Donald Trump's threat of "additional 50 per cent tariffs" on Beijing starting Wednesday. Trump had announced an additional 50 per cent tariff on China after Beijing announced 34 per cent tariff on the United States in tit-for-tat response.

Trump had said if China did not withdraw its 34 per cent increase in 24 hours, the United States would impose additional tariffs and all talks with China concerning their requested meetings will be terminated.

The 50-point rise in tariff by China mirrors the additional 50 per cent tariff introduced by the US.

Beijing announced the tariffs after the White House on Tuesday (local time) announced the imposition of a 104 per cent tariff on

China starting Wednesday, marking a significant escalation amid the tariff tension which have shaken the markets.

During a press briefing, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt emphasised that it was a "mistake" for China to retaliate against the US, asserting that when America is challenged, the response is forceful and unyielding.

"It was a mistake for China to retaliate. When America is punched, He punches back harder. That's why there will be 104 per cent tariffs going into effect on China tonight... If China reaches out to make a deal, he will be incredibly gracious," Leavitt declared.


Leavitt stated that the new tariffs come as part of an ongoing effort by the Trump administration to address what it deems unfair trade practices that have led to job losses and economic strain on American workers. She sharply criticised China's trade policies, accusing the nation of exacerbating economic issues for American workers.

"President Trump made it very clear that the era of American economic surrender is over. President

TOUGH TIMES AHEAD

The US additional tariff measures seriously violate WTO rules, a spokesperson of the Commerce Ministry in China

The new tariffs on both sides will hit about \$575 billion bilateral trade with \$430 billion Chinese exports to the US.



The US trade deficit with China last year totalled USD 295.4 billion, according to official figures.

'Tariff-hit countries dying to make a deal'


AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said that countries affected by US tariffs are eager to negotiate and make deals with him.

Trump said he was a better negotiator than Congress. "I'm telling you these countries are calling us up, kissing my a**. They are dying to make a deal please sir make a deal, I'll do anything, I'll do anything sir", he said.

I'm telling you- these countries are calling us up, kissing my a**. They are dying to make a deal- please sir make a deal, I'll do anything....

- Donald Trump



Russia invites PM Modi for Victory Day Parade on May 9

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Russia has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the May 9 celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of victory over Germany in World War II, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko has said.

Moscow is expecting the Indian Prime Minister at the May 9 parade. The invitation has already been sent and the visit is being worked out, Rudenko was quoted as saying by the state-run Tass news agency.

"It's being worked out...He has an invitation," Rudenko said on Tuesday.

Russia has invited leaders of several friendly nations



PM Modi with President Vladimir Putin File photo

to attend this year's Victory Day parade.

In January 1945, the Soviet Army launched an offensive against Germany. The commanders-in-chief on May 9 signed the Act of Unconditional Surrender of Germany which ended

the war.

In July last, Prime Minister Modi visited Moscow to attend the 22nd Russia-India summit, his first trip to the country in nearly five years. He had visited the far eastern city of Vladivostok

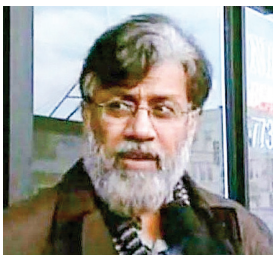
Air India passenger 'urinates' on co-flyer

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

An Indian national allegedly urinated on a fellow passenger aboard Air India flight AI2336, which was en route from Delhi to Bangkok on Wednesday.

The airline confirmed the incident and stated that a standing independent committee would be convened to assess the matter and determine appropriate action.

"Air India confirms that an incident of unruly passenger behaviour was reported to the cabin crew operating flight AI2336, from Delhi to



Misri were also present, the sources said without elaborating on the issues discussed at the meeting.

Your EMI burden will ease now as RBI cuts key rate for 2nd time

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Home, auto and other retail loans are likely to become cheaper as the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on Wednesday announced a 25-basis-point (bps) cut in the repo rate to 6 per cent to support economic growth amid growing global uncertainties. Further, it signalled more easing to come.

The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends money to banks to meet their short-term funding needs. With a 25 bps cut in the repo rate, all external benchmark lending rates (EBLR) linked to it will come down.

The move lowers borrowing costs to the lowest level since November 2022, amid easing inflation and a fall in oil prices.


RBI changed its policy stance to "accommodative" from "neutral", indicating the possibility of more rate cuts in future, Governor Sanjay Malhotra said while

DOVISH

Repo rate cut 25 basis points to 6% .

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RBI changed its policy stance to "ac-

commodative" from "neutral"

RBI also lowered its estimate for economic growth to 6.5 per cent for 2025-26 fiscal year from 6.7 per cent earlier.

Inflation projection also lowered to 4 per cent from 4.2 per cent

announcing the MPC decisions.

RBI also lowered its estimate for economic growth to 6.5 per cent for 2025-26 fiscal year from 6.7 per cent earlier. The inflation projection was also lowered to 4 per cent from 4.2 per cent, keeping it within the target range of 2-6 per cent.

The Indian economy grew by 6.5 per cent in the fiscal year ended March 31 (2024-25), its weakest pace since the pandemic.

State Bank of India (SBI) chairman CS Setty said the

revision of stance to accommodative will cushion the secondary impact of tariffs on the domestic economy.

DK Srivastava, Chief Policy Advisor, EY India, said the central bank recognises that global uncertainties will have an adverse impact on India's growth prospects.

RBI's unanimous 25bps rate cut and stance change to "accommodative" reflect the uncertain global environment and benign inflation environment; the change in stance provides a directional easing bias going forward,

said Ms. Madhavi Arora, Chief Economist, Emkay Global Financial Services.

"A periodic injection of monetary stimulus supported by maintenance of adequate liquidity conditions and healthy domestic economic conditions, including robust agricultural prospects, will help India maintain a reasonably high GDP growth in the presence of a likely global growth slowdown. The expectation is that RBI will continue the downward rate cycle by re-

AICC resolution is more about attacking BJP, less about future course of action

ANAND SINGH
AHMEDABAD

The Congress on Wednesday passed the Nyay Path (Sankalp, Samarpan, Sangharsh) resolution at the AICC session here, reiterating its commitment to social justice, economic and political as laid down in the Constitution

It also stressed that the "pseudo-nationalism of the BJP and RSS is nothing but sheer opportunism for power" and their goal is not unifying nationalism, but a Machiavellian quest for ex-



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge in a conversation with senior leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi during the AICC session in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. ANI

THOSE UNWILLING TO PERFORM MUST RETIRE: KHARGE'S STERN WARNING TO PARTY WORKERS

exploitative power.

The Nyay Path resolution mentioned the Congress vision on pressing issues facing the nation. It also has a message for the party

workers to fight unitedly towards the cause of the nation and to take the fight against the BJP-RSS regime to the last mile.

"The BJP-RSS model of nationalism aims to erase India's diversity. The nationalism espoused by the Congress is deeply embedded in our shared heritage, while that of the BJP-RSS is marred by vitriol and prejudice," read the resolution which was unanimously passed after extensive deliberations, in presence of Congress president Mal-

Ram Rahim gets another furlough

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Controversial jailed Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been granted a 21-day furlough and he walked out of the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak on Wednesday morning



He was convicted in a rape and murder case, was granted 30 days parole by the Haryana government. Earlier, he was granted one month's parole in January, ahead of Delhi Assembly Elections. He was even allowed to visit the Sirsa Dera headquarters, first time since his conviction in 2017. During his previous paroles, he stayed at the Shah Satnam Ashram in Uttar

Tihar ready as NIA team likely to land in Delhi with Tahawwur Rana today

AGENCIES
NEW YORK/NEW DELHI

Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana is expected to be extradited to India from the US "shortly", sources have said.

According to government sources in India, a multi-agency team from India has gone to the US and all paperwork and legalities

are being completed with US authorities.

Sources said "very high possibility" that Rana "could be extradited shortly."

Meanwhile in New Delhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Wednesday,

sources said.

The meeting came against the backdrop of reports of the imminent extradition of Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana from the US.

The home minister held a meeting the external affairs minister and the NSA. Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka and Foreign Secretary Vikram

PERFORM OR RETIRE: KHARGE’S STERN WARNING TO CONGRESS WORKERS

Says party follows principles of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, attacks BJP-led Centre for destroying democracy

ANAND SINGH
AHMEDABAD


In a stern message to party leaders, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday said those unwilling to contribute to party work should “take rest,” while those not ready to fulfil responsibilities should consider “retiring” while he also reiterated those who do not help in party work, need to rest, those who do not fulfil their responsibilities must retire.”

He said the election institutions are under the control of the ruling dispensation and it is increasing its dominance by interfering in every institution.

Addressing the AICC Session here, in presence of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Kharge said, “Those who do not help in party work, need to rest, those who do not fulfil their

‘CENTRE INTERFERING IN EVERY INSTITUTION’

- Addressing the AICC Session here, Kharge said, “Those who do not help in party work, need to rest, those who do not fulfil their responsibilities must retire.”
- “Today the government is trying to expand its influence from the Election Commission to the Parliament. The institutions conducting elections are under the control of the government, Kharge said.



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge addresses the gathering during the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session, at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Memorial in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. (ANI Photo)

responsibilities must retire.” Emphasising Congress’s ideological roots, he said the party follows the principles of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel. “From the banks of Sabarmati, we are going to take the message of determination, struggle and dedication to walk on the path of justice,” Kharge said. “I also want to say that those who do not help in party work, need to rest, those who do not fulfil their responsibilities must retire,” he said.

Targeting the Central government, he said, “Today the government is trying to expand its influence from the Election Commission to the Parliament. The institutions conducting elections are under the control of the government. The government is increasing its dominance by interfering in every institution.” Referring to Maharashtra Assembly elections, he called the outcome “fraud and attack on the Constitution to destroy democracy”.

The Congress chief said Leader of Opposition Gandhi had raised the issue related to Maharashtra elections in the House, but it did not have any impact on the government. Claiming that between the MahaAssembly polls and the Lok Sabha elections, the number of voters increased by lakhs, he said, “What kind of EC is this, what kind of democracy is this? They won the elections by making everything fake. This is fraud and an attack on democracy.” He said the

Singhvi criticises Centre on Constitutional norms, calls for caste census

ABHINANDAN MISHRA
NEW DELHI

At the second and the last day of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session in Ahmedabad, party leader Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and Chairman of the Law, Human Rights and RTI department of the AICC, attacked the central government regarding its respect for constitutional norms and democratic processes while demanding a nationwide caste census to ensure social justice and equitable distribution of resources.

Singhvi alleged that the BJP led National Democratic Alliance government was systematically undermining the fundamental pillars of India’s democratic framework.

A significant portion of Singhvi’s address addressed the contentious issue of fed-



eralism as he cited the recent intervention by the Supreme Court in the prolonged delay of assent to bills passed by the Tamil Nadu state legislature by the Governor as a glaring example of what he termed executive overreach and a blatant disregard for the spirit of cooperative federalism enshrined in the Constitution. “The decision came later, the violation happened first,” Singhvi stated, alleging a pattern of the central government and its appointees undermining

the autonomy of state governments. The Congress MP also voiced strong concerns over the alleged suppression of dissenting voices and the weakening of parliamentary accountability. He specifically highlighted the perceived denial of adequate speaking time and opportunities to the Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi in both houses of Parliament.

The Congress leader further questioned what he termed as Prime Minister Modi’s extended silence on the Manipur crisis as a stark illustration of the government’s lack of responsiveness and transparency on critical national issues.

It is worth noting, however, the PM has spoken on the Manipur issue. In July last year, while speaking in the Rajya Sabha, PM Modi had said that efforts were on to

bring peace in the state. “We have to rise above politics to bring normalcy. The elements who are trying to add fuel to the fire in Manipur should stop. There will be a time when Manipur will reject them. There is a long history of social tensions which are deep-rooted... We have to act wisely. Whoever wants to contribute to peace-building is welcome,” the Prime Minister had said. Singhvi repeated the party’s ongoing demand for a comprehensive, nationwide caste census. “It is the party’s firm belief that the absence of accurate and up-to-date socio-economic data on caste demographics was a significant impediment to achieving genuine social justice and ensuring the equitable allocation of welfare schemes and developmental resources.

Police lathi-charges schoolteachers protesting job loss in Kolkata

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

Schoolteachers in West Bengal who lost their jobs due to the inability of the State Government to segregate those who had paid money to Trinamool Congress leaders in exchange for jobs, faced police lathi-charge while demonstrating outside the offices of the District Inspectorate of Schools.

The protesting schoolteachers organised rallies and orchestrated sit-ins outside the Inspector of Schools offices in several districts after a Supreme Court order annulled the appointments of more than 25,000 West Bengal school staff. Protesters demonstrated in Kolkata and towns like Barasat, Mur-



shidabad, Medinipur, Malda, Tamluk, Berhampur, Purulia and Bardhaman. Chaos also broke out at Acharya Sadan, the head office of the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC), as some teaching and non-teaching staff protested in front of the office. In Kasba in South Kolkata, the protesters scaled

the locked gates of the District Inspectorate of Schools office following which they were lathi-charged by the police. The police resorted to the lathi charge to disperse the protesters and kicked a few of them. The police issued a statement that four male and two female police personnel sustained injuries in an “unprovoked attack” by the protesters. Kolkata Police chief Manoj Verma alleged that the police retaliated after being attacked by the protestors who tried to damage Government property.

On April 3, the Supreme Court termed the 2016 School Service Commission (SSC) recruitment process as “vitiated and tainted by fraud”, and upheld a Calcutta High Court order on an alleged school jobs scam case.



wall of the South Building, all 24 Tirthankaras are depicted together,” PM Modi highlighted.

“fraud” that was committed in the Maharashtra assembly elections has never happened in the country before and this was done only to destroy democracy.

“We are working on the irregularities in voters list. We will have to fight this,” the Congress chief said.

Mentioning EVMs, Kharge said developed countries all over the world have abandoned EVMs and moved towards ballot papers. “Many countries in the world are not using EVMs, but we are dependent on EVMs.

This is all fraud. The government has devised such methods which are benefiting only them, but in the coming times, the youth of the country will stand up and say that we do not want EVMs,” he said. Accusing the BJP of attacking the Constitution since it came to power, the Cong chief said, “In the last 11 years, our constitutional values, constitutional provisions, constitutional institutions are being constantly attacked.”

No organisational overhaul, Rahul focuses on backward class agenda

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The Congress convention held on the banks of the Sabarmati in Gujarat was aimed at strengthening the party’s grassroots structure and reinforcing its appeal to various communities. From this convention, we can draw three major inferences regarding the party’s future direction.

A clear takeaway from the convention was Congress’s strategy to further hone Rahul Gandhi’s political focus on the backward classes. The party plans to deepen its commitment to justice and equality by using the Constitution as its foundational guide. This approach is seen as a response to the BJP, with Congress aiming to galvanize support from the OBCs and advocating for the caste census. By emphasizing these issues, the party seeks to position itself as a champion of social justice and to

Rahul slams Waqf Act, PM’s silence over US tariff

ANAND SINGH
AHMEDABAD

Amid the debate on reciprocal tariff imposed by US President Donald Trump, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on second day of the AICC Session here in Ahmedabad warned that the economic typhoon is going to come and also called the contentious Waqf Act an “assault” on the Constitution and freedom of religion.

He also said that the party will demolish the wall that is restricting reservation to 50 per cent for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) while pushing for a caste census across the country.

The Gandhi scion while addressing the party leaders and workers here at the Sabarmati Riverfront said, “Waqf Bill (now Act) was passed by the BJP few days back. It is an assault on freedom of religion, Constitution.”

This was Rahul Gandhi’s, who is also the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha, maiden public remarks on the Waqf issue as he dubbed the Bill as anti-Constitution and anti-re-



Warns of economic ‘toofan’ over US reciprocal tariff on India, calls Waqf Act anti-Constitution

ligion. The former Congress chief also brought up a now-deleted article in the Organiser, the mouthpiece of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the ideological mentor of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, as he mentioned that how “soon after (the Bill’s passage), they (RSS) write that they are going to attack the land of Christians, then they will go to Sikhs”.

“So you don’t think that you have not been attacked. We want every community, religion, language should get respect and place in the

empowering the new generation and revamping its organizational structure. One of the key decisions discussed at the convention was strengthening the party at the district level. The central organization, however, will remain largely unchanged. The real shift will occur at the grassroots level, with the election of new district presidents. These district leaders will play a pivotal role in selecting candidates for future Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. By empowering district-level leaders, Congress hopes to reinvigorate the party at the grassroots and reconnect with local communities. This also signals a shift away from top-heavy leadership, focusing more on regional and local dynamics.

Despite these changes at the grassroots level, the convention also revealed the continued dominance of Rahul Gandhi within the party.

BJP president poll hangs in balance amid delays in state heads polls in 13 states

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The suspense over the name of new BJP president has yet not been revealed. There were speculations that following PM Narendra Modi’s visit to Nagpur in the RSS headquarters the name would be unveiled. But the name is still hanging in thin air. Doubts have emerged about the election of the new president before the BJP’s National Council meeting on the 18th of this month. The process for se-



lecting the new party president has stalled for now, leaving the situation unclear and uncertain as the party waits for a decision.

The BJP had planned to discuss the election process for the national president in an upcoming meeting,

but the elections for state presidents remain incomplete in several major states. States such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Haryana, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Punjab, and West Bengal have yet to conduct elections. Notably, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are significant because state elections are scheduled next year. It is believed that a decision on the new state president

country. We want the country to belong to everyone,” the Congress Lok Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh’s Raebareilly said. Rahul Gandhi and his sister and party MP from Kerala’s Wayanad Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had faced criticism for not participating in the Waqf Bill debate in Lok Sabha.

Meanwhile, Priyanka Gandhi also skipped the voting on waqf Bill in Parliament and the Ahmedabad meet because she is abroad after informing the party leadership.

Mentioning about the caste census exercise taken up by the Congress led Telangana government, Rahul Gandhi said, “In Telangana, Revanth Reddy’s government carried out caste census. And 90 per cent of the population consists of OBCs, extremely backward classes, Dalits, extremely marginalised Dalits, minorities, and tribals. But if you look at Telangana’s corporate sector, check the list of owners, CEOs, and senior management, you won’t find a single person from this 90 percent population segment.”

Naveen calls for unity, defends Pandian amid rift over Waqf

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Amid signs of internal rift in the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) over the controversial Waqf Amendment Bill, party chief and former Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday came out in strong defence of his close aide VK Pandian, while calling for unity.

Patnaik also came down heavily on his party colleagues for holding large meetings in hotels amid growing internal rift following party members’ split voting on the Bill in Rajya Sabha five days ago.

The remarks of the former Chief Minister came after signs of rift emerged following the BJD leaders divided in the Rajya Sabha with MPs casting split votes, which has been so far known for its discipline.

Jainism’s role in strengthening India’s identity has been invaluable, says PM Modi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday highlighted Jainism’s invaluable role in shaping India’s identity, emphasizing the nation’s unwavering commitment to preserve this rich heritage.

Addressing a gathering at the ‘Navkar Mahamantra Divas’ at Vigyan Bhawan in the national

capital, PM Modi pointed to its presence in India’s cultural fabric, including its reflection in the newly inaugurated Parliament, which he described as the “temple of our democracy.” “The role of Jainism in strengthening the identity of India has been invaluable. Our commitment to preserve this precious heritage is visible everywhere, even in the new Parliament,

the temple of our democracy,” the Prime Minister said. “As soon as you enter the Parliament building through the ‘Shardul Dwar’, you can see the ‘Sammed Shikhar’ in the ‘Shatapatha’ gallery. In the Lok Sabha, there is a statue of a Tirthankara. This statue was brought from Australia. There is also a remarkable painting of Lord Mahavir. On the

Earlier, Prime Minister Modi also emphasized the importance of Jain literature in shaping India’s rich intellectual and spiritual heritage, calling it the “backbone of India’s intellectual grandeur.” “The literature of Jainism is the backbone of India’s intellectual grandeur. Preserving this knowledge is our duty,” he stated. The Prime Minister high-

lighted the government’s decision to grant Prakrit and Pali classical language status, two ancient Indian languages deeply intertwined with Jain and Buddhist traditions. “That is why we have granted Classical Language status to Prakrit and Pali,” he said, underlining the cultural and scholarly significance of these languages. PM Modi recalled his

early spiritual exposure to Jain teachings. “I was born in Gujarat, where the influence of Jainism is visible in every street.

Since childhood, I have been in the company of Jain Acharyas,” he said, adding that chanting the Navkar Mantra is a moment of deep reverence as “we bow to the Panch Parmeshthi.” Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi inaugurated the Navkar Mahamantra Divas at Vigyan Bhawan in the national capital, marking a significant spiritual and cultural event dedicated to the revered Jain chant.

The Navkar Mahamantra, also known as the Namokar Mantra, is a universal prayer revered in Jainism and recited for inner peace, spiritual upliftment, and non-violence.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON TAHAWWUR RANA'S EXTRADITION

74% believe Tahawwur Rana should be hanged

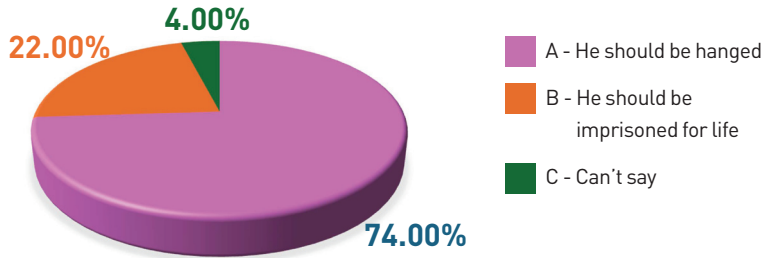
Tahawwur Rana, accused in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, is being extradited from the US to India,

where he will face trial. A multi-agency team will escort him, with plans to lodge him in Tihar Jail. In-

dia assured the US of his safety after concerns were raised about torture and legal aid access during custody.

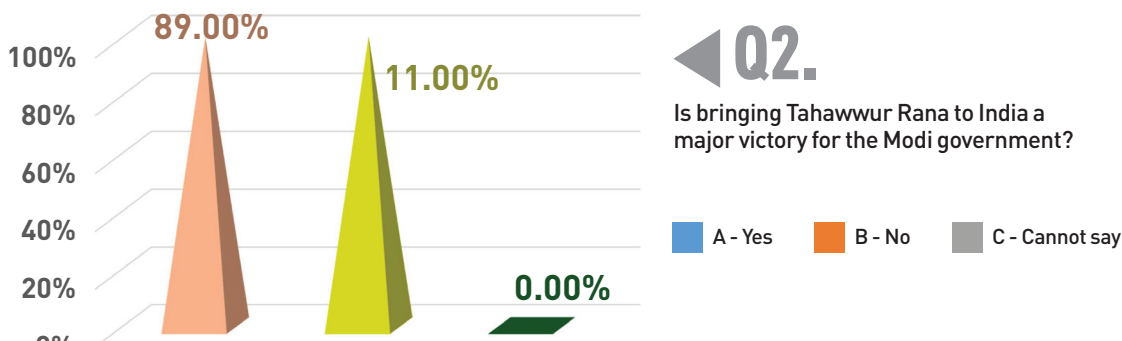
Q1.▶

The 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana is being brought to India. What is your opinion?



Q2.◀

Is bringing Tahawwur Rana to India a major victory for the Modi government?



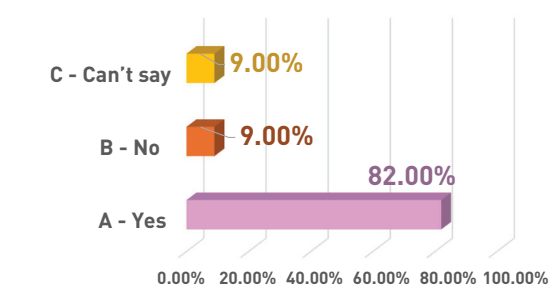
Q3.▶

After Rana's extradition, will it become easier for India to bring back other enemies of the country hiding in foreign nations?



Q4.◀

After Rana's extradition, will Pakistan be internationally exposed regarding the 26/11 attacks?



THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BENGAL VIOLENCE ON WAQF AMENDMENT BILL

34% believe President's Rule should be imposed in West Bengal

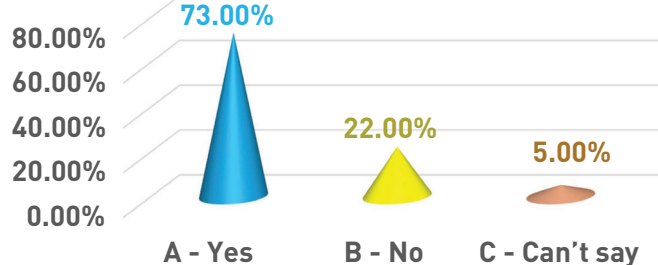
Violence erupted during an anti-Waqf protest in Murshidabad's Jangipur, leading to 22 arrests and a suspension of internet services. A

48-hour prohibitory order was imposed, banning gatherings of five or more people. According to officials, multiple groups organised rallies

and blocked a national highway. Clashes began when police attempted to clear the blockade, said District Magistrate Rajarshi Mitra.

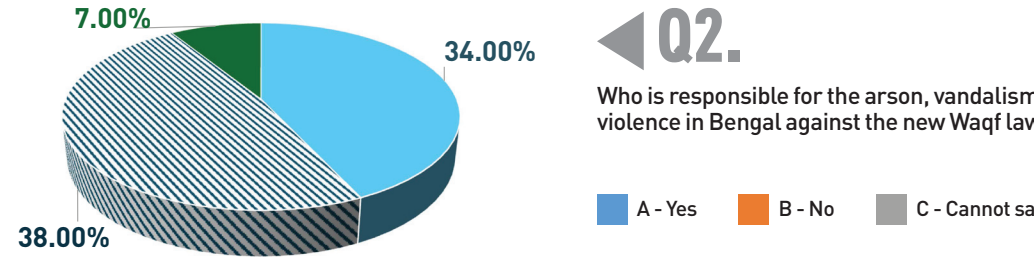
Q1.▶

Mamata said, "The Waqf law will not be implemented in Bengal." Does this statement encourage violence in Bengal?



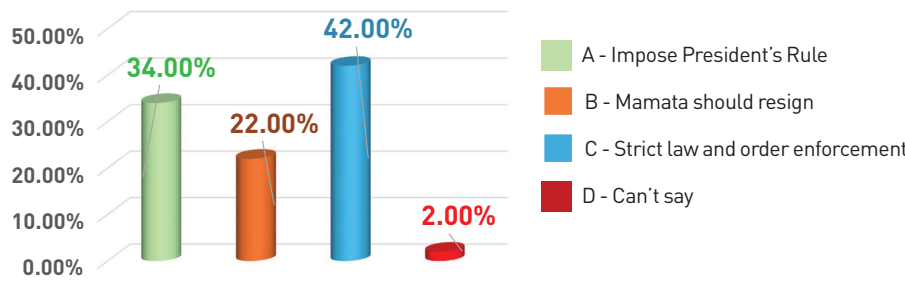
Q2.◀

Who is responsible for the arson, vandalism, and violence in Bengal against the new Waqf law?



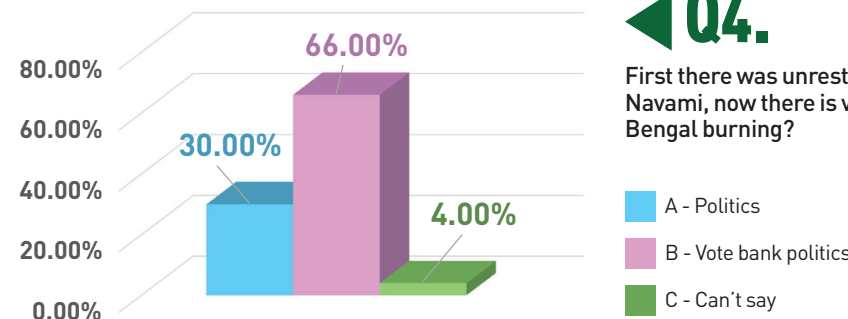
Q3.▶

Violence keeps recurring in West Bengal. How can it be stopped?



Q4.◀

First there was unrest during the Hindu festival Ram Navami, now there is violence over Waqf. Why is Bengal burning?



Trade war escalates as China retaliates with 84% tariff

CONTINUED FROM P1

Trump is no longer going to allow American workers and companies to be ripped off at the hands of foolish trade practices that shift away millions of high-paying jobs and hollow out communities across the country," the White House Press Secretary said.

"Countries like China, who have chosen to retaliate and try to double down

on their mistreatment of American workers, are making a mistake. President Trump has a spine of steel, and he will not break, and America will not break under his leadership," she added.

Leavitt further stated that there was no consideration made by President Trump on either "extension or delay" of the tariffs but that he "is willing to pick up the phone and talk."She noted

that "since the Liberation Day announcement, nearly 70 countries have already reached out to the president to begin a negotiation."

She also mentioned that Trump has directed his trade team to have "tailor-made trade deals with each and every country that calls up this administration to strike a deal."Leavitt also discussed the broader strategy behind the tariffs, explaining that the tariffs

were focused not only on monetary tariffs imposed by other nations on US goods but also on non-monetary barriers that hinder American trade.

"The reciprocal tariff rates that were implemented by country were focused on the monetary tariff that those countries have imposed on the US but also the non-monetary tariff barriers," she added.

Earlier on Sunday, Trump

threatened an additional 50 per cent hike in tariffs on China following Beijing's 34 per cent retaliatory tariff hike after Trump's announcement of reciprocal tariffs during Liberation Day on April 2.

China decried the US tariffs imposed on the country as "groundless" and called them a unilateral bullying practice, as per a spokesperson from China's Ministry of Commerce.

Russia invites PM Modi

CONTINUED FROM P1

in 2019 to attend an economic conclave.

In October last, Modi visited the Russian city of Kazan for the BRICS summit.

During his last visit, Modi invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to visit India.

Putin has already accepted Modi's invitation to visit India. He is expected to travel to India this year

as part of the established framework for reciprocal annual engagements between the leaders of the two nations. However, the dates of Putin's visit have not been revealed yet.

In his congratulatory message to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Modi on the occasion of India's 76th Republic Day in January, Putin said that Russian-Indian relations

are based on "special and privileged strategic partnership".

Putin and Modi maintain regular contact, holding telephone conversations once every couple of months. The two leaders also hold in-person meetings, particularly on the sidelines of international events.

Your EMI burden will ease now

CONTINUED FROM P1

ducing the repo rate all the way to 5.25 per cent by successive reductions of 25 basis points each in the next three rounds," Srivastava said.= The new governor cut rates in his debut policy meeting in February, and has injected more than USD 80 billion into the banking system in the last two months.

Lower interest rates provide relief to businesses and consumers alike, potentially spurring credit demand, investments, and job creation.

Commenting on the MPC decision, Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank, said, "The increasing global turmoil and its spillovers to the Indian growth slowdown will necessitate the MPC for deeper rate cuts.

"We see scope for additional 75-100 basis

point rate cuts in the year ahead, depending on the scale of global slowdown."

Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist at DBS Bank, said recent liquidity management measures have underscored the preference to maintain a surplus balance, thereby keeping the banking system well-oiled and aiding policy transmission.

"Overall, policy guidance remained dovish, while keeping an eye on global uncertainties and the consequent need to maintain stability in domestic financial markets. We expect a further 50 bp of cuts this year," Rao said.

On the impact of global trade and policy uncertainties on growth and inflation, the RBI governor said uncertainty in itself dampens growth by affecting investment and spending decisions of businesses and households.

Air India passenger

CONTINUED FROM P1

Bangkok, on 9 April 2025. The crew followed all laid down procedures, and the matter has been reported to the authorities. In addition to warning the unruly passenger, our crew offered to assist an aggrieved passenger to take up a grievance with authorities in Bangkok, which was declined at

the time," the airline said in a statement.

"The standing Independent Committee will be convened to assess the incident and determine the action, if any, to be taken against the unruly passenger. Air India continues to follow the SOPs as laid out by DGCA in such matters," it added.

AICC resolution is more about attacking BJP

CONTINUED FROM P1

likarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress Parliamentary chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

"The pseudo-nationalism of the BJP and RSS is nothing but sheer opportunism for power and their goal is not unifying nationalism, but a Machiavellian quest for exploitative power," it alleged.

"In order to grab and retain power by any means, they seek to divide the nation along the lines of religion, caste, region, language, attire, and food habits. Their hollow brand of nationalism is symbolised by spread hatred, seize power, and raid, invade and extort donations," the party said.

Accusing the ruling dis-

pensation of attacking the Constitution, the Congress said its systematic and conspiratorial attack on India's Constitutional Institutions is relentless.

"This web of unconstitutionality is being executed by premeditated strikes against different institutions by stripping all semblance of independence and autonomy of Election Commission of India, by a designed bungling in the electoral voter lists, by coercively and forcibly collecting donations through an illegal 'Electoral Bond Scheme', by capturing and enslaving institutions like the CBI, ED, CVC, CAG, CBDT and Income Tax to unleash them against political opponents, writers, thinkers, journalists, artists, film makers, NGO's, civil society members," the

party said.

Several of the party leaders also spoke in favour of the resolutions moved by the party including senior party leader Sachin Pilot, Shashi Tharoor, Imran Pratapgarhi, Kanhaiya Kumar among others.

"A glaring and painful example of calculated decimation of federal structure is denial of Statehood to J&K, despite the promise made by the government in the Parliament on 05 August 2019 and the judgement of the Supreme Court, as also failure to fulfil the aspirations of people of Ladakh. This onslaught now extends to the country's education system by the unilateral imposition of the 'National Education Policy', which has become an instrument for 'academic subjugation' and commer-

cialisation of education," the party said in its resolution.

Mentioning about Manipur, the Congress said, "Manipur is a painful example of this constitutional assault, where the BJP government instigated and crafted the horrific violence, law and order collapsed, a civil war like situation existed on the ground. The Prime Minister shows no inclination to heal the pain and suffering of people of Manipur or even visit the state till today."

The party also said that the malady of attack on every institution and compromising its sanctity, by force or by allurements, by the powers that are, has not spared even the Judiciary. "The recent incident of recovery of cash from the residence of a Judge is indeed

alarming. While the Congress Party recognises that an independent judiciary is intrinsic to protection of Constitutional principles and democracy, it is also true that Judiciary must set safeguards and standards for accountability. A mechanism for Judicial accountability, without compromising Judicial independence, is the need of the hour," the Congress said.

The Congress further said not only did it play a decisive role in the framing of the Constitution, it has steadfastly defended it as a soldier over the last 75 years, adding the Constitution is the final protector of the rights of 140 crore people of the country.

Reiterating its pledge for social justice, the party said social justice' is the ideological core of it.

Ram Rahim gets another furlough

CONTINUED FROM P1

Pradesh's Baghpat. This is his 10th parole since June 2022. Last year, he was given 20 days parole in October before the Haryana Assembly elections and 21 days parole in August. The Congress, during the Haryana Assembly elections had strongly criticized these decisions, accusing the Haryana government of using Ram Rahim to influence voters.

Ram Rahim is serving a 20-year sentence for raping two disciples and was also convicted in 2019 for the

murder of a journalist. His followers from Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh are planning grand celebrations for his return to the Dera headquarters.

As per the record, he has frequently been granted parole or furlough, often coinciding with elections. Notably, he was given 30-day parole just before the Delhi assembly elections in January 2024, spending time in Sirsa and Baghpat. In the past two years, he has received multiple paroles—29 days before Rajasthan polls (Nov 2023), 30 days before

Haryana panchayat polls (July 2023), 40 days before Adampur bypolls (Oct 2022), and others before civic and state elections.

In total, his leaves from jail have often aligned with key electoral events. His lawyer maintains the paroles are within legal limits—70 days parole and 21 days furlough annually.

The SGPC has repeatedly objected to Ram Rahim's frequent paroles, but the Haryana government maintains that parole is a legal right for prisoners, and it follows all legal procedures in granting it.

STALIN HOLDS MLAs' MEET TO DISCUSS TAMIL NADU'S EXEMPTION FROM NEET

To pursue all necessary legal steps, including challenging it in SC afresh

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin held a meeting on Wednesday with Tamil Nadu assembly MLAs to discuss NEET from the state.

All party members, including DMK, Congress, MMK, PMK, VCK, Tamizhaga Vazhuvirimai Party, CPI(M), and CPI legislators, were present at the meeting, whereas the BJP and AIADMK boycotted it.

During the meeting, MK Stalin said that DMK had been fighting against NEET from the beginning, and till now, it has not changed its heart or stance on the issue. He stated that former CM M Karunanidhi opposed NEET, and it was also approved by the governor.

'AGAINST POOR STUDENTS'

■ All party members, including DMK, Congress, MMK, PMK, VCK, Tamizhaga Vazhuvirimai Party, CPI(M), and CPI legislators, were present at the meeting, whereas the BJP and AIADMK boycotted it.

■ The Tamil Nadu CM said that NEET entrance exams affect the students who are living in poverty and alleged governor RN Ravi of doing politics over the issue.

■ Stalin stated that the Union Government continued to reject their proposal, but if legal battles fought constantly, then Tamil Nadu can get an exemption from NEET.



Stalin emphasised that during those days, Tamil Nadu had become an example in the field of medical studies. "DMK has been fighting

against NEET from the beginning. The state government has been very strong on the decision, and till today, we have no change

of heart or decision on this matter. Former Tamil Nadu Karunanidhi, back in the day, opposed NEET, and then it was also approved

by the Governor. And it was at that time Tamil Nadu had become an example in the field of health and education of medical studies", MK Stalin said during the meet.

The meeting decided unanimously to pursue all necessary legal steps, including challenging it in the Supreme Court afresh.

A resolution, moved by Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin in this regard was adopted unanimously in the meeting.

The resolution said: "This all party meeting unanimously resolves that the Tamil Nadu government must continuously carry on the legal struggle to secure NEET exemption."

The Tamil Nadu government had in 2023 moved the Apex Court opposing the NEET exam.

Cabinet nod to doubling of Tirupati-Pakala-Katpadi single railway line section

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the doubling of Tirupati - Pakala - Katpadi single railway line Section (104 km) in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with total cost of Rs.1332 crore (approx.).

The enhanced line capacity will improve mobility, providing enhanced efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. According to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), the multi-tracking proposal will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much-required infrastructural development on the busiest sections across Indian Railways.



The project is in line with the PM Modi's vision of a New India that will make people of the region "Atmanirbhar" by way of comprehensive development in the area which will enhance their employment/self-employment opportunities.

The project is the result of PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity, which has been possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless con-

nectivity for movement of people, goods and services. The project will increase the existing network of railways by about 113 Km.

Along with connectivity to Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, the project section also provides rail connectivity to other prominent destinations such as Sri Kalahasti Shiva Temple, Kanipakam Vinayaka Temple, Chandragiri Fort, etc, attracting pilgrims and tourists from across the country.

Karnataka HC adjourns Ranya Rao's bail plea hearing until April 17

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has adjourned actor Ranya Rao's bail plea hearing until April 17 in the gold smuggling case. The court has instructed the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) to file objections.

Earlier on April 2, the Special Court for Economic Offenses sent Sahil Jain, the third accused in the Ranya Rao gold smuggling case, to a 14-day judicial custody. The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) presented him before the court on Wednesday after his custody period ended.

On April 1, Actor Ranya Rao approached the Karnataka High Court for bail, days after a sessions court in Bengaluru rejected her plea for relief.

Rao's lawyer, BS Girish, submitted the petition, which the High Court will take



up next week.

On March 27, the 64th CCH Sessions Court in Bengaluru rejected the bail application of Ranya Rao in connection with a gold smuggling case.

Ranya Rao was arrested on March 3 at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport after officials from the DRI found her carrying gold. The Cen-

tral Bureau of Investigation (CBI) later filed an FIR based on a complaint by Abhishek Chandra Gupta, Additional Director of DRI.

The FIR was registered under the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1988, along with several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (BNS). According to the complaint, two foreign nationals were arrested at Mumbai Airport on March 6 for attempting to smuggle 21.28 kg of gold into India, valued at Rs. 18.92 crore.

According to the complaint, after Ranya Rao's arrest on March 3, two foreign nationals were also arrested on March 6 at the Mumbai airport for attempting to smuggle 21.28 kg of gold into India worth Rs. 18.92 crore, as per the complaint.

The CBI has filed an FIR in the gold smuggling case on the complaint of Abhishek Chandra Gupta, Additional Director of DRI.

Gujarat CM increases grant allocated to MLAs by Rs 1 crore

TDG NETWORK
GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has increased the grant allocated to MLAs for developmental works in their constituencies by Rs 1 crore, aiming to accelerate the state's progress, contribute to national development, and further strengthen Gujarat's stature as a model of growth and good governance.

Aligning with CM Bhupendra Patel's decision, the existing annual grant of Rs 1.50 crore allocated to MLAs for essential local community development has been increased by Rs



1 crore. As a result, each MLA will now receive an enhanced annual grant of Rs 2.50 crore, according to a release.

The Chief Minister has also integrated a forward-looking approach into this grant allocation, encouraging MLAs to propel Water Conservation and Rainwa-

ter harvesting projects in their constituencies, thereby reinforcing the 'Catch the Rain' campaign inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Since 2018, Sujalam Sufalam Jal Abhiyan has been conducted annually across the state to ensure future water security by promoting rainwater harvesting and increasing groundwater levels. As part of this campaign, a wide range of water conservation activities, such as deepening of ponds, desilting of check dams, repair, maintenance and cleaning of canals and water streams, construction of earth embankments, and

implementation of rainwater harvesting systems, are undertaken with active public participation.

Owing to the campaign's success, over the past seven years, the state's water storage capacity has increased by approximately 1,19,144 lakh cubic feet, while generating employment equivalent to 199.60 lakh mandays.

This year, PM Modi has urged citizens across the nation to conserve every drop of water through the "Catch the Rain" campaign. Drawing inspiration from this visionary appeal, the state has embraced a people-centric approach, the release said.

VETERAN CONGRESS LEADER KUMARI ANANTHAN PASSES AWAY



Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi consoles BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan as he arrives to pay his last respect to the mortal remains of her father and veteran Congress leader, Kumari Ananthan, who passed away at the age of 93 due to age-related illness. ANI

Kerala madrasa teacher gets 187 years in jail for sexually assaulting minor

TDG NETWORK
KANPUR

A madrasa teacher in Kerala's Kannur was sentenced to 187 years in prison for sexually assaulting a 16-year-old girl during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The verdict was pronounced by a Taliparamba POCSO court on Tuesday.

According to Public Prosecutor Advocate Sherimol Jose, Muhammed Rafi, a native of Alakode, was convicted in the case. The court

also imposed a fine of Rs 9 lakh.

The court took into account that the accused had previously been involved in another case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Advocate Jose said.

HC raps Maha govt for delay in acting on panel's suggestions set up after Badlapur sexual assault

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday criticised the Maharashtra government for delaying the implementation of the suggestions made by a panel, set up in response to the Badlapur school sexual assault incident, regarding the safety of children in schools and other educational institutions.

The HC questioned the government's seriousness in tackling the issue and preventing such incidents.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Neela Gokhale urged the government to demonstrate sensitivity towards the matter, noting that if the government genuinely cared, it would work "day and night."

In August 2024, two minor girls were sexually



assaulted inside the toilet of a school in Badlapur, Thane district, by a male attendant, sparking widespread protests and outrage. The accused, Akshay Shinde, was later killed in an alleged retaliatory police shootout while being escorted in a police vehicle.

The high court initiated a suo motu (on its own) petition and directed the establishment of a committee, led by two retired high court judges and other experts, to prepare a report on the safety of children in schools and educational

institutions.

After the panel submitted its recommendations in February 2025, the high court instructed the government to consider them and issue the necessary Government Resolutions (GRs) for schools across Maharashtra.

On Wednesday, additional public prosecutor Prajakta Shinde requested the high court for more time, stating that the recommendations needed to be reviewed by several departments before decisions could be made.

Over 1,900 Indian pilgrims get Pak visas to visit religious sites

TDG NETWORK
AMRITSAR

Over 1900 Indian pilgrims have received visas from Pakistan to visit religious places on the occasion of Khalsa Sajna Diwas.

The pilgrims expressed happiness upon being able to visit religious places.

"We will be visiting Gurdwara Nankana Sahib, Gurdwara Panja Sahib and other religious places in Pakistan. It is a ten-day trip beginning 10th April," a Sikh pilgrim said. Earlier on April 7, the Pakistan High Commission said that it received a representative delegation of pilgrims ahead of the festival of Baisakhi.

The High Commission stated that "the Govt. of Pakistan will issue over 6500 for the Baisakhi celebrations."

"In connection with the upcoming Baisakhi festi-

val, @PakinIndia received a representative delegation of yatees today. Extending his felicitations on the occasion, Cd'A @Saadawar- raich announced that the Govt. of Pakistan will issue over 6500 for the Baisakhi celebrations", the Pakistan High Commission said in a post on X. The High Commission said in another post, "The step is reflective of Pakistan's commitment to promote and facilitate travel to sacred and holy places of pilgrimage in Pakistan: Saad Ahmad Warraich."

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing the nation during his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' program on March 30, extended his greetings as the country starts its vibrant month of multiple festivals.

The Prime Minister highlighted how such festivals underline the country's unity in diversity.

Uttarakhand opens its first butterfly gallery in Dehradun, over 100 species displayed

TDG NETWORK
DEHRADUN

The research branch of the Uttarakhand Forest Department has set up the State's first butterfly gallery at the Nature Education Centre in Jolly Grant, Dehradun.

The gallery displays high-resolution photographs of butterflies from Uttarakhand, providing visitors with an engaging display of these unique

species.

The gallery serves as an educational and awareness platform, highlighting the ecological importance of butterflies in pollination, food chains, and overall ecosystem health.

Mukul Sonal, Forest Range Officer, told ANI that the butterfly gallery is of great benefit to those who study butterflies.

"Uttarakhand is home to around 500 species of butterflies. Here, we have high-reso-

lution displays of 105 of them. The lifecycle of butterflies is demonstrated here. Also, the migration of Munnar butterflies from one generation to the next is displayed with locations. The mud-puddling behaviour modelling of a butterfly, where butterflies take sodium from mud for reproduction, is also demonstrated here," Sonal said.

"Uttarakhand's State butterfly is the Common peacock.



Here, its structure is displayed along with that of the Munnar butterfly. We have also

kept specimens of important butterflies in Uttarakhand. Those who study butterflies

can benefit from this. This gallery is open to the public," Sonal added.

The butterfly gallery is an effort to highlight Uttarakhand's remarkable butterfly diversity and promote greater appreciation for these ecologically important species. By educating visitors about their role in the ecosystem, the gallery aims to encourage conservation efforts and raise awareness about their protec-

tion, said officials

Uttarakhand is home to around 500 species of butterflies. The gallery displays 105 butterfly species from five different families- Papilionidae, Hesperidae, Lycaenidae, Nymphalidae, and Pieridae.

Of the 1318 species of butterflies reported from India, over 460 species have been recorded in Uttarakhand. This vast variety of butterflies, greater than the total variety of but-

terflies found in peninsular India or the whole of Europe, inhabit different types of forests, which are found at different elevations.

The best time to see butterflies in Uttarakhand is between April and June in the lower Himalayas, July and August in the high Himalayas and the trans-Himalayan area, and again September to November at medium and low elevations.

CITY REELS UNDER SEVERE HEATWAVE

Power demand peaks, touches 5,462 MW

All-time highest power demand was 8,656 MW

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The peak power demand in Delhi touched 5462 megawatts at 3:27 pm on Wednesday, the highest ever in the first nine days of April, officials said. This was a sharp rise from Tuesday's peak of 5,029 megawatts (MW). The city's all-time highest power demand was 8,656 MW, recorded in June 2024. This summer, the peak load in Delhi is projected to reach 9000 MW. In line with our focus on reliability, we've asked the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) to review all power purchase agreements to enhance procurement efficiency," Sood said. He also highlighted the establishment of a joint control room with Delhi Transco Limited and discoms for real-time load monitoring and infrastructure protection. Power distribution company BSES recently said


APRIL HEAT

■ Projected peak demand is 9000 MW for summer 2025.

■ BSES is ready to meet the demand for over 50 lakh consumers in Delhi.

■ Over 2100 MW of green energy, including solar and wind, will support the supply.

■ BSES has secured up to 500 MW of power from other states for summer.



■ BSES uses predictive checks and advanced tech to ensure reliable power during peak months.

that it was fully prepared to meet the escalating demand and has made extensive arrangements to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply to nearly two crore residents across the city. According to the State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC), yesterday, Delhi's peak power demand was 5029 MW. On their part, BSES discom's successfully met the peak power demand in their respective areas. Delhi is on the cusp of another historic power milestone. According to SLDC, after clocking a record power demand of 8656 MW in 2024, Delhi's peak power demand during the summers of 2025 may clock 9000 MW for the first time. Peak power demand in BRPL's area of South and West Delhi, which clocked 3809 MW during the summers of 2024, is expected to reach around 4050 MW during the summers of 2025. On the other hand, in BYPL's area of East and Central Delhi, the peak power demand, which reached 1882 MW during the summers of 2024, is expected to touch around 1900 MW this year. BSES discoms are geared up to ensure a reliable power supply to meet the power demand of more than 50 lakh consumers and 2 crore residents in South, West, East, and Central Delhi. These arrangements include long-term PPAs and banking arrangements with other states and the deployment of the latest technologies, such as AI and ML, for accurately predicting power demand, which is critical for ensuring a reliable power supply.

Among the other monitoring stations, Ayanagar recorded a maximum temperature of 40.9 degree Celsius, Palam 40.3 degrees Celsius, Ridge 40.2 degrees Celsius, while Lodhi Road recorded a high of 39.7 degrees Celsius, as per IMD data. With the daytime temperature in the capital hovering around 40 degrees Celsius for the past three days, four out of five weather stations in Delhi reported heatwave conditions, the IMD said.



Deers get drenched in water to get rid of the scorching sun, at Delhi National Zoological Park in New Delhi. ANI

Heatwave forces schools to cut outdoor activities

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

As Delhi experiences its first heat wave of the season, several schools across the city are taking extra steps to protect students from heat-related illnesses. The measures include serving hydrating drinks like aam panna, lemonade, buttermilk and wood apple beverages on the school premises. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday issued a yellow alert after the city recorded a maximum temperature of

40.2 degrees Celsius. Under the IMD's colour-coded alert system, a yellow alert advises people to stay cautious, avoid heat exposure, wear light-coloured and loose cotton clothing, and cover their heads with a cloth, hat or umbrella. The schools have cut down on the outdoor activities post 10 am to prevent sun exposure and heat related illnesses to students, said principals. Sudha Acharya, the principal of ITL International School in Dwarka, said the school has stocked several

hydrating drinks in the cafeteria. "As the temperature is soaring early, students get dehydrated easily since they run and play a lot. So, we have asked them to bring cucumber and watermelon-infused water for added hydration. If the water is flavoured, they tend to drink more of it," she said. Acharya added that teachers have also taught students how to prepare different cooling drinks during class practically by making them.

CM: 'Beti Badhao' is the next step in journey of women empowerment

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday said it is time to move beyond protecting and educating girls to actively enabling and uplifting them. Speaking at "Samanvay: Celebrating a 100 Years Legacy" at Indraprastha College for Women, she called for action with 'Beti Badhao' as the next step in the journey of women empowerment. "We have completed the journey from Beti Bachao to Beti Padhao, and now it's time for Beti Badhao. Our mothers protected and educated us -- now it's our responsibility to help the next generation of girls rise and shine," Gupta said, addressing hundreds of young women at the event. Highlighting her own student leadership days, she recalled, "DU introduced a



common admission form for all colleges in 1996 when I was DUSU president. This culture at DU -- where students, teachers, and administrators work together -- has made it one of the finest institutions in the country and the world." Gupta also reflected on the legacy of Delhi University in shaping women leaders. "From Sucheta Kriplani, the first woman chief minister of India, to me standing here today as CM -- this is the journey of DU," she said. Calling on young women to be self-reliant and assertive, she urged, "I request all girl students here to pledge to fight for themselves. Tum toh dariya ho, apna hunar jaanti ho, jis aur nikal jaaogi, raste bana logi," she said, drawing applause. Indraprastha College, founded in 1924, has played a key role in promoting women's education and was closely associated with the Indian freedom movement.

Indraprastha College, founded in 1924, has played a key role in promoting women's education and was closely associated with the Indian freedom movement.

Cops to probe Mahua's claim of forcible closure of meat shops

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police will launch an investigation after TMC MP Mahua Moitra claimed on Tuesday that a few people, allegedly belonging to right-wing ideology, forcibly tried to close fish shops in South Delhi's Chittaranjan Park area. Sources in the force said they have not received any complaint about the matter, but they are verifying all the facts from the social media post. "The market is a licensed market according to MCD records. The video appears to be outdated, but we are verifying the date of the incident. The police have not received any complaint so far," said a police source. In a series of social media posts on X, Moitra posted a video with the caption, "Please watch as saffron



brigade BJP goons threaten fish-eating Bengalis of Chittaranjan Park, Delhi. Never in 60 years has this happened, residents say." In another post, the TMC MP said, "The temple in CR Park that BJP goons are laying claim to was built by the non-veg market vendors. They pray there -- the big pujas are held there. Three months of BJP rule in Delhi. A good anniversary present." In her third post, she claimed, "WhatsApp message from a Bengali who lives near CR Park saying how terrible the situation is with the forcible closure of meat and fish shops."

Two killed in Swaroop Nagar road crash

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

An elderly couple was killed after they were hit by a car in outer north Delhi's Swaroop Nagar area, police said on Wednesday. The car driver rushed the couple, Somdutt (66) and his wife Rampyari (65), to the hospital but they did not make it, police said. The incident took place on the morning of April 7. A PCR call regarding the accident was received around 8.36 am on Monday. The couple were hit by the car and the vehicle's driver, Prince Giri, took them to a private hospital in Shalimar Bagh, police said. While Rampyari was declared brought dead by doctors, Somdutt succumbed to his injuries during treatment, they said. No eyewitnesses were found at the accident spot or the hospital. An FIR has been registered in the matter under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) at Swaroop Nagar police station, according to police.

Haryana cracks down on private schools over expensive books, uniforms

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government has taken strict steps against private schools for troubling parents and students at the start of the new academic year. The Education Department has issued an advisory with important rules to stop schools from forcing parents to buy expensive books, heavy bags, and new uniforms every year. The department has clearly told schools not to pressure parents to purchase high-priced books from private publishers. Only NCERT and CBSE-approved books should be made compulsory, the advisory said. Also, schools have been instructed to strictly follow rules related to the weight of school bags. According to the rules, students of Class 1-2 should carry bags weighing no more than 1.5



kg, Classes 3-5 up to 3 kg, Classes 6-7 up to 4 kg, Class 8-9 up to 4.5 kg, and Class 10 up to 5 kg. In addition, the Education Department has warned schools not to change uniforms frequently. Many schools were found forcing parents to buy new uniforms with special logos from selected shops at high prices. The department said this practice puts unnecessary financial pressure on parents. Another major concern raised was the use of old books. The department

said schools should not discourage students from using second-hand books. In fact, using old books helps protect the environment and reduces financial stress on families. Schools have also been told not to force students to bring their own water bottles. Clean drinking water must be provided within school premises. If students are denied access to school water taps, strict action will be taken. The Education Department has ordered all district and primary educa-

tion officers to conduct surprise visits to schools and check whether rules are being followed. If any violations are found, they must report it immediately for further action. Parents can also file complaints directly to district officers via mobile numbers and email addresses, which will be shared soon. Education Minister Mahipal Dhanda said, "We received several complaints that school authorities were forcing parents to buy costly books and uniforms from specific shops. That's why we have issued these guidelines to stop such practices." The department stressed that education is a service, not a business. Private schools are mostly registered as non-profit institutions and must function with that mindset. Schools found making profit from parents will face strict action.

Govt will repair 600 km of roads this year: Verma

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government plans to repair 600 kilometres of roads in the city this year, with 250 kilometres to be fixed before the monsoon, said PWD minister Parvesh Verma on Wednesday. He also said the roads maintained by the Public Works Department (PWD) have been identified and works are underway on 250 km of such stretches across the national capital under the first phase. "After the monsoon, we plan to carry out the second phase of road repair. Under this another 250-300 km of roads, for which we have started the process of identification and budget allocation, will be repaired," Verma said. The minister further explained that operation and maintenance contracts for these road repair works will be a minimum of two years. "In case a road is dam-



The road repair work is carried out by the PWD from mid-March to mid-June and then it stops because of the monsoon.

aged in that period, then it will be the responsibility of the contractor to fix it with no additional cost to PWD." "On an average, 200-240 km of road stretches are repaired each year. We plan to increase that and have fixed a target of 600 km of PWD roads," Verma said.

The repair work would include road recarpeting, patchwork, pothole repair and restoration of roads cut by other agencies. The road repair work is carried out by the PWD from mid-March to mid-June and then it stops because of the monsoon. "Tenders are being called for the roads that have already been identified and in some areas such as the Noida Link road, the Ring Road stretch near Bhairon Marg, and Outer Ring Road the work on the ground has started. We are also filling the potholes," a senior PWD official said. In Delhi, PWD maintains 1400 km of road length, which are 60 feet in width. These were transferred to the department from the MCD in 2012, which is the original owner of these roads. Residents have often complained about the poor quality of roads ridden with potholes.

UNRAVELLING TAHAWWUR HUSSAIN RANA'S ROLE IN MUMBAI TERROR ATTACK

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a 64-year-old Pakistan-born Canadian national, is set to be extradited from the US to India soon. He is closely linked to one of the main conspirators of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, David Coleman Headley, and played a significant role in the planning and execution of the deadly attacks.

Born in Chichawatni, Pakistan, Rana moved to Canada in the late 1990s after leaving the Pakistani Army's medical corps and later obtained Canadian citizenship. He then started an immigration services business, 'First World Immigration Services,' before moving to the US, where he established an office in Chicago.

Rana's connection to Headley goes back to their childhood. Headley, who was born in the US but moved to Pakistan, became close friends with Rana while attending school in Hasan Abdal, Pakistan. Headley later became involved with Pakistan-based terror groups Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul Jihadi Islami (HUJI), while Rana assisted him in obtaining a visa for India and establishing a front company, the 'Immigrant Law Centre' in Mumbai. Rana is accused of being aware of Headley's terror links and assisting in the reconnaissance for the attacks, which targeted locations such as the Chabad House in Mumbai and the National Defence College in New Delhi.

Rana's involvement in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks includes traveling to India with his wife in the weeks leading up to the attack, visiting cities like Hapur, Delhi, Agra, Kochi, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai. He had multiple communications



The National Investigation Agency (NIA) of India registered a case in 2009 against Rana and Headley under various sections of Indian law, including those related to criminal conspiracy and terror activities. The NIA has been

with Headley during these trips, with hundreds of phone calls exchanged. His role in the conspiracy was further corroborated by his contact with Major Iqbal, another co-conspirator. Rana's assistance extended to facilitating the planning of the attack and providing logistical support.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) of India registered a case in 2009 against Rana and Headley under various sections of Indian law, including those related to criminal conspiracy and terror activities. The NIA has been investigating the roles of several senior figures from LeT, HUJI, and the ISI, including Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, and Major Iqbal, who are believed to have coordinated the attacks with Rana and Headley.

Rana is currently held at a metropolitan detention center in Los Angeles, where he was arrested in 2009 by the FBI for his involvement in a separate plot to attack a newspaper in Copenhagen. Although he was acquitted of charges related to the Mumbai at-

tacks, he was convicted in 2011 for providing material support to LeT and sentenced to 14 years in prison.

India has been pursuing Rana's extradition for years due to his role in the Mumbai attacks. After exhausting his legal avenues in the US, Rana is now on the brink of facing justice in India. His extradition was cleared by the US Supreme Court in January, which rejected his appeal to delay the process. On April 7, 2025, the US Supreme Court officially denied his renewed application, allowing for his imminent return to India.

US President Donald Trump had confirmed the extradition during a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February 2025, stating that his administration had approved the extradition of "very evil people of the world" like Rana to face justice in India. A multi-agency team from India has already traveled to the US to finalize the legal procedures, and Rana is expected to be transferred to Indian custody soon.

Custody depends on extradition grounds, says Mumbai Police

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Mumbai Police on Wednesday said that any decision on taking custody of the 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana will depend on the specific grounds outlined in the extradition order once he is brought to India.

According to reports, Rana is being extradited from the United States in connection with a conspiracy case registered by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2009 related to the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

According to the Mumbai Crime Branch, a case of criminal conspiracy against Rana was originally lodged by the NIA in Delhi following the deadly November 2008 attacks in which over 160 people were killed.

It is a challenge to keep Rana in jail: Former Joint CP

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Former ADG Special Operations and Joint CP Mumbai Police, PK Jain, on Wednesday addressed the complexities involved in keeping high-profile terrorism suspects, such as Tahawwur Rana, in Indian custody.

Reflecting on the 26/11 Mumbai attacks and Rana's extradition to India, Jain emphasized the significance of bringing such individuals to face Indian justice despite the challenges posed by their foreign connections and political backing.

"It is a challenge to keep a person like Tahawwur Rana in jail because whenever these people argue before a foreign country that we will not get justice in India, they say that their security and healthcare will be compromised in Indian jails and that the Indian jails are in poor condition.

“Only after examining the grounds of extradition will it be clear whether custody can be sought by the Mumbai Crime Branch in this matter,” sources said.

The ongoing extradition process pertains to that case. However, officials clarified that it is yet to be determined whether Mumbai Police can seek his custody for any local investigation linked to the attacks.

“Only after examining the grounds of extradition will it be clear whether custody can be sought by the Mumbai Crime Branch in this matter,” sources said.

Sources added that the Mumbai Police has not received any formal communication so far regarding Rana's transfer to the city

for questioning or judicial proceedings.

Tahawwur Rana, a Pakistani-Canadian national, was convicted in the US for the banned terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives and providing material support to the group responsible for the Mumbai attacks that killed over 174 people.

Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday welcomed the US Supreme Court's decision to extradite Tahawwur Rana, a key accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, to India. he said, "There's nothing

Father of slain cop seeks death penalty for Rana

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The father of an SRPF constable killed in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks on Wednesday demanded capital punishment for accused Tahawwur Rana, as he spoke about his struggles with mental scars left behind by the carnage 16 years ago.

Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, is expected to be extradited to India from the US very soon, according to sources.

Strict punishment to stop his extradition failed as the US Supreme Court denied his application, moving him closer to being handed over to the Indian authorities to face the law in the country.

Rana, 64, was lodged at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles. He is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks.

"So many people were killed in the deadly attack



DGP Rajnish Seth pays tribute to those who lost their lives in the 26/11 Terror Attacks (File photo)

The significant development comes days after Rana's last-ditch effort to stop his extradition failed as the US Supreme Court denied his application,

moving him closer to being handed over to the Indian authorities to face the law in the country.

Rana, 64, was lodged at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles. He is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks.

"So many people were killed in the deadly attack

really new that I can say on the Tahawwur Rana issue. Obviously, we welcome the decision of the American legal process."

The comments came as the United States (US) Supreme Court rejected the plea of Tahawwur Rana- accused in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks- seeking a stay on his extradition to India.

"The application for stay addressed to The Chief Justice and referred to the Court is denied," the US SC order dated Monday, April 7, 2025, stated.

On April 7, the Supreme Court of the United States rejected Tahawwur Rana's plea to stay his extradition to India. Rana filed an emergency application with Chief Justice Roberts on March 20, 2025, seeking a stay on his extradition.

Tahawwur Rana should be hanged to death: Shiv Sena (UBT)

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Anand Dubey said that the extradition of Tahawwur Rana to India is a "step that is better late than never," but it should have been done "earlier."

On Monday, the US top court rejected Tahawwur Rana, 2008 Mumbai attacks accused stay plea which cleared the path for his extradition to India.

Dubey stated that if he had been brought earlier to India, a lot of Pakistani conspiracies would have been uncovered. The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader demanded the death penalty for Rana after the necessary information was extracted from him.

"Whenever I talk about the attack, I can visualise the terrible images of the terror assault," Subhash Shinde said. "The damage we have suffered, the loss of lives of our policemen, soldiers and citizens, cannot be forgotten," he said.

Exposing the whole conspiracy and punishing all the accused in the attack will be a befitting tribute to police officials and citizens killed in the attack, he added.

Another policeman, who was injured in the terror attack, on condition of anonymity, said the authorities should take stern action against Rana and punish him for the crime.

Rahul Shinde, a constable with the State Reserve Police Force (SRPF), was among the first police personnel to enter the Taj Mahal Palace hotel in south Mumbai after it came under attack by terrorists. He was killed while fighting the terrorists.

Subhash Shinde lives in Maharashtra's Solapur district where he has a farm.

India, US in talks for swift bilateral trade deal: MEA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday addressed the ongoing trade discussions with the United States, with spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal highlighting the efforts towards a mutually beneficial trade agreement.

In response to recent tariff announcements, Jaiswal reiterated that India is carefully studying the implications and engaging in reciprocal discussions with the US trade teams.

While addressing a weekly press briefing on Wednesday, Jaiswal said, "On the



3rd, we had a detailed press release issued by the Ministry of Commerce, in which India's position was made clear. We are studying the implications of the tariffs that have been announced."

He added, "Reciprocal tariffs and discussions are on-

going between India and US Trade teams for an expeditious conclusion of a mutually beneficial multi-sectoral bilateral trade agreement. India values its comprehensive global strategic partnership with the US and is committed to working closely with it... Both teams are in discussion and hopefully we can close it."

On being asked about the extradition of Tahawwur Rana, Jaiswal stated, "You all are aware that Supreme Court rejected his plea. As far as extradition of Rana is concerned, at this point, I don't have an update. But, we will provide you the update at an appropriate time."

Concerned about rhetoric from Bangladesh: EAM Jaishankar

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday expressed concerns about radicalizing tendencies, attacks on minorities, and inflammatory rhetoric in Bangladesh, stating that India has been open about sharing these concerns.

He said, "No country wishes Bangladesh well more than us. That's almost in our DNA," highlighting the unique historical and cultural ties between the two nations

Jaishankar also commented on the meeting between Bangladesh's Chief Adviser



Muhammad Yunus and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emphasizing India's long-standing friendship with Bangladesh.

"We have concerns about the rhetoric which is coming out of the people in Bangladesh, we have concerns about the radicalising tendencies we see, we have concerns about the attacks on minorities. I think we were very open about sharing those concerns. As a

country, no country wishes Bangladesh well more than us. That's almost in our DNA," he said.

He stressed the need for Bangladesh to hold elections soon, citing the importance of democratic traditions and the renewal of mandates through electoral processes.

"As a well-wisher, as a friend, I think we hope that they go the right way and do the right things, and as a country with a democratic tradition, democracies require elections; that's how mandates are given and mandates are renewed. So, we hope they go down that path," he said.

Loyalty, secrecy, and strategy: The misunderstood role of strategic advisers

ABHINANDAN MISHRA
NEW DELHI

Many in India would be aware of Steve Bannon, Kellyanne Conway, Dominic Cummings, Vladislav Surkov, and Lu Wei- all names that were active in different parts of the globe at different times, associated with different world leaders.

Bannon and Conway were with Donald Trump, Cummings with Boris Johnson, Surkov with Vladimir Putin and Wei with Xi Jinping.

The commonality among all these names was their role as trusted strategists for their respective leaders, and their involvement in shaping media and communication strategies to align with their leaders' needs.

In the United States, Bannon played a key role in Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, where he used alternative media to amplify Trump's messaging. Conway, on the other hand, managed Trump's public image and media interac-

tions as a key advisor.

In the United Kingdom, Cummings was regarded as someone who handled Boris Johnson's Brexit campaign and premiership with data-driven strategies and memorable slogans, showcasing a tech-savvy approach to narrative management.

Russia's Vladislav Surkov, a longtime aide to Vladimir Putin, worked on media management to bolster his leader's image while operating as a behind-the-scenes "technologist."



Stephen Bannon was an architect of Trump's 2016 general election victory. Agencies

Similarly, in China, Lu Wei oversaw focus on digital media under Xi Jinping, aligning online narratives with state goals. These individu-

als highlight the critical role of trusted strategists in modern political communication, each adapted to the unique national contexts and their

leader's way of thinking.

These individuals, with specific roles, are often the target of critics and opposition leaders for 'pulling strings behind the scenes' - as they see it - to shape public opinion or push agendas.

Another reason for which they face the attack is that their work happens in the shadows- advising leaders, crafting strategies, and influencing decisions without always showing their cards. However, amidst all the criticism, the

critics forget that the strategies of these hand-picked officials are designed to win for only one side- the political leader they are working for, their loyalty lies with him. For outsiders, it is difficult to realise that the opaque hidden approach that they execute is inherent to the job they are doing.

The work they do cannot be done in the full glare, narrative building, like political strategies, to counter one side, gives the best result when done in a limited

participant setup.

These strategists are lightning rods because they thrive in the messy, high-stakes world of political maneuvering-where perception often outweighs openness, and loyalty -a quality that is moving towards extinction rapidly-trumps everything else.

Irrespective of criticism they face, they play a key role in managing the flow of information between political leaders and the public.

PSUs DELIVER RECORD RS 1.5L CRORE DIVIDENDS, HALF GOES TO GOVT


Retail investor participation in the stock market has been growing steadily

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) have distributed record dividends in the financial year 2025, amounting to approximately Rs 1.50 lakh crore in aggregate, of which the government's share was Rs 74,000 crore, said Arunish Chawla, Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM).
“While PSUs account for only 10 per cent of the overall market capitalization, they contribute 23 per cent of the total dividend distribution by listed companies,” Chawla emphasised, terming central PSUs as “role models in the stock market.”
The Secretary further explained that PSUs “first order stochastically dominate the Nifty 50” in terms of dividend payout and treatment of minority shareholders.

TO SUM UP

- CPSEs paid record Rs 1.5 lakh crore in dividends in FY25; govt earned Rs 74,000 crore, says DIPAM Secretary Arunish Chawla.
- PSUs beat Nifty 50 on dividend stability and shareholder fairness, despite holding just 10% of market cap.
- Coal India and ONGC led payouts, distributing Rs 10,252 crore and Rs 10,002 crore, respectively.
- Chawla urged private firms to match PSU dividend practices and called on fund managers to back PSU stocks for stable investor returns.



“PSUs tend to offer more stable and potentially better dividend payouts relative to earnings, while NIFTY 50 companies display greater variance and lower central tendency,” he elaborated.
Among CPSEs, Coal India has given the highest dividend in FY25 at Rs

10,252.09 crore, followed by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) at Rs 10,001.97 crore.
The DIPAM Secretary's statements come at a time when retail investor participation in the stock market has been growing steadily, with many small investors looking for stable

returns on their investments.
“We would nudge the private corporates to declare fair dividends to their minority shareholders so that together we can make our share market a better place for the aam aadmi,” said Arunish Chawla, Secretary, Department of

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Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM).
DIPAM Secretary suggested fund managers to include public sector stocks in their portfolios for inclusive market participation.
“This would enable common investors, senior citizens, and minority shareholders to deploy their savings productively and participate in the value created by public enterprises,” he added.

Markets slip despite RBI rate cut

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

After staging a smart comeback yesterday, Indian stock markets ended on a negative note on Wednesday, showing no major enthusiasm for the policy interest cut by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
According to the market experts, the sentiments of the market participants are subdued due to the developments in the US reciprocal tariffs which will be effective from today.
At the end of the trading session, BSE Sensex was down 37993 points or 0.51 per cent, at 73,847.15, while the Nifty 50 closed at 22,399.15, declining 136.70 points or 0.61 per cent.
“Markets slipped after a brief rebound, losing over half a per cent as the choppy trend persisted. Sentiment took a hit following the announcement of fresh U.S. tariffs on China, leading to a gap-down opening and a largely range-bound session thereafter. The outcome of the MPC meeting—where a 25bps rate cut was announced along with a shift to an accommo-



dativ stance—failed to evoke any meaningful market reaction,” Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said, observing the markets.
Mishra further said that the ongoing volatility continues to keep traders cautious, and any near-term relief seems unlikely given the recent tariff-related developments and the onset of the earnings season.
“Investors will react to the IT major TCS's results in early trades on Friday, which could influence market direction initially. Until volatility, as reflected by the elevated India VIX, cools off, we recommend maintaining a hedged approach to navigate potential sharp swings,” he added.
“In this phase, export-import-dependent companies

may face financial pressure over the next 2-3 quarters due to the ongoing tariff war,” said VLA Ambala, Co-Founder of Stock Market Today.
The stocks of about 1500 companies advanced while 2241 shares declined, and 138 stocks remained unchanged.
On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), Nestle, HUL, Tata Consumer, Titan Company, and Power Grid Corp were the major gainers, while Wipro, SBI, Tech Mahindra, L&T, and Trent were the major losers.
On BSE, the Midcap index was down 0.8 per cent and the Smallcap index was down 1 per cent.
On NSE, Consumer Durables and FMCG traded in the green, leaving all the other indices in the red territory.

LPG losses set to shrink on price

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) are likely to reduce losses on selling domestic LPG cylinders over the next few months due to the recent LPG price hike and falling international fuel prices, according to a report by Antique Stock Broking.
The government has increased the prices of LPG cylinders by Rs 50 from April. It has also raised excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre.
According to the report, the LPG price hike is clearly aimed at covering the under-recoveries, or losses which OMCs are facing while selling LPG cylinders below the cost. These under-recoveries were becoming a financial burden.
It said, “With the latest hike, LPG losses will fall to INR 160/cyl in May-25, which we estimate will decline to INR 60/cyl by 2QFY26”.
The report estimated that losses on LPG will fall to Rs 160 per cylinder in May 2025, and further reduce to just Rs 60 per cylinder by the second quarter of the financial year 2025-26 (July to September



The report estimated that losses on LPG will fall to Rs 160 per cylinder in May 2025, and further reduce to just Rs 60 per cylinder by the second quarter of the financial year 2025-26.

2025).
These lower losses are expected because of a fall in crude oil prices and a seasonal drop in international propane prices, especially from Saudi Arabia. Propane prices are likely to fall by USD 85 per tonne, reaching around USD 525 per tonne by August.
By August, LPG under-recoveries could fall further to Rs 60 per cylinder and may even come down to zero if these trends continue.
The report also mentioned that even if retail fuel prices are cut in the coming months, as long as crude oil remains around USD 65 per barrel, OMCs will still earn

enough from their marketing margins to cover any losses in refining.
The report said OMCs are currently in a good position. They are enjoying strong profits from auto fuel sales, and Singapore refining margins (also known as GRMs) are also expected to improve. This is because of ongoing refinery shutdowns, better pricing between light and heavy crude oils, and the rollback of supply cuts by oil-producing countries.
Additionally, the report added that Saudi Arabia is expected to lower its official selling price (OSP), which will also help improve refining margins.

‘Accelerate action’: BRICS CCI calls for gender parity

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a decisive step toward advancing gender equality, the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women's Empowerment Vertical (BRICS CCI WE) unveiled a whitepaper titled ‘Accelerate Action for a Gender Equal World’ in New Delhi on Wednesday.
The comprehensive report outlines a roadmap for transformative change across sectors, aimed at empowering women and addressing systemic gender disparities.
The whitepaper, a product of deliberations at the BRICS CCI WE Trailblazers Roundtable, brings together insights from global women changemakers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and corporate leaders.
It includes key recommendations such as implementing a mandatory 33 per cent quota for women across boardrooms, judiciary, and cultural sectors; establishing funds for women contesting elections; gender-segregated data collection; and introducing ISO certification for women-led organizations.

Airbus-Mahindra to build H130 fuselages

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Airbus and Mahindra Aerostructures on Wednesday signed a contract for manufacturing H130 helicopter fuselage, according to a statement from the Civil Aviation Ministry.
Minister for Civil Aviation, Ram Mohan Naidu, chaired the signing ceremony, the ministry said.
This manufacturing contract marks a pivotal moment in India's aviation journey, further strengthening the global confidence in the country's industrial potential, the ministry said.
The ministry added that the partnership between Mahindra Aerostructures and Airbus underscores India's progress in the aviation sector and the government's steadfast commitment to the ‘Make in India’ and ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ initiatives spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
Highlighting India's rapid aviation growth, the Minister shared that India is set to become one of the world's largest civil aviation markets, with over 2,200 aircraft expected to join the fleet in the next 20 years.
By 2030, India will handle



630 million passengers annually, growing at a CAGR of 6-8 per cent.
Over the next 10-15 years, the domestic aerospace manufacturing market can grow to a USD 10 billion industry, encompassing structural components, avionics systems, and more, he said.
The Minister also acknowledged the exemplary contribution of Indian MSMEs and startups, which supply over USD 2 billion worth of aircraft components annually to global OEMs like Airbus and Boeing.
The event builds on the momentum from a February 2025 meeting chaired by the minister, focusing on accelerating aircraft component manufacturing in India. Attended by senior officials, industry leaders, and experts, the meeting aimed

to chart a unified roadmap for bolstering domestic production and enhancing global competitiveness.
Secretary, MoCA, Vumlunmang Vualnam in his address emphasized how the H130 fuselage contract will not only bring cutting-edge technologies and jobs to India but also catalyze the development of domestic MRO capabilities and a robust manufacturing base. The two Final Assembly Lines in India; one for the C295 military aircraft, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez, and the upcoming H125 helicopter assembly line stand as beacons of India's thriving aerospace ecosystem and its strategic partnership with global players like Airbus, the ministry added.

Pralhad Joshi celebrates 25 years of gold hallmarking at GJS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Indian gems and jewellery industry witnessed a momentous occasion as Pralhad Joshi, Hon'ble Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Minister of New & Renewable Energy, graced the prestigious India Gem & Jewellery Show (GJS) at Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai. The event also marked the 25th anniversary of the hallmarking of gold in India, a significant milestone in ensuring quality, transparency, and consumer trust in the industry. The show is organised by the apex industry All India Gem & Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) and is scheduled from 4th to 7th April 2025.
Addressing the gathering, Pralhad Joshi applauded the efforts of jewellers in adopting hallmarking, which has played a crucial role in protecting consumer interests while strengthening India's position as a trusted market for gold jewellery.

RBI's monetary policy review: A measured shift toward growth

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In its latest monetary policy review, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) unveiled a series of wide-ranging measures that mark a strategic shift toward supporting economic growth while strengthening India's financial ecosystem. The central bank, under Governor Sanjay Malhotra, cut the repo rate by 25 basis points—from 6.25% to 6%—and changed its stance from “neutral” to “accommodative”, signalling an intent to stimulate growth amid global headwinds and moderating inflation.
This policy direction includes a host of systemic interventions in regulation, payments, fintech innovation, and credit mar-

kets. Together, they reflect a holistic approach to monetary policy—balancing macroeconomic stability with proactive reform.
ACTIONS AND GROWTH OUTLOOK
Governor Malhotra projected India's real GDP growth for FY2025-26 at 6.5%, revised downward from the earlier 6.7%, citing increasing global trade frictions and tariff uncertainties. This follows a robust 9.2% growth in FY2024-25, as per data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
“The agriculture sector is expected to do well due to healthy reservoir levels and crop output. Manufacturing gain-

ing momentum, and services remain resilient,” the governor noted, adding that rural demand is steady and urban consumption is on the rise, aided by discretionary spending. Investment activity, he emphasized, is gathering pace, driven by infrastructure spending, high-capacity utilization, and healthy balance sheets across banks and corporates.
However, he warned that merchandise exports could come under pressure due to global slowdown, though services exports and remittances are expected to stay strong, bolstering external resilience.
SIX NEW SYSTEMIC MEASURES
In a push to deepen and modernize India's financial sector, the RBI unveiled six significant regulatory and operational initiatives:
Securitisation of stressed assets: A new market-based mechanism will be introduced to

enable the securitisation of stressed loans, complementing the existing Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) route under SARFAESI Act, 2002.
Expansion of co-lending framework: Currently limited to priority sector loans, co-lending will now be permitted for all regulated entities across loan categories. This is expected to boost liquidity and enhance credit delivery.
Unified gold loan regulations: The RBI will issue com-

prehensive prudential norms and conduct regulations for gold loans, harmonizing standards across institutions and accounting for their varied risk capacities.
Standardized credit facility norms: Regulations on non-fund-based credit facilities—such as bank guarantees and letters of credit—will be harmonized across institutions for better consistency and risk management.
Revised guidelines for partial credit enhancement (PCE): These will aim to expand funding options for infrastructure projects and improve credit ratings for debt instruments.
UPI transaction limit flexibility: The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) will now have the authority to set person-to-merchant transaction limits on the UPI platform.

form, in consultation with banks and stakeholders.
To encourage continuous innovation, the RBI's Regulatory Sandbox framework will now be ‘theme-neutral’ and on-tap, enabling fintechs to apply any time for experimentation without waiting for specific cohorts.
INFLATION TRENDS AND MONETARY TRANSMISSION
On inflation, the RBI projected the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation at 4.0% for FY26, assuming a normal monsoon. This represents a notable improvement from earlier levels, buoyed by a sharper-than-expected drop in food inflation—especially vegetable prices.
Quarter-wise, inflation is expected to stay below the 4% mark in the first three quarters (Q1: 3.6%, Q2: 3.9%, Q3: 3.8%), before slightly rising to 4.4% in Q4. Malhotra emphasized that risks to inflation are

“evenly balanced” with global uncertainties and weather-related volatility being key watchpoints.
The RBI also reaffirmed that monetary transmission typically takes six to nine months, and assured surplus liquidity to ease credit conditions. “We will ensure that the benefit of the repo rate cut is swiftly transmitted across the spectrum—short, medium, and long-term interest rates,” Malhotra said.
CALLS FOR BOLDER STEPS
Market experts largely welcomed the rate cut, though many called for a more aggressive approach.
Shriram Ramanathan, CIO, of Fixed Income at HSBC Mutual Fund, said the MPC's accommodative shift and inflation confidence mark “the beginning of a rate softening cycle.” He expects the repo to decline further to 5.5% in CY2025.
Rajeev Radhakrishnan, CIO,

of Fixed Income at SBI Mutual Fund, echoed the sentiment, highlighting the RBI's “unambiguous focus on domestic growth” and the door left open for further cuts.
Mayur Modi, Co-founder of Moneybox Finance, praised the expansion of the co-lending framework and stressed asset securitisation as an important move for NBFCs. “These steps strengthen credit quality while ensuring underserved segments aren't excluded,” he said.
Jyoti Prakash Gadia, MD of Resurgent India, argued for a 50 bps cut given the subdued growth and low inflation. Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank, also sees room for 75-100 bps cuts ahead amid growing global turmoil. From industry bodies, CII's Chandrajit Banerjee said with real interest rates still at 2.6%, quicker easing is necessary to revive investment demand. CREDAI President Boman Irani said the rate cut will support affordable housing demand.



TARIFFS BY THE US AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

OPINION

DR APARAAJITA PANDEY



The rhetoric by President Trump, well before his political campaign even began, talked about the imposition of high tariffs across the board for the American trade partners. However, the imposition of these harsh tariffs across 150 countries, has come as a shock to most nations, analysts, and people. The decline that stock exchanges around the world have experienced after the announcement are an indication of how this has been perceived.

As President Trump announced the tariffs the word reciprocal was used repeatedly. The intent behind these tariffs is being narrated as a step towards balancing the scales and levelling of the playing field, mostly with countries that the US had a trade deficit against. There was also a mention about currency manipulation on the part of other countries. These tariffs, according to President Trump, would finally

alleviate the grave suffering that the US has been going through for decades. The concept of a trade deficit has been translated to tariffs by the Trump regime. It is important to note, however, that such a translation is extremely simplistic and not necessarily an accurate representation of the US' bilateral trade with a particular country, the value it carries for the US' economy, or even the tariffs levied by that country on exports from the US.

Reciprocal of tariffs could be explained by some long economic equation for some countries that US has a high trade deficit against. However, the US has a positive balance of trade with about a hundred and fifteen countries mentioned on the list, and they have also been slapped with a 10 per cent tariff. This does show that a lot is left to be analysed and discussed by the US, and with the US when it comes to tariffs.

There is a consensus among economists that the imposition of these tariffs would not automatically and instantaneously rectify the problems with the US' economy. The US is now attempting to reinvigorate its manufacturing sector. The manufacturing sector has for long been outsourced to other countries, as the US chose to focus on the services sector. Furthermore,

these announcements did come with the rhetoric of the US becoming a manufacturing hub once again and bringing jobs back to the US.

This policy is supposed to be a function of an inward-looking US first foreign policy, and while giving primacy to national interests is a noble thought, US would need to first build capacity for their manufacturing sector which would not happen overnight. There also needs to be greater discourse among the Trump regime about the pressure these tariffs would put on the American consumer.

IMPACT OF TARIFFS

The most immediate impact of the announcement about reciprocal tariffs by the US was on stock markets around the world. The loss that these markets experienced has the most direct impact on the end consumer. Most trade pundits believe that this trend will continue for some time in the immediate future, since there is uncertainty about the long-term impacts of the tariffs. There is also a lack of clarity about how and when the world would at large achieve some consolidation of economic processes.

There is a possibility of this escalating to a trade war with countries like Mexico, China, even the EU. Countries might react with their rates of tariffs on US exports that would mimic the rates imposed by the US, thereby beginning a trade war. This would deepen the rift with the US and would not necessarily point towards a solution.

As mentioned before, the ultimate pinch would be felt by the consumer, and



this would happen across sectors from agriculture to tech. As the financial pressure of the tariffs is passed on to the consumer, it could start a chain reaction of global inflation which would have a definitive impact on social and political stability around the world although the magnitude of it would be different in each country depending on their domestic situation.

There is also a large possibility of a shift in global supply chains and a realignment of trade blocks. There would be a need to diversify the supply chains and to reduce dependency on the American markets as well. This could be a chance for the EU to take centerstage in place of the US.

Another question that lingers in the air is that of the strength and legitimacy of the systems built by and of the existence of global economic organisations like the WTO. This weakening and undermining of their systems would mean either their reduction to mere suggestions or their complete eradication from the present geo economic structure.

It would provide some opportunities for some

countries to make a greater contribution towards global supply chains and cement their presence as manufacturing hubs of the world.

Impact on India

A tariff of 27 per cent has been imposed on India, which does destabilise India's position in the ongoing trade negotiations with the US. The 27 per cent tariff on India does mean that Indian exports to the US would become more expensive but at the same time this tariff is still less than China, Vietnam, and Thailand. The importance of this comparison lies in the fact that there is great possibility of supply chain realignments which does present an opportunity from India to replace these countries as large-scale suppliers of good to the US.

As sectoral analysis of Indian exports to the US reveals that Indian exports like steel, aluminum, pharmaceuticals, and automobiles could become more vulnerable under the new tariff regime. However, textiles present and opportunity as Bangladesh faces 37 per cent tariffs. India will nevertheless have to build capacity in the textile sector. India would have to invest

in infrastructure, logistics, and human resources to be able to take advantage of this global economic chaos.

India is presently undergoing trade negotiations with the US; it has pledged 25 billion USD in energy imports. India has also reduced the tariff of whiskey from 150 to a 100 per cent, in addition to completely scrapping the 6 per cent digital tax. These steps should help in strengthening the Indo-US ties, however, a change in the tariff rate is not guaranteed. There is a possibility that the US uses this moment to overturn India's strict regulations on import of GMO products. It remains to be seen what the result of these negotiations will be.

These are uncertain times for global economic systems around the world, but they do offer opportunities for both India and the world. It would be interesting to see what the future holds.

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PERSPECTIVE INTERSECTIONALITY

WHY ARE SOME INDIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. SUPPORTING HAMAS?

In the latest deportations and attempted deportations of students and scholars from the United States, it is a bit surprising to see the names popping up of Hamas-supporting Indian students, who are in that country legally. Indian students abroad were always thought to be sensible, hard-working, concentrating in their studies, keeping their opinions and ideologies—if they had any—to themselves. It is well known that several radical-left student activists of Bengal's Naxal movement, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, left the Indian shores for the US when the heat from the police became unbearable. They turned full capitalist during their stay in the US and flourished in their respective fields, never to return to their homeland. That is the kind of effect the United States has always had even on “ideologically” motivated students and scholars who have gone to study there. As for the rest, they have always stayed away from ideological battles and extreme ideas and have reached the top of American society through sheer hard work. Radicalisation is a word that cannot be associated with them. This is the reason why Indian-Americans have the highest median household income in the US. So it comes as a surprise to hear that some Indian students have been supporting Hamas' terrorist activities in the name of supporting the Palestinian cause—that they have been participating in campus protests in favour of the Hamas' 7 October 2023 barbarity. This problem has become sufficiently mainstream for even a Microsoft employee of Indian origin to get sacked for disrupting an official program in support of the Palestinians.

To a large extent, this is a reflection of the hold that the leftists have had first, on our universities, and then the increasingly tighter grip that they have on the liberal arts segment of the western universities. The situation has become so bad in the West that the phenomenon has come to be known as wokism. Add to this cauldron the term intersectionality and you have a right royal mess brewing on western campuses, threatening to swamp Indian campuses as well. Intersectionality is a relatively new word to enter the western academic-activist space. To quote the Encyclopaedia Britannica, intersectionality means the “interaction and cumulative effects of multiple forms of discrimination affecting the daily lives of individuals... The term also refers more broadly to an intellectual framework for understanding how various aspects of individual identity—including race, gender, social class, and sexuality—interact to create unique experiences of privilege or oppression.” To put it simply, if someone is picking up women's rights—specifically, women of colour—as a cause, then that person should also be ready to align oneself with causes like the “oppression” of Dalits by upper caste Hindus, of the blacks by the whites, of Palestinians by the Israelis, etc. It is about “interlocking oppressions” in areas like gender, sex, race, ethnicity, caste, physical appearance, and so on. Hence, anyone working on caste will automatically pick up the cause of Palestinians or Kashmiris, and go on campus protests, become anti-Hindu, anti-Jew, will support sex change operations of ten-year-olds, will fight for transgenders’ “right” to use women's toilets, or play in girls' teams. In other words, wokism or far left activism has resulted in the complete brainwashing of at least two-three generations of youngsters or more—and the academics are completely guilty of carrying out this brain-washing. Hence, it should not come as a surprise that Ranjini Srinivisan, the PhD scholar, who self-deported for fear of being jailed after her visa was cancelled, was working on the topic of caste in the Kolar goldfields as part of her urban planning dissertation. How caste comes into urban planning in 21st century India, no one knows, but unsurprisingly, she was also an anti-Semite and has been accused of being a supporter of the terrorist organisation Hamas.

The problem may not be that acute in India, yet, but there is a strong streak of loony left in India's academic space as well, much of it imported from the West. It is just that India is far too rooted in its culture and tradition for its academic space to sink in wokism. In fact, India has started coming out of the hold that the left has had over academics for decades, which has resulted in the distortion of India's history. The fight-back that has just started must continue. Even the West has started revolting against the loony left's plan of destroying the family as the core of human social existence. Donald Trump's victory is a testimony to that.

While it may be argued that the number of such “woke” Indian students is small when compared to the hundreds of thousands of students studying in the US, the problem is the perception. How many Chinese students have been deported for getting involved in anti-Semitic activities? Zero. Why isn't that the case with the Indians? Hence, it is time to introspect why a section of our youth is going astray and how this can be prevented.

JOYEETA BASU

Sacred Spaces and Legal Battles: The Places of Worship Act

OPINION

DR. ALISHA VERMA &
ADV. ANIKET NIKALJE



The Supreme Court is all set to hear the petitions challenging the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, following an extended period characterised by political manoeuvring and legal uncertainty. The forthcoming hearing, amidst unresolved historical claims and constitutional enquiries, has rekindled public interest in a statute that has mainly stayed dormant for almost thirty years. This law preserves religious character of places of worship as on August 15, 1947.

Several petitions are currently pending before the Apex Court, some challenging Sections 2, 3, and 4 of the Act, while others for its strict enforcement. The Supreme Court of India refused to consider a fresh petition against the



Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. The bench consisting of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar, underscored the imprudence of multiple proceedings on the same matter and asked the intended to file an intervention application instead. Justice Khanna is not the first Chief Justice of India to address these cross petitions, one challenging the legality of the 1991 Act and the other demanding its implementation.

OBJECT OF THE ACT, 1991

The said Act came into existence following the Ayodhya movement. It was enacted by the Congress Government in response to the escalating Ram Janma Bhumi campaign. The movement experienced a

vigorous campaign that incited violence. Certain groups advocated for the coercive conversion of places of worship. Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao served as Prime Minister, while Mr. S.B. Chavan held the position of Home Minister. The Home Minister stated that this Bill is perceived as a means to uphold and cultivate our esteemed traditions of love, peace, and harmony. Tolerance for all faiths has characterized our great civilization since time immemorial. The Bill had strong resistance from the leaders of the Bhartiya Janata Party, who were in the resistance. In his opposition to the Bill, Mr. Ram Naik characterised it as the most egregious legislation.

WHAT IS THE ACT OF 1991?

It bans the conversion of places of worship and preserves their religious character of any place of worship as it was on August 15, 1947. Section 3 of the Act prohibits the conversion of any places of worship of any religious denomination. Section 4(1) preserves a place of worship's religious character as on August 15, 1947. Section 4(2) states that any suit, appeal, or other proceeding pending before any court, tribunal, or other authority, regarding the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship, as

it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, shall abate, and no such suit, appeal, or other proceeding shall lie on or after such commencement. If a suit, appeal, or other proceeding instituted or filed on the ground that a place's religious character has changed after August 15, 1947, is pending on the commencement of this Act, it will be disposed of according to sub-section (1). Section 4(3) excludes 1958's Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act. It does not apply to settled or mutually agreed disputes or conversions before the Act's implementation. The Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case and related legal actions are exempt from the Act under Section 5, allowing the Ram Temple to be built.

JUDICIAL SCRUTINY AMID RISING NUMBER OF PETITIONS

In the Ram Janmabhumi case, the Supreme Court upheld the Act on November 19, 2019. The Court noted that the Act protects the Constitution's fundamental values. Further, due to the restriction imposed under Section 4(2) of the Act, the outcome of the suits to determine the religious character of place of worship is uncertain. The petition challenging section 2, 3 and 4 of the said Act is pending in the Apex Court since 2020. Supreme Court, via its order dated December 12, 2024, observed that the primary issue, that arises

for consideration, is with regard to Sections 3 and 4 of the 1991 Act and its contours, as well as the width and expanse of the said provisions and further stated that though fresh suit may be filed, no suit would be registered and no proceeding shall be undertaken further in the pending suits, no court will pass any effective interim orders or final orders, including orders directing surveys, etc. till further orders of the Court. Consequently, the Lower Courts are prohibited from allowing surveys or ASI reports, as seen in several recent cases.

Following December 12, 2024 many petitions were filed including those by AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi, Samajwadi Party representative and Kairana MP Iqra Choudhary, and the Congress Party, advocating for the proper enforcement of the 1991 legislation. Choudhary, the Lok Sabha MP from Kairana, Uttar Pradesh, on February 14, tried to mitigate the rising trend of legal measures against mosques and dargahs, which he asserted jeopardise communal peace and the secular fabric of the nation. The Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind has filed a petition for the implementation and enforcement of the Act. Numerous intervention applications have been filed by political parties such as CPI(M), Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), DMK, RJD, and NCP (Sharad Pawar), among others,

endorsing the Act.

GOVERNMENT'S RELUCTANCE TO CLARIFY ITS STAND

The present Union government has not yet expressed a definitive position on these concerns. In the last three years, the Supreme Court has permitted many delays for the government to submit a response, with the latest postponement being in February 2025, deferring the issue until April. The extended silence has prompted conjecture on the government's stance, particularly in light of the Act's historical setting and its ramifications for current controversies surrounding religious sites.

JUDICIAL DILEMMA IN A SENSITIVE DISPUTE

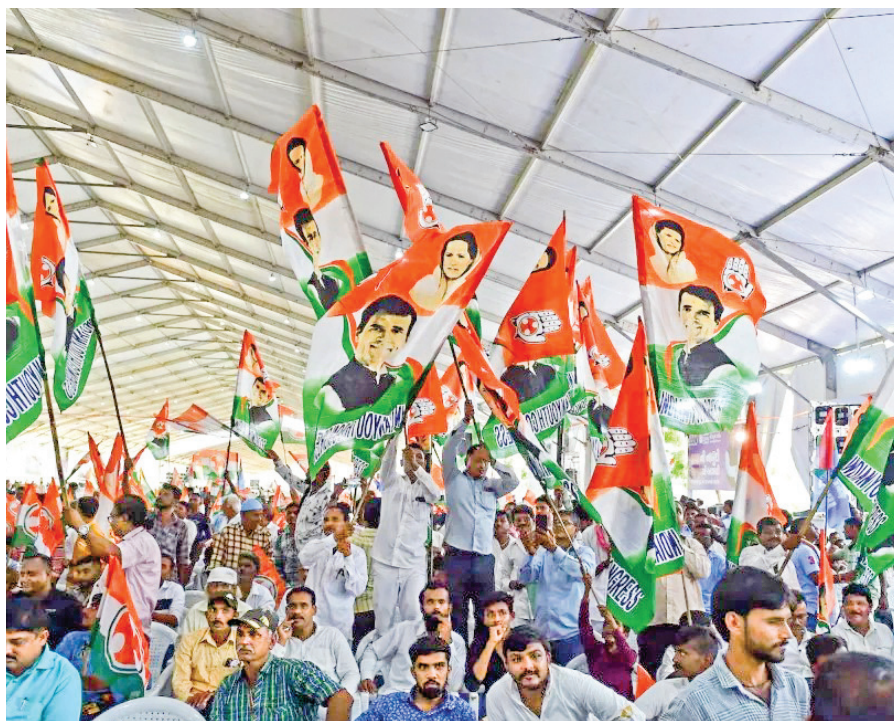
Amid ongoing historical and theological conflicts about places of worship, it is imperative to maintain communal harmony and mutual respect among all groups. The court faces a complex challenge of reconciling historical grievances with constitutional tenets while ensuring that judicial outcomes are not furthering community differences. An equitable and impartial approach, one that honours faith, law, and national cohesion is vital for preserving peace while addressing the interests of all parties involved.

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In the summer of 2022, as Congress leaders gathered in the regal city of Udaipur to examine their party's future, Rahul Gandhi was seen pacing the corridors — visibly frustrated by the silence of senior leaders after yet another bruising electoral season. Outside, young workers chanted for change; inside, old guard hesitation smothered momentum. It was not the first time the Congress had been at war with itself. Three years later, the party assembled again — this time on the banks of the Sabarmati in Ahmedabad, the very city where Mahatma Gandhi launched some of his most potent campaigns for national renewal. But it wasn't just history the Congress was invoking — it was trying to outrun its own obsolescence.



Congress leaders during a press conference on day 2 of the party's 'Nav Sankalp Shivir', in Udaipur on May 14, 2022. File photo



Supporters of the Indian National Congress party wave flags during a rally in Ahmedabad on September 5, 2022. File photo

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

On a hot April morning in Ahmedabad, the Indian National Congress returned to a city it hadn't officially convened in for over 60 years. But the air wasn't just thick with history—it was saturated with urgency. The grand old party of Indian independence, now struggling for relevance in a BJP-dominated landscape, gathered for what was framed as a national convention but functioned more like an existential therapy session. “Where did we go wrong? Can we still matter?”

This wasn't just another internal meeting. It was a resurrection attempt.

ECHOES OF THE PAST

Ahmedabad holds a unique place in Congress history. It was here in 1921 that Mahatma Gandhi presided over the party's annual session, signalling the shift from elite politics to mass mobilization. It was here again in 1938 that Subhas Chandra Bose, representing a fiery and socialist youth force, clashed with conservative seniors over the party's direction. The ideological battles fought in the city shaped the freedom movement.

In returning to Ahmedabad in 2025, Congress wasn't just choosing a venue. It was summoning ghosts—of conviction, of clarity, and of confidence long lost.

FROM UDAIPUR TO AHMEDABAD: TWO CITIES, ONE CRISIS

The journey toward this moment arguably began in Udaipur in 2022, where the party held a “Chintan Shivir”—a brainstorming retreat designed to diagnose its own decline. Set in the tranquil backdrop of Rajasthan's lakes and palaces, the three-day conclave was meant to offer both in-



Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as the new President of Indian National Congress (1938 photo). Picture source: X post/indianhistorypics

trospection and inspiration.

Rahul Gandhi, visibly impatient with the party's inertia, called for “radical transformation.” There was talk of giving 50% of party tickets to people under 50, of reviving booth-level engagement, or enforcing one-man-one-post policies. Yet despite the flurry of resolutions, a familiar paralysis followed. As one young party worker reportedly said, “The bosses debated change. But we're still waiting for change to reach us.”

Pachmarhi Chintan Shivir (1998): A Vision for Solitude

In September 1998, under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi, the Congress held its first Chintan Shivir in Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh. This conclave came at a time when the party was grappling with consecutive electoral defeats and a diminishing support base. The primary resolution from Pachmarhi was a reaffirmation of the Congress's commitment to single-party dominance, eschewing coalition politics. The party believed it could regain its preeminent position without alliances,

emphasizing a return to its core values and grassroots connections. However, this stance was soon challenged by the evolving political dynamics of the country.

Shimla Chintan Shivir (2003): Embracing Coalition Dharma

By 2003, the political landscape had shifted significantly, necessitating a reassessment of the Congress's strategy. The Shimla Chintan Shivir marked a departure from the Pachmarhi resolution, as the party acknowledged the importance of coalition politics. The Congress expressed willingness to collaborate with like-minded parties to counter the growing influence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This pragmatic approach aimed to build a united front, leading to the formation of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), which eventually came to power in 2004.

Jaipur Chintan Shivir (2013): Youthful Aspirations and Organizational Reforms

A decade later, in 2013, the Congress convened another

REQUIEM OR RESURRECTION? INSIDE CONGRESS'S SEARCH FOR ITSELF

18 और 19 जनवरी, 2013
जयपुर, राजस्थान
18 & 19 January, 2013
Jaipur, Rajasthan



Congress party's brain-storming session began in Jaipur on Friday, January 18, 2013. Picture source: X



Udaipur: Congress Interim President Sonia Gandhi and party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Anand Sharma with members during the 'Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir- 2022', in Udaipur on Friday, May 13, 2022. Picture source: Prokerala

er Chintan Shivir in Jaipur, Rajasthan. This session focused on infusing young blood into the party's leadership, culminating in the elevation of Rahul Gandhi as the party's vice president. The Jaipur conclave underscored the need for organizational reforms, emphasizing inclusivity and the empowerment of grassroots workers. However, despite these resolutions, the party faced significant challenges in subsequent elections, indicating gaps between intent and implementation.

Udaipur Chintan Shivir (2022): Navigating Contemporary Challenges

In May 2022, amidst a series of electoral setbacks and internal dissent, the Congress organized the Udaipur Chintan Shivir. The conclave aimed to address pressing issues such as organizational restruc-

turing, ideological clarity, and strategies to counter the BJP's dominance. Key resolutions included enforcing a 'one family, one ticket' rule, setting a five-year term limit for party positions, and enhancing representation of youth and marginalized communities. Despite these ambitious plans, reports indicated challenges

HITS: WHAT CONGRESS GOT RIGHT

To dismiss the Chintan Shivirs as failures would be unfair. The Udaipur Shivir did produce a roadmap, however tentative, for organizational reform. It emphasized decentralization, district-level empowerment, and inclusivity. The focus on youth inclusion was a nod to India's demographic reality.

In Ahmedabad, these conversations matured into action items. The Con-

gress Working Committee (CWC) passed resolutions to strengthen district units, empower grassroots committees, and hold more frequent internal elections. Mallikarjun Kharge's leadership injected new stability, with his speeches balancing ideological fire with procedural focus.

The party also struck a sharper tone against the BJP's communal politics. “They are not just rewriting history,” Kharge warned, “they are erasing the soul of India.” The symbolism wasn't subtle. Holding a convention in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's hometown was a direct challenge to the BJP's appropriation of national icons.

MISSSES: THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Yet, for all its ambition, the Congress still stumbles on the same obstacles that

have plagued it for years: implementation, leadership cohesion, and voter trust. While the Ahmedabad convention resolved to empower district committees, many local units remain plagued by patronage and infighting.

The biggest elephant in the room remains Rahul Gandhi. His Bharat Jodo Yatra reenergized the base but didn't translate into major electoral victories. His ambiguity about full-time leadership continues to confuse both party workers and voters. For a party that once rallied around titans like Nehru, Indira, and Rajiv, the current indecision is more than symbolic—it's structural.

THE G-23 AND THE GHOSTS OF 1969

Ahmedabad 2025 also revived memories of 1969, when Indira Gandhi split from the Congress old guard to form her own faction, Congress (R). Back then, it was a battle between the status quo and populism. Today's tensions—embodied in the now-muted G-23 dissenters like Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma—echo a similar discomfort with centralization and dynastic control.

Though many dissenters have been sidelined or have exited the party, the underlying question remains: Can Congress tolerate dissent, or does it merely absorb and silence it?

LEARNING FROM THE BJP'S PLAYBOOK

Ironically, the party could take cues from its chief rival. The BJP, under Modi and Shah, built a formidable ground machinery by relentlessly focusing on booth-level strategy, cultural narrative-building, and digital outreach. Congress's Shivirs often identify these gaps but fail to plug them consistently.

What Congress needs is not just vision but velocity.

CULTURAL AMNESIA: WHY IDEOLOGY STILL MATTERS

A senior Congress leader at the Ahmedabad meet reportedly lamented, “We

don't tell our story anymore.” That confession points to a deeper malaise. In the post-liberalization era, Congress stopped defining its ideological moorings. While the BJP offered Hindutva, nationalism, and a strong leader, Congress fumbled with vague secularism and fragmented welfare agendas.

The Udaipur and Ahmedabad sessions attempted to revive the ideological soul of the party—one grounded in constitutionalism, pluralism, and economic justice. But without consistent storytelling, these ideals sound more like museum exhibits than mobilizing ideas.

WOMEN, YOUTH, DALITS: STILL MARGINS IN THE MAINSTREAM

Despite the promise of representation, Congress remains slow in elevating women, Dalits, and minorities into meaningful leadership positions. The Shivirs gave lip service to these groups but offered little data on actual power redistribution. For a party that claims to represent “India's diversity,” its leadership structure remains remarkably homogenous.

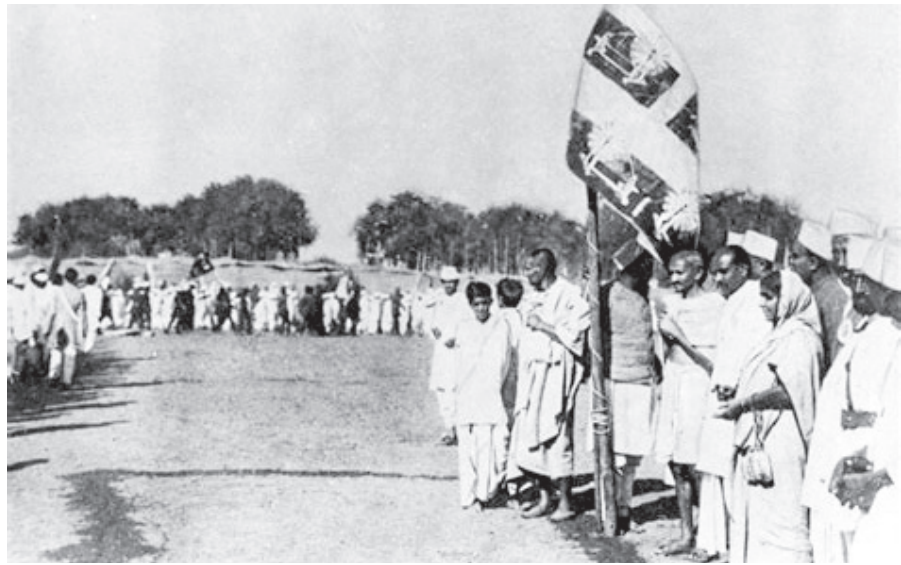
WHAT NEXT? A WARNING, NOT A PREDICTION

The Congress faces an existential crossroads. Will Ahmedabad be remembered like the 1921 session—a pivot to mass revival—or like the 1969 split—a prelude to further fragmentation?

The party still retains over 19% of India's vote share. It governs in a handful of states. It holds the intellectual heritage of the freedom movement. But history does not guarantee the future. Only strategy, cohesion, and courage can.

And perhaps, honesty. As one old Congressman said while exiting the Ahmedabad hall, “We all know what's wrong. The question is—do we have the stomach to fix it?”

Ahmedabad may yet be a beginning. Or, as some fear, a beautifully worded obituary.



Mahatma Gandhi with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Sarojini Naidu at the Flag salutation ceremony during the Ahmedabad session of the Congress, December 1921. The first 'Chintan Shivir' was when the President was in prison. Picture source: Facebook post/ India in Bhutan Consulate General of India, Phuentsholing

THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS TO HEAVEN: THE ARUNACHAL PRADESH ODYSSEY



MURARI GUPTA

The Northeast part of India has some magic which attracts people from all over the world. The Majestic mountains, the perilous trails, the vast stretches of f-greens, the azure sky; the Northeast has picturesque panoramic view all the year round. I fell in love with Arunachal from the very first posting in radio in the capital Itanagar. In the last week of March, the author got a chance to visit Arunachal again with his family. Earlier in 2010, during my service in Akashvani in Arunachal's capital Itanagar, I got the opportunity to see only a part of Arunachal. But this time, to experience the beauty of this beautiful part of Arunachal, we planned to travel from Guwahati to Tawang by taxi.

On the first day of the journey, our stop was Bhalukpong. Bhalukpong is the gate to reach Tawang. It is a part of Arunachal's West Kameng district and is the main route to reach Bomdila and Tawang. Bhalukpong is a border town on Assam and Arunachal which is situated at the mouth of the Kameng river. There are many excellent guest houses of Guwahati government here. I got the opportunity to stay in one of them. Right behind the guest house, the cold stream of Kameng river was flowing, which was absolutely clean, clear and transparent. Although it was not the monsoon season, so its peace was visible in its flow. The width of the river had shrunk a lot. But sitting on the round stones on the banks of the river, one

can enjoy the morning here, which comes two hours before the rest of India. Obviously, we also enjoyed this cold morning to the fullest. Talking a little about the history of Bhalukpong, this is a place associated with the name of Bhaluka Raja. The remains of some characters related to Mahabharata are associated with this town. Another important thing, it is necessary to do an administrative formality to come to Arunachal. And that is to get ILP i.e. Inner Line Permit. Without ILP, you cannot travel to Arunachal. However, it is easy. If you are not able to make it online, then you can get Inner Line Permit by showing your documents at the center present in Bhalukpong.

Now let's travel further. About 150 km from here is Dirang, a beautiful, green town of West Kameng, surrounded by snowy mountains and the Kameng river. The influence of Buddhism and Monpa culture is widely visible here. The houses of the tribals here are generally made of wood. The most sacred place in the Dirang Valley is Kalachakra Gumpa. This Gumpa or Buddhist monastery is in a village a little above Dirang and is five hundred years old. Tourists come here from far and wide to understand Buddhism and its culture. There is a hostel for Buddhist monks nearby, in which Buddhist monks of all ages live and receive education in Buddhism. The day we were here, young Buddhist monks were enjoying cricket. When we requested them to take a photo with us, they readily came.

There are many homestays to stay in Dirang. If you want to enjoy Dirang, try to choose a homestay that is on the river bank. Luckily our homestay was right at the mouth of the Kameng river. The whole night the music of the river kept playing music through the windows. In the



morning, after crossing huge rocks, we reached the river bank and felt the warmth of the cold water. The people of Arunachal are just like the purity of the river. Very clean and transparent. They talk in your own language. The language that connects the people of Arunachal is Hindi.

On the way from Dirang to Tawang, there are many small shops and restaurants, where Maggi, apples, oranges and dried yak meat are easily available. Apart from this, candy made from yak milk is available everywhere. Those who avoid eating pork often look for Nepali restaurants, where non-vegetarian

food is available, but there is no pork in it. It is better if vegetarians do not waste time in the pursuit of pure vegetarian food. Both types of food are available in the same restaurant. Eat together and move ahead.

It takes almost a whole day to reach Tawang from Dirang. But amidst the snowy mountains, the boards of Border Road Organisation (BRO) with beautiful sentences written on them tickle the heart - as if the paths to heaven probably go through the mountains...we are soft on my curves...after whisky driving is risky...don't be a gama in the land of lama... Looking at the interest-



ing sign boards of BRO, we reached Sela Pass, a marvel of Indian engineering, by afternoon. Sela Tunnel, situated at a height of thirteen and a half thousand feet, is a tunnel of strategic importance. It is the longest double lane tunnel in the world. As soon as we got down from our vehicle at the mouth of the tunnel, our lungs started panting due to lack of oxygen. After ten fifteen minutes, the situation became normal. But seeing the enthusiasm of other tourists, our enthusiasm also doubled. We took a lot of pictures. We made videos. There were high snowy peaks all around, it seemed as if their tops never ended. Thousands of feet deep trenches below. We were amazed at the difficult conditions in which BRO has built such a wonderful and amazing tunnel and handed it over to the country at a place where one cannot survive even for half an hour due to extreme cold and lack of oxygen.

After crossing the tunnel, we reached Jaswantgarh, a symbol of military pride. In the 1962 Sino-Indian War, Chinese soldiers had reached

here, but our brave soldiers gave them a befitting reply. Brave soldier Jaswant Singh was awarded the Param Vir Chakra for his bravery in the Indo-China War. This place has also been established in his memory. There is a military canteen here where you can eat Kadi Rice, Dal Rice, Maggi at very cheap rates. Water and tea are available free of cost from the army. If you are with children, then you should show them the stories of the bravery of the Indian Army here. We also made the children aware of it. They also understood in what difficult conditions the Indian Army is protecting the country.

By evening we reached Tawang. It was getting dark at 4:30. By the time we reached Tawang, the darkness became even denser. On the roads on the winding hills, traditional Tibetan doors welcome the tourists, on which tourists are welcomed in the Tibetan language. At many places on the hills, mountain bulls, i.e. yaks, are seen eating grass from the hills. Cows are also seen in the plains in between. Apples and oranges brought

from the plains are available in the wooden shops on the roadside. Although these are much more expensive than the prices in the plains. But their availability here is an achievement.

In Tawang, we were fortunate to get a place in the state government's circuit house. In front of us was a temple with a huge statue of Lord Buddha thirty feet high. We were in the refuge of Buddha. A beautiful view of Tawang is visible from this place. Tawang Monastery is present at a short distance from here. As soon as one enters this monastery, built about three hundred years ago, the feeling of peace enters the veins of the tourists. More than five hundred Buddhist monks live here. This monastery looks like a fort from a distance. The painting on its entrance is tempting. The War Memorial in Tawang has the stories of those soldiers who protected the country's borders in the Indo-China war. The city of Tawang falls asleep by 8-8:30 pm. After that, it is difficult to find a restaurant to eat in the city.

The next day, our target at the last stop of the journey was Bumla Pass. Bumla is situated on the Indo-Tibet border 35 km from Tawang and is located on the Line of Actual Control between India and Tibet (China). The road from Tawang to Bumla Pass is crossed by a road built by BRO between high and very high mountains covered with white snow. Many lakes made by the gods are seen in between. These lakes are formed by the water of melted snow from the snowy mountains all around. These lakes freeze in winter. Bumla Pass is the place from where China attacked India in 1962.

It was from this pass, situated at an altitude of more than fifteen thousand feet, that the supreme guru of Tibet, Dalai Lama, entered India in 1959 against the il-

legal encroachment of China on Tibet. The army is always ready to welcome tourists at this historical place. To reach here, a special pass has to be taken from the office of Deputy Commissioner Tawang. On reaching here, the oxygen level had once again gone down. When the eight-year-old daughter felt uncomfortable, she became comfortable after taking oxygen in the medical room in the army tent nearby. Tourists are filled with a great zeal of patriotism as soon as they reach here. When the Indian soldiers tell the tourists about the importance of this place and the heroic story of Subedar Joginder Singh in the Indo-China war, all the tourists shout slogans of Bharat Mata ki Jai.

But before reaching Bumla, there is another interesting place. Sangster Lake. Its popular name these days is also Madhur Lake. Do you remember the song from the film Koyla - Tanhai Tanhai... This song was filmed on Shahrukh and Madhuri against the backdrop of this lake. This lake can also be called a symbol of creation amidst destruction. This beautiful lake was formed as a result of the earthquake in 1973. The dead trees standing in the middle of it create a scene like the mausoleum of the departed souls.

There is a very good army canteen near the lake, where we enjoyed noodles with the children. The icy water from the snowy hills around the lake keeps filling it from different paths. The road to reach here is very narrow. The road to the lake starts from Jemithang which reaches the shore of the lake after passing through fifty-two turns. Arunachal Pradesh is one of the beautiful states of the Northeast. One must definitely visit Arunachal at least once in life.

The author is a novelist and editor of DD News Jaipur.

From Rajasthan to the World: The rise of folk music bands

TDG NETWORK

Rajasthani music, known for its rich cultural heritage, has captivated listeners worldwide with its unique sounds, rhythms, and folk traditions. The music of Rajasthan is deeply rooted in the state's history, landscapes, and diverse communities, offering a powerful blend of soul-stirring melodies and rhythmic beats. One of the most defining features of Rajasthani music is its diversity, as it includes both classical and folk traditions, with each region of Rajasthan contributing distinct styles and instruments.

Famous for their lively performances, Rajasthani bands have played a significant role in showcasing the state's music globally. These bands often blend traditional instruments like the dholak, tabla, sarangi, and harmonium with modern elements to create a fusion that appeals to both local and international audiences. The Rajasthani folk music genre includes various forms such as Ghoomar, Kalbeliya, and Manganiyar music, each with its own distinctive style, rhythm, and purpose.

Rajasthani folk bands often perform songs that tell stories of love, heroism, and

devotion, drawing from the epic tales of Rajasthan's kings and warriors. The Manganiyar community, known for its poetic and melodic music, has gained significant recognition globally. Their songs are often accompanied by dance performances that enhance the storytelling aspect of their music.

In recent years, Rajasthani bands have made their mark on international platforms. Groups like Rahis Bharti's Dhod Band have toured extensively, performing in over 119 countries and spreading the culture of Rajasthan far and wide. These bands not only perform at cultural festivals but also introduce Rajasthan's folk traditions to global audiences through collaborations with other musicians and performing arts groups.

Through their performances, Rajasthani music continues to evolve while staying true to its roots, contributing to the preservation of the state's musical heritage while also ensuring its global recognition. The sound of Rajasthan's folk music, with its lively rhythms and powerful storytelling, continues to resonate with audiences across the globe.

Rajasthan's cultural am-

bassador Rahis Bharti and his band, Dhod Band, are gaining international acclaim with their captivating performances, showcasing the state's rich heritage to the world. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Dhod Band, which has played a significant role in elevating Rajasthan's cultural presence globally.

The band recently celebrated its milestone anniversary with a special ceremony honoring the gypsy tradition that traveled from India to Spain over 600 years ago. Under Rahis Bharti's leadership, Dhod Band performed in Spain and France, leaving a lasting impact on audiences with their unique blend of Rajasthani folk music and vibrant performances. One of their notable performances was at the Holi festival in France, where they spread the vibrant colors of Rajasthan's culture.

Over the years, Dhod Band has been a true ambassador of Rajasthan's musical heritage, delivering over 1600 performances across 119 countries. Their international acclaim is a testament to the universal appeal of Rajasthani folk music and the band's dedication to preserving and promoting this rich cultural tradition.



Through their captivating shows, Rahis Bharti and Dhod Band continue to create waves in the global music scene, showcasing Rajasthan's diverse cultural heritage to audiences worldwide, and establishing themselves as cultural ambassadors of the state.

Rajasthan's world-renowned artist Rahis Bharti's Dhod Band celebrated its 25th anniversary this year with an unmatched presentation of Rajasthani folk

culture in Spain and France. The Dhod artists created a unique scene of the confluence of cultural friendship between India and Spain by giving a joint performance with Spanish flamenco artists in a special program organized by Spain's Culture Ministry on April 8. The Dhod Band was specially invited for the performance in Spain. This event was organized in memory of the gypsy tradition that reached Spain from India 600 years

MORE THAN ONE LAKH SPECTATORS WITNESSED THE RURAL TALENT

Dhod Group was earlier invited to the country's biggest festival held in Rennes city of France, where India was given special honor as 'Guest Country'. More than one lakh spectators saw the glimpse of Rajasthani folk culture in the presentations that lasted for 10 days. French ministers, MPs, mayors and other dignitaries were present in this grand event. Dhod was also invited to many cities of France under the Holi festival, where they presented

the tradition of India to the whole of Europe with colors, music and dance.

It is noteworthy that the Dhod Band under the leadership of Rajasthan's folk artist Rahis Bharti has given more than 1600 performances in 119 countries so far and is representing India's folk culture and tradition in different countries of the world for 6 to 7 months every year. Rahis Bharti and Dhod Band are considered cultural ambassadors of Rajasthan all over the world. They have not only kept the Rajasthani traditions alive, but have also provided a global platform to more than 700 rural artists so far. They have given Indian folk culture a unique identity on the world map through music, dance and interaction. Rahis Bharti said that on its 25th anniversary, the Dhod Group will perform in many countries including Spain, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, Germany this year. Dhod has created a buzz on these prestigious platforms of the world

INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES BY RAHIS BHARTI'S DHOD BAND

Rahis Bharti's Dhod Band has earned international acclaim for its exceptional performances, showcas-

ing the vibrant culture and music of Rajasthan on the global stage. The band has been a part of prestigious events like the welcome ceremony of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Paris and the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II at Hyde Park in London. Their performances have also been featured in front of world leaders, including French Prime Minister Edward Philippe and President Francois Hollande, as well as Croatian President Ivan Yosipovic. The band has captivated audiences at renowned festivals such as the Sziget Festival in Hungary and the Paleo Festival in Switzerland. Additionally, they have performed at significant cultural events like the European Capital of Culture in Turkey. The band's tours include performances at prestigious opera houses in Lyon, Saint Etienne, Lille (France), and Opera Cologne (Germany), as well as national concert halls in Moldova, Armenia, and Belgium. Rahis Bharti's Dhod Band has also undertaken a live tour across 35 cities in America and delivered a historic performance under the Romfest Festival in 26 cities of Japan, cementing their reputation as cultural ambassadors of Rajasthan worldwide.

US-IRAN INDIRECT TALKS: CAN DIPLOMACY PREVENT THE NEXT MAJOR WAR?

These indirect negotiations are crucial as they represent the latest effort to prevent the escalation of one of the most dangerous stand-offs in the Middle East.

In a world already fraught with tension and unrest, the resumption of US-Iran talks has brought the spotlight back onto one of the most volatile relationships in modern geopolitics. The United States and Iran are set to engage in their first serious diplomatic talks since President Donald Trump's controversial decision to withdraw from the 2015

escalation of one of the most dangerous stand-offs in the Middle East. With both sides at loggerheads, this diplomatic engagement could be the final chance to avoid another catastrophic conflict in the region.

Why These Talks Matter
The stakes could not be higher. The US wants Iran to curb its nuclear ambitions, specifically its uranium enrichment program, which has reached alarming levels. Iran is currently enriching uranium to a 60% purity level—almost weapons-grade. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports that Iran has accumulated more than 8,000 kg of enriched uranium, far surpassing the 300 kg limit set under the 2015 nuclear agreement. While Iran insists it will never use this enrichment for bomb-making, the rapid increase in its nuclear stockpile has led to heightened concerns in Washington and beyond.

The backdoor, indirect nature of these talks, conducted through intermediaries like Oman, underscores the deep mistrust between the two countries. The US has signaled its willingness for direct negotiations, but Iran insists



Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action meeting. File Photo

about a nuclear-armed Iran, alongside an ever-increasing military build-up in the region, make these negotiations both critical and precarious.

TRUMP'S RETURN: NEW DYNAMICS

The situation has become even more volatile with the return of President Donald Trump to the White House. Under his previous administration, the US withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018, reimposing harsh sanctions on Iran, which effectively crippled its economy. The reimposition of sanctions and Trump's aggressive rhetoric have exacerbated tensions, and there are growing fears that a misstep by either side could trigger open conflict.

Trump's hardline approach has included direct threats of military action against Iran. In a move that rattled diplomatic circles, he sent a warning letter to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, cautioning that if progress was not made in the talks, military strikes might



follow. Iran, however, has not been intimidated. Ayatollah Khamenei dismissed the threat, asserting that any military action would be met with an overwhelming response from Iran. The Iranian government, in no uncertain terms, has reiterated its readiness to defend itself, further complicating the path to peace.

Iran's Position: No Trust
Iran's reluctance to engage in direct negotiations with the US speaks volumes about the lack of trust that has built up over the years. Iranian officials argue that past US behavior—most notably Trump's abrupt withdrawal from the nuclear deal—has

proven that the US cannot be trusted to uphold its commitments. Iran, in turn, demands a clear demonstration of goodwill and tangible results from the US before it will consider engaging in direct talks.

Iran's political leaders, including President Masoud Pezeshkian, have consistently stated that they are open to negotiations but require assurances that the US can and will fulfill any promises made. The Iranian Foreign Ministry has denounced Trump's threats, calling them a "shocking affront to peace." Meanwhile, tensions in the region have intensified, with both countries engaging in military posturing.

Iranian media reports suggest that Iran has moved its missiles closer to US targets, while the US has responded by deploying B-2 bombers to Diego Garcia, a military base in the Indian Ocean that is within striking distance of Iran. This military buildup has only exacerbated the climate of mistrust and fear.

Threat of Regional Fallout
The consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran would extend far beyond the US and Iran alone. The Middle East, already a region fraught with conflict and instability, could be thrown into a broader arms race. Israel, which is already nuclear-armed, would likely view an Iranian nuclear weapon as an existential threat. This could push Israel to act preemptively, launching military strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities in an attempt to prevent Iran from crossing the nuclear threshold.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has repeatedly threatened to develop its own nuclear arsenal if Iran succeeds in obtaining a nuclear bomb. This would likely trigger other countries in the region, such as Turkey and Egypt, to pursue similar paths. The result could be the destabilization of the global non-proliferation regime, with disastrous consequences for international security. The impact on global oil markets could also be profound, as instability in the Middle East often leads to fluctuations in oil prices, with reverberations felt worldwide.

A Long Road to Conflict
The roots of the US-Iran conflict stretch back de-

cades. In 1979, the Islamic Revolution in Iran led to the overthrow of the pro-US Shah and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Later that year, Iranian militants stormed the US Embassy in Tehran, taking 52 Americans hostage for 444 days. This event severed diplomatic ties between the two nations and marked the beginning of a fraught relationship characterized by sporadic bouts of hostility and limited engagement.

The nuclear deal in 2015 represented a rare moment of cooperation between the two countries. Under the agreement, Iran agreed to curtail its nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief. However, the deal was far from perfect, with both sides harboring reservations. When President Trump withdrew from the deal in 2018, citing flaws and accusing Iran of non-compliance, it set the stage for the current crisis. The subsequent imposition of "maximum pressure" sanctions on Iran failed to stop its nuclear progress, leading to a deadlock that has left both sides entrenched in their positions.

THE SHADOW OF 1979

The animosity between the US and Iran can never be fully understood without considering the legacy of the 1979 hostage crisis. For many in Iran, the US represents imperialism, interference, and a long history of political manipulation in the region. On

the other hand, the US views Iran's leadership as a destabilizing force in the Middle East, accusing it of sponsoring terrorism and threatening the security of its allies. The decades of distrust have built a thick wall between the two nations, and it is difficult to see how meaningful engagement can occur without a fundamental shift in how both sides perceive each other.

DIPLOMACY OR DI-SASTER?

The upcoming talks in Oman represent a critical juncture. These indirect negotiations could pave the way for a breakthrough, offering an opportunity to de-escalate tensions and restore some measure of trust. However, the risk of failure is equally high. If the talks collapse without significant progress, the possibility of military action increases, particularly if Israel perceives Iran's nuclear program as an imminent threat. Saudi Arabia, too, may take steps to counterbalance Iran's nuclear ambitions, further entrenching the conflict.

The question now is whether diplomacy can prevail over the drumbeat of war. Both the US and Iran are desperate for security, but they disagree on how best to achieve it. While the US continues to push for Iran to abandon its nuclear program, Iran seeks sanctions relief and the assurance that its security concerns will be addressed. The next few weeks will be crucial in determining whether these conflicting desires can be reconciled.

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nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). These indirect negotiations are crucial as they represent the latest effort to prevent the

on using intermediaries. This gap in diplomatic preferences is a reflection of the trust deficit that has been eroded over years of hostility, broken promises, and diverging political goals. The growing fears

China unlikely to yield in America's Tariff War despite rising tensions

The trade war between the United States and China, initiated by President Donald Trump in 2018, has entered an uncharted phase, marked by escalating tariffs and mounting tension. What began with Trump's January threat to impose a 10% tariff on Chinese imports has now ballooned to a staggering 104%. In response, China has retaliated with an 84% tariff on US goods, and both nations are engaged in a war of words, with Beijing vowing not to back down. As the conflict deepens, the risk of a global economic downturn grows, while ordinary consumers bear the brunt of rising prices. Yet, despite its economic challenges, China is unlikely to blink first in this ongoing standoff.

ESCALATING TARIFF WAR

The tariffs have become the focal point of the trade war. Originally, the Trump administration imposed a 10% tariff on Chinese imports, but within three months, the rate skyrocketed to 104%. China swiftly retaliated, imposing its own set of tariffs on US goods, including industrial and agricultural products. The result was a trade imbalance where the US is significantly more dependent on China for consumer goods like smartphones, toys,

and computers. In contrast, China imports industrial supplies such as soybeans, fossil fuels, and jet engines from the US.

This imbalance in trade dependencies plays a critical role in shaping China's approach to the trade war. While the US imports billions of dollars worth of consumer goods from China, China's reliance on US exports is more limited, which gives Beijing a certain level of leverage. For instance, analysts predict that if Trump's tariffs continue to rise, the price of an iPhone in the US could increase by more than \$300. Given that these consumer goods are essential for everyday life, it is likely that US consumers will feel the pinch more immediately than Chinese consumers.

China, however, has the advantage of greater flexibility in how it responds. The Chinese economy is more insulated from US imports, and the government has been increasingly successful in diversifying its trade partnerships. In fact, China has already reduced its dependency on the US, ramping up trade with other countries, including Brazil, which has seen its soybean exports to China rise significantly since the trade war began. As a result, China is less reliant on US agricultural exports, which has dampened the impact of US

tariffs on its economy.

BEIJING'S DETERMINATION

For Chinese President Xi Jinping, backing down is politically untenable. If China were to make significant concessions or appear to yield to the US, it could risk domestic unrest and undermine his leadership. As noted by Diana Choyleva, chief economist at Enodo Economics, the politically viable response for Xi is to adopt a tough stance: "Bring it on!" The Chinese leadership understands that any appearance of weakness could be seen as a loss of face and might embolden Trump or other adversaries.

Since the start of the trade war, China has already taken retaliatory measures, including implementing tariffs as high as 34% on US imports. These actions have resonated with the public, as they align with China's broader goals of asserting its independence and standing up to foreign pressure. The Chinese government's rhetoric has only strengthened this resolve, with Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian declaring that China will never back down when challenged.

Moreover, the strategic advantage for China is clear. The US is more vulnerable to tariff increases, particularly in the consumer sector, as many US businesses rely

on Chinese manufacturing for products that American consumers buy. These tariffs have the potential to significantly increase costs for companies like Apple, which would likely pass those price hikes onto consumers. As the costs of everyday goods rise in the US, the blame will likely fall on the US government's trade policies, not on China. This dynamic places more pressure on the US economy, potentially leading to a political backlash against Trump.

CHINA: RETALIATORY MEASURES

China has several retaliatory options at its disposal, many of which go beyond traditional tariffs. Recent reports suggest that China could explore measures such as suspending cooperation onentanyl control, which has been a point of contention between the two countries, or investigating US companies' intellectual property practices in China. Additionally, China could impose unofficial measures, such as boycotts of American companies or films, as it has done in the past.

In 2017, following a political dispute over the US missile defense system in South Korea, China allowed online nationalists to lead a boycott of Lotte, a South Korean retailer.

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Why Apple shifts focus to India amid rising US-China tariffs

Apple is shifting its iPhone production strategy, ramping up exports from India to the US as a response to the escalating US-China trade war. This move comes as US President Donald Trump imposes heavy tariffs, up to 54%, on Chinese tech imports, including Apple's products. Apple has been deeply reliant on China for its manufacturing, but the new tariffs have prompted the company to seek alternatives, with India emerging as a critical player in Apple's global supply chain. The shift is tactical for now, but experts predict it could pave the way for a long-term production base in India as US-China tensions show no sign of easing.



India to the US, carrying iPhones and accessories as part of a stockpiling effort. Indian officials confirmed that the increased production was aimed at meeting US demand while minimizing the shock from the impending cost hikes. While Apple's shift away from China is not a complete decoupling, it signals a strategic adjustment in its global supply chain to manage ongoing trade tensions.

APPLE'S CRISIS MODE

Trump's tariff hikes have placed Apple in a precarious position, potentially causing a significant financial blow. With tariffs on Chinese goods reaching up to 54%, Apple could face losses of \$8.5 billion annually if exemptions aren't granted. Additionally, these tariffs would add an estimated \$300 to the cost of each iPhone 16 Pro. In response, Apple has accelerated its iPhone exports from India, where retaliatory tariffs are relatively lower, at 26%. This move is part of a broader strategy to mitigate the financial damage caused by the new tariffs.

Days before the April 5 tariff increase, five cargo planes were sent from

FROM BACKUP TO BACKBONE

Apple's production in India has been growing steadily since 2017, initially focusing on older iPhone models. However, the scope has now expanded to include high-end models like the iPhone 16 Pro. India's combination of competitive production costs, a favorable tariff environment, and government policy support has made it an increasingly attractive manufacturing hub. Unlike Vietnam, which was once considered a viable alternative, India offers more advantages, especially as Vietnam now faces tariffs of up to 46%.

Beyond the economic factors, India's vast consumer market and rap-

A LONG-TERM PLAY

Apple's investment in India is not just a short-term solution to tariff challenges. It represents a broader strategy to reduce the company's reliance on China and diversify its production base. By moving some of its manufacturing operations to India, Apple is positioning itself for stability and scalability in an increasingly unpredictable global trade environment. The Indian government has been proactive in offering incentives to attract foreign companies, creating a favorable environment for Apple to expand its operations.

In addition to mitigating tariff risks, Apple's shift to India allows the company to tap into the country's growing middle class,

which is becoming an increasingly important consumer segment for tech products. The move also enhances Apple's ability to maintain a strong presence in both domestic and global markets, which is critical as competition in the smartphone industry intensifies.

While India's cost advantage and growing tech capacity make it a viable alternative to China, the country's long-term role in Apple's global supply chain will depend on continued investment in infrastructure, talent, and policy support. However, if trade tensions between the US and China persist, India may increasingly become Apple's go-to production hub for both domestic and international markets.

NEW ERA FOR APPLE

Apple's growing reliance on India marks a significant shift in its global supply chain strategy. While the move is largely driven by the need to dodge tariffs, it also highlights the strategic importance of India as both a manufacturing hub and a key consumer market. As US-China trade tensions continue to rise, India's role in Apple's operations is likely to expand, making it a cornerstone of the company's long-term growth plans. Whether this shift will lead to a complete realignment of Apple's production strategy remains to be seen, but for now, India has firmly positioned itself as a critical part of Apple's global operations.

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MISTAKE FOR CHINA TO RETALIATE: US

It was a mistake for China to retaliate. When America is punched, He punches back harder.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The White House on Tuesday (local time) announced the imposition of a 104 per cent tariff on China starting Wednesday, marking a significant escalation amid the tariff tension which have shaken the markets.

During a press briefing, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt emphasised that it was a “mistake” for China to retaliate against the US, asserting that when America is challenged, the response is forceful and unyielding.

“It was a mistake for China to retaliate. When America is punched, He punches back harder. That’s why there will be 104 per cent tariffs going into effect on China tonight... If China reaches out to make a deal, he will be incredibly gracious,” Leavitt declared.

Leavitt stated that the new tariffs come as part of an ongoing effort by the Trump administration to address what it deems unfair trade practices that have led to job losses and economic strain on Ameri-

TARIFF WAR



- Leavitt: US response is forceful and unyielding
- Trump’s administration aims to address unfair trade practices
- Leavitt criticizes China’s impact on American workers
- Trump’s tariffs part of broader strategy against unfair trade barriers
- Trump willing to negotiate but no delay or extension of tariffs
- China calls US tariffs “groundless” and accuses of bullying

can workers.

She sharply criticised China’s trade policies, accusing the nation of exacerbating economic issues for American workers.

“President Trump made it very clear that the era of American economic surrender is over. President Trump is no longer going to allow American workers and companies to be ripped off at the hands of foolish trade practices that

shift away millions of high-paying jobs and hollow out communities across the country,” the White House Press Secretary said.

“Countries like China, who have chosen to retaliate and try to double down on their mistreatment of American workers, are making a mistake. President Trump has a spine of steel, and he will not break, and America will not break under his leadership,” she

added.

Leavitt further stated that there was no consideration made by President Trump on either “extension or delay” of the tariffs but that he “is willing to pick up the phone and talk.”

She noted that “since the Liberation Day announcement, nearly 70 countries have already reached out to the president to begin a negotiation.”

She also mentioned that

Israeli strike kills 29 people in Gaza City house

AGENCIES
CAIRO

An Israeli airstrike killed at least 29 Palestinians, including children, in a house in Shejaia in Gaza City, local health authorities said on Wednesday.

Medics said dozens of others were wounded in the attack that hit a multi-floor residential building in the eastern suburb of Gaza City. Many were still believed to be missing and trapped under the ruins of the building. The strike damaged several other houses nearby, medics said. The Israeli military said in a statement it struck a senior Hamas militant responsible for planning and executing attacks from Shejaia in northern Gaza,



A Palestinian man carries a wounded child to Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital, following an Israeli strike, in Gaza City April 9, 2025. Agency

whom it did not identify. The military said several steps were taken before the attack to mitigate harm to civilians. Local health authorities said nine other Palestinians were killed in separate Israeli military strikes in other parts of the enclave, raising Wednesday’s death toll to 38.

Last week, the military ordered Shejaia residents

to evacuate, saying forces intended to operate against militants in the area.

Israel resumed its bombardment of Gaza on March 18 after a two-month truce and sent troops back into the enclave. In the three weeks since, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says Israeli military strikes have killed nearly 1,500 Palestinians.

NASA welcomes B’desh as newest Artemis Accords signatory



The signing ceremony took place in Dhaka, Bangladesh’s capital city, on Tuesday. Ashraf Uddin, the country’s Secretary of Defense, signed on behalf of the country.

AGENCIES
DHAKA

Bangladesh has officially become the 54th nation to sign the Artemis Accords, a set of guidelines for responsible space exploration, NASA said in a statement.

The signing ceremony took place in Dhaka, Bangladesh’s capital city, on Tuesday. Ashraf Uddin, the country’s Secretary of Defense, signed on behalf of the country. Charge d’Affaires Tracey Jacobson from the US Embassy in Dhaka participated in the event, and NASA acting Administrator Janet Petro contributed remarks in a pre-recorded video message.

“We are thrilled by Bangladesh’s signature of the

Accords,” said NASA acting Administrator Janet Petro.

“Bangladesh affirms its role in shaping the future of space exploration. This is about ensuring that our journey to the Moon - and beyond - is peaceful, sustainable, and transparent,” it said.

“We look forward to working together, to learning from one another, and to seeing how Bangladesh’s incredible talent and vision contribute to humanity’s next great chapter in space,” NSASA added. “Bangladesh’s commitment to the Artemis Accords will enhance the country’s engagement with NASA and the international community,” said Bangladesh’s Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus.

Dominican Republic nightclub roof collapse: 113 died

AGENCIES
SANTO DOMINGO

Search operations are underway in the capital city of the Dominican Republic, where the collapse of the roof of a nightclub resulted in the death of at least 113 people, New York Times (NYT) reported.

As per the NYT, heavy machinery and drones were being used in the large scale search and rescue operations taking place at the Jet Set nightclub in Santo Domingo.

Despite this, the death toll in Tuesday’s nightclub roof collapse in the Dominican Republic kept steadily rising, as efforts continued into the night in a frantic quest to find survivors.

NYT reported that by late Tuesday, at least 113 people had died, after the roof suddenly caved in at about 12:45 AM (local time) dur-



Rescue force in action at the Jet Set nightclub in Santo Domingo. Agency

ing a concert at Jet Set, a popular nightclub in Santo Domingo. Its Monday night dance party was a decades-old tradition frequented by a who’s who of Dominican society, many of whom were still trapped inside.

NYT reported that several people were killed or injured during the merengue concert, including a governor, a member of the Dominican Republic’s congress, and two former US Major League Baseball players.

NYT quoted the club’s

Trump has directed his trade team to have “tailor-made trade deals with each and every country that calls up this administration to strike a deal.”

Leavitt also discussed the broader strategy behind the tariffs, explaining that the tariffs were focused not only on monetary tariffs imposed by other nations on US goods but also on non-monetary barriers that hinder American trade.

“The reciprocal tariff rates that were implemented by country were focused on the monetary tariff that those countries have imposed on the US but also the non-monetary tariff barriers,” she added.

Earlier on Sunday, Trump threatened an additional 50 per cent hike in tariffs on China following Beijing’s 34 per cent retaliatory tariff hike after Trump’s announcement of reciprocal tariffs during Liberation Day on April 2.

Meanwhile, China decried the US tariffs imposed on the country as “groundless” and called them a unilateral bullying practice, as per a spokesperson from China’s Ministry of Commerce.

White House Correspondents Association praises return of AP journalists to presidential events

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The White House Correspondents Association expressed its support for the decision by a US federal judge on Tuesday (US local time) to call the White House’s decision to eliminate the Associated Press’s access to coverage of presidential events unconstitutional.

CNN reported that the preliminary injunction was issued Tuesday afternoon against the White House by Judge Trevor McFadden.

In a 41-page document issued by the US District Court for Columbia district, it was noted that the court “simply holds that under

the First Amendment, if the Government opens its doors to some journalists--be it to the Oval Office, the East Room, or elsewhere--it cannot then shut those doors to other journalists because of their viewpoints.”

Describing the background which led to the development seen now, the district court in its memorandum order mentioned, “About two months ago, Trump renamed the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America. The Associated Press did not follow suit. For that editorial choice, the White House sharply curtailed the AP’s access to coveted, tightly controlled media events with the President. The AP now sues the White House

Tariff-hit countries dying to make a deal: Trump

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday (local time) said that countries affected by US tariffs are eager to negotiate and make deals with him, offering to do anything to secure an agreement.

While speaking at the National Republican Congressional Committee, Trump said he was a better negotiator than Congress.

He said, “I’m telling you these countries are calling us up, kissing my a**.. They are dying to make a deal- ‘please sir make a deal, I’ll do anything, I’ll do anything sir”.

Trump’s comments were made in the context of his administration’s tariff policies, particularly with countries like China. He emphasized his ability to negotiate better deals than Congress, citing China’s 104% tariffs as an example.

He added that although some ‘rebel’ Republicans argue that he must allow Congress to make a deal, he believed that if that were the case, China wouldn’t have been slapped with 104 per cent tariffs, and vice versa. “I’ll see some rebel Re-

MAJOR TARIFF ON PHARMA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump continues to be belligerent on his policy of reciprocal Tariffs despite strong opposition both within the US and outside. On Tuesday night (local time), the US President announced that Tariffs on the Pharma sector were coming soon. The sector has so far been exempt from the Tariffs. Speaking at the National Republican Congressional Committee dinner, Trump said, “Tariffs on pharma will be there because we don’t make our own phar-

ma drugs; they are made in another country. The same packet in the US is priced at USD 10 or more. We are going to tariff pharma in such a way that companies will come rushing to us very soon. The advantage we have is, we are very big market. Very shortly, will announce a major tariff on pharma, and when these companies hear that, they will leave China and other countries because most of their products are sold here. And they will be opening their plants here.”

publicans that want to grandstand say, ‘I think that Congress should take over negotiations.’

Let me tell you, you don’t negotiate like I negotiate,” he said.

Trump expressed skepticism about Congress’s ability to negotiate effectively, suggesting that their involvement would lead to unfavorable outcomes for the US.

“Congress takes over negotiating to sell America fast because you’re going to go

busted. I just saw it today. A couple of your congressmen said, ‘I think we should get involved in the negotiation of the tariffs,’” he mocked.

Trump said that Congress’s negotiations would make China the happiest, as China would not have to pay any tariffs; the US would pay them instead!

“Oh, that’s what I need- I need some guy telling me how to negotiate. I tell you, the happiest people in the world would be Chinese.



chief of staff, her communications deputy, and the press secretary (collectively, “the Government”), seeking a preliminary injunction enjoining the Government from excluding it because of its viewpoint.”

CNN cited the judgement, which notably mentioned, “The Court merely declares that the AP’s exclusion has been contrary to the First

Amendment, and it enjoins the Government from continuing down that unlawful path.”

“We are gratified by the court’s decision,” Lauren Easton, a spokesperson for the AP, said. “Today’s ruling affirms the fundamental right of the press and public to speak freely without government retaliation. This is a freedom guaranteed for

We need resumption of ceasefire: Macron

AGENCIES
PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron called for a ceasefire in the conflict-torn Middle East on Wednesday.

Upon the conclusion of his visit to Egypt, Macron said that he hoped to keep their support alive in helping Gaza.

“What we need is a resumption of the ceasefire, the release of all hostages and a path to peace as soon as possible,” he said.

“I leave Egypt after three moving days. I saw the beating of hearts. In your generous welcome. In the strength of our cooperation. In the support we provide together to the people of Gaza. In El Arish, where hope resists pain. Thank you. Long live the friendship between our peoples!”



Emmanuel Macron

he added.

A visibly moved Macron said earlier in the day that in Gaza, almost two million people were trapped without any assistance, and thousands were dead.

“Two million people trapped with no access to aid or assistance. Tens of thousands of dead people. The wounded. Orphans. This is the reality in Gaza today,” he said.

Korea adds nearly 200,000 jobs in March

AGENCIES
SEOUL

The Republic of Korea added nearly 2,00,000 jobs in March, but employment in the construction and manufacturing sectors continued to decline, data showed Wednesday. Yonhap News Agency quoted data compiled by Statistics Korea as saying that the number of employed people reached 28.59 million last month, up 1,93,000 from a year earlier. The country had posted a net increase of 1,35,000 jobs in January, reversing a 52,000 decrease in the previous month. In February, the Republic of Korea added 1,36,000 new positions.

In March, employment in the construction sector dropped by 1,85,000 from the same month last year, marking a continuous decline for 11 consecutive months. In contrast, employment in public health and social welfare increased 2,12,000, while jobs in public administration and finance rose by 87,000 and 65,000, respectively.

Mass shooting in Virginia leaves 3 dead, 3 wounded

AGENCIES
VIRGINIA

Three people were killed and three others were wounded in a shooting in northeastern Virginia on Tuesday evening, and one or more shooters was on the loose, authorities said.

At about 5:30 pm, 911 calls came in about a shooting at a townhouse complex in Spotsylvania County, just outside Fredericksburg and about 65 miles (105 kilometres) southwest of Washington, said Major Elizabeth Scott, Spokesperson for the Spotsylvania Sheriff’s Office.

Officials urged people to avoid the area and those near the scene to stay indoors while authorities investigate, she said.

The shooting may have been committed by more than one person, according to Scott.

There were no immediate arrests

or publicly released information about a possible motive.

The three injured people were taken to hospitals with gunshot wounds.

Their conditions and other information about them were not immediately available.

CUMMING GETS CANDID ON HIS NIGHTCRAWLER'S ROLE IN 'AVENGERS'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Actor Alan Cumming will be reprising his role of Nightcrawler from X Men 2 in the upcoming Marvel film 'Avengers: Doomsday'. The actor revealed that he has already started the preparation for his iconic superhero role in the film, reported Deadline.

During an interview on NBC's Today, as quoted by the Deadline, the Traitors US show host, Cumming, shared that he has already went through some make-up tests for his Nightcrawler's role in the upcoming Marvel film.

"It's 23 years since I was a superhero. I had some makeup tests already," said



Cumming in an interview as quoted by Deadline.

The 'Prague' actor also highlighted the changes in the makeup transformation since starring in 2003's X2, making it easier to play the character.

"Actually, what's great about it, it was four and a

half to five hours before, and now it was 90 minutes," he said, before explaining that "before all the tattoos were done by hand because they hadn't decided on them before we started filming and now there are all these little things that stick on -- it's a game changer," said Cumming as quoted by Deadline.

"I'm going back to being a 60-year-old superhero, and everyone seems really lovely," he added.

According to Deadline, the actor also revealed that he would soon start shooting the film in London.

Cumming played the comic book role in 2003's X2: X-Men United and had not played it since. The actor will also reunite in the new Avengers movie with his

co-stars, including Patrick Stewart (Charles Xavier / Professor X), Ian McKellen (Magneto), Rebecca Romijn (Mystique), and James Marsden (Cyclops).

Marvel Studios recently revealed the cast for its upcoming film 'Avengers: Doomsday', featuring a mix of familiar Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) faces and newcomers from the 'X-Men' and 'Fantastic Four' franchises.

The star-studded cast includes Chris Hemsworth (Thor), Tom Hiddleston (Loki), Anthony Mackie (Captain America), Paul Rudd (Ant-Man), Letitia Wright (Black Panther), Simu Liu (Shang-Chi), and Winston Duke (M'Baku), as per a social media post shared by Marvel Studios.

SRK, Kajol DDLJ statue set to represent first Indian film in London

AGENCIES
LONDON

Iconic Bollywood on-screen couple Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol will soon be immortalised in bronze, as their classic film Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ) becomes the first Indian film to be honoured at London's celebrated Scenes in the Square movie trail in Leicester Square.

According to Yash Raj Films, the Heart of London Business Alliance has announced a new statue will be joining the exciting 'Scenes in the Square' movie trail in Leicester Square, with historic



blockbuster Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ) erected statue in London.

This will mark the start of 30-year celebrations of DDLJ, one of the most loved blockbuster Hindi films of all time, the timeless and multi-award-win-

ning rom-com which also marked the directorial debut of Aditya Chopra.

The bronze statue will depict the two Bollywood megastars, Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol, in an iconic DDLJ pose. Set to be unveiled in Spring this

year, the latest announcement signifies how the film is loved by the over five million strong British South Asian community as per YRF.

DDLJ follows two non-resident Indians, Raj and Simran, and their star-crossed love story across Europe and India, beginning on a train from King's Cross Station.

The location couldn't be more fitting, with Leicester Square featuring in DDLJ in a scene when Raj and Simran first cross paths, unknown to one another, before setting off on their memorable European adventure.

'Adolescence' climbs to No. 4 on Netflix's most popular series list

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The popular crime miniseries 'Adolescence' is still going strong on Netflix, as the British show has now reached the fourth spot on Netflix's Most Popular English TV list, climbing from ninth place just last week, reported Deadline.

According to the publication, from March 31 to April 6, the show pulled in another 17.8 million views, indicating that viewers are still hooked on it even a month after its release.

According to Deadline, with 65 days left in its premiere window, the series has already beaten the viewership numbers of shows like Bridgerton, The Night Agent (Season 1), and Stranger Things (Season 3).

Meanwhile, the documentary 'Gone Girls: The Long Island Serial Killer' took second place this week with 13 million views, while the medical drama 'Pulse' had a slower start with 6.5 million views. 'The Residence' dropped to fifth place with 4.6 million views.



Adolescence is a British crime drama miniseries created by Jack Thorne and Stephen Graham and directed by Philip Barantini.

On the film side, Sofia Carson's 'The Life List' held the top movie spot with 29.2 million views for the second week in a row.

As per Deadline, 'Adolescence' keeps growing at this pace, it might soon overtake even Stranger Things 4, which currently sits at 140.7 million views. As of now, Dahmer holds third place with 115.6 million.

Adolescence is a British crime drama miniseries created by Jack Thorne and Stephen Graham and directed by Philip Barantini.

The four-episode se-

ries follows the arrest of a 13-year-old schoolboy, Jamie Miller, played by Owen Cooper, who is accused of murdering a female classmate. What also makes the series a masterpiece is that each episode is filmed in a single, continuous take.

Graham, who is the co-creator of the show, also plays Eddie Miller, the father of the accused Jamie Miller.

The series premiered on Netflix on March 13 and has received widespread critical acclaim for its writing, direction, and performances.

Amitabh Bachchan thanks fans for wishes on wife Jaya's birthday

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Wednesday expressed his gratitude and love to fans for their wishes on his wife, actor-MP Jaya Bachchan's birthday.

Jaya Bachchan, known for her work in films such as "Guddi", "Piya Ka Ghar", "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham...", and "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani", turned 77 today.

"To all that have wished Jaya on her birthday, my gratitude and love.. it will



be impossible to respond to each one hence this comment here.. " Amitabh Bachchan, 82, wrote on X.

Jaya and Amitabh Bach-

chan, co-stars of popular films such as "Zanjeer", "Abhimaan", "Sholay", "Chupke Chupke", "Miln" and "Silsila", tied the knot in 1973. They

share two children - columnist Shweta Bachchan Nanda and actor Abhishek Bachchan. Her granddaughter Navya Naveli Nanda, an entrepreneur, shared a picture with Jaya Bachchan on her Instagram Stories. "Happy birthday Nani!" she wrote.

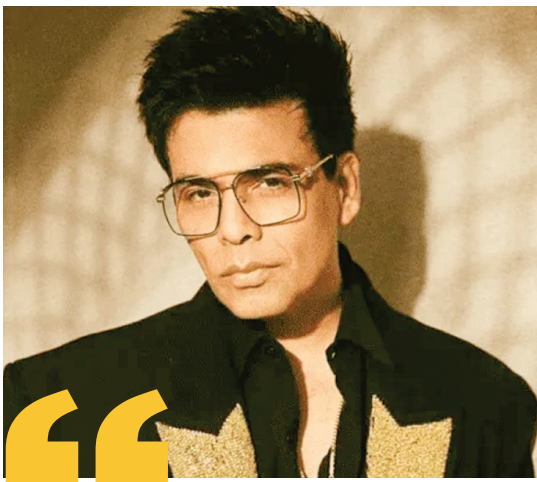
Actor Kajol, who worked with Jaya Bachchan in "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham...", also wished her on X.

"Happy birthday to the most no nonsense woman I know wish u a fantastic year ahead #JayaBachchan," she captioned a throwback picture with the veteran actor



Wamiqa Gabbi snapped at Maddock Films' 20th anniversary celebrations on Monday night in Mumbai. (Instagram)

BRAIN PICKING



I think that I have self esteem issues, really. If you really analyse it... People who really like me I have no interest in.
— KARAN JOHAR
(Indian Movie Producer)

Himesh Reshammiya announces Cap Mania Tour, check dates

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Singer, composer, and actor Himesh Reshammiya is ready to entertain fans once again with his upcoming Cap Mania Tour.

The tour will begin in Mumbai on May 31 and reach Delhi on July 19. The shows are expected to be a musical treat for his fans.

Saregama Live, on Wednesday, took to its Instagram to make the announcement.

The post reads, "Jab Himesh cap pehne kar stage pe aate hain, awaaz nahi, toofan laate hain! Brace yourself for the CAPMANIA TOUR - the ultimate



suror-fest."

The tickets for the tour will be available on BookMyShow. Pre-registrations for early bird discounts started on April 9 at 11:11 AM.

The singer began his music journey with films like Bandhan and Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya in the late 1990s.

Since then, he has produced many popular songs that are remembered by fans to this day.

Reshammiya was recently seen in the film Badass Ravikumar, which hit theatres on February 7 this year. The film stars Prabhudeva, Kirti Kulhari, and other well-known names.

Prabhu Deva, Manchu meet UP CM to promote film 'Kannappa'

TDG NETWORK
LUCKNOW

Choreographer-actor Prabhu Deva and Vishnu Manchu met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his office in Lucknow to promote their upcoming film Kannappa on Wednesday.

The film artists were accompanied by the Chancellor of Mohan Babu Univer-

The Kannappa team gifted CM Yogi Adityanath a glass painting and other presents before snapping group pictures with him.

sity, Mohan Babu and Vinay Maheshwari. During the visit, CM Adityanath signed

the poster of Kannappa and extended his best wishes to the team for the success of

the film.

The Kannappa team gifted CM Yogi Adityanath a glass painting and other presents before snapping group pictures with him.

For the visit, Prabhu Deva donned a pink shirt and paired it with white pants. The Kannappa lead star, Vishnu Manchu, donned blue jeans and a grey shirt for the meet. The actor also

wore a beaded necklace to showcase his spiritual side of the personality, which also resonated with the religious Hindu theme of the movie Kannappa.

Kannappa is a mythological epic that tells the story of the legendary devotee of Lord Shiva. It was originally slated to be released on April 25, but the makers recently postponed the release date.

Jr NTR to join shooting for Prasanth Neel's film from April 22

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The official X (formerly Twitter) page of the yet-to-be-titled NTR Neel and the producers, Mythri Movie Makers, announced the news, writing, "#NTRNeel is entering its most explosive phase. Man of Masses @Tarak9999 steps into the destructive soil from April 22nd."

They also released a poster reiterating the same.

Fans were thrilled to

know that Jr NTR would join the shooting soon, with one fan commenting, "Rede-



fine the action cinema & going to set new benchmarks in the global film industry."

Another wrote, "Blockbuster loading super excited." One fan opined, "Ntr & Neel Cooking Something big." Some fans were disappointed because they had expected something more than the date Jr NTR was joining the shoot.

NTR Neel officially went on-floors in February this year with Prasanth shooting for a fiery scene with extras.

TECH TALK: ALL ABOUT FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE | PART 3

In this story, we'll articulate on articulation while also helping you avoid being indifferent to differentials...



Photos: Syed Shiraz Shah



SYED SHIRAZ SHAH

In our last two Tech Talk stories on All About Four-Wheel-Drive, I discussed what makes a vehicle a 4WD/4x4 and also the differences between AWD (All Wheel Drive) and 4WD/4x4. Today, in this story, you will learn in detail about two of the most talked about “technical terms” in the world of 4x4s and offroading. The motive of this series is to help you better understand not only the basics of offroading and 4x4s, but, in the process, also give you a good idea about your current or potential 4WD vehicle's ability AND limitations so that you can use it effectively and happily offroad without damaging any of its components.

ARTICULATION

You must have heard this one a lot. The sad part is that the majority of reviewers don't actually know themselves what articulation is. That's why you don't see them articulating the subject of articulation well. Today, I can promise you that I will break it down for you, as always, in an easy to understand language. Simply put, articulation is the vehicle's ability to keep all four wheels on the ground when the ground/surface is uneven. See, on a flat surface any car will be able to keep all four wheels on the ground, but that's not the case offroad. Before I proceed further, please note that in this entire series—including this story, obviously—we'll always be

the ground, that's not articulation but a lack of it, and if the other three wheels remain on the ground too, then THAT'S called articulation, right? Great. You're getting the hang of it now. And why is it important, you ask? Well, it's sheer common sense but I shall explain it anyway. Also, in case you're wondering, I will talk about solid axles and sway bars under “suspension” in Part 4 of this series. For now, it would suffice to say that as far as stock production vehicles go, it's the Jeep Wrangler Rubicon that has the best articulation in the world. But, again, your question was why's articulation important? It's important because with all four wheels on the ground you would have better traction than you would with one or more wheels off it, right? And TRACTION, dear ladies and gentlemen, is what you would always want to have offroad (onroad too; except while drifting, but, again, we're talking about driving slow). Traction is what every bit of 4x4 hard-

The motive of this series is to help you better understand not only the basics of offroading and 4x4s, but, in the process, also give you a good idea about your current or potential 4WD vehicle's ability AND limitations so that you can use it effectively and happily offroad without damaging any of its components.

ware and software aims to enhance. Traction is the end goal. Period. In life too, being grounded helps you go further. But how do those three-wheels-in-the-air SUVs come out of that obstacle, then? Well, they do it by either locking the differentials or by electronically “simulating” the effect of a locked differential and sending power to the wheel that has traction. You'll learn all about it in the next section. DIFFERENTIALS: OPEN vs LOCKED, BLD vs PROPER LOCKERS All cars powered by internal combustion engines have at least one differential—a mechanical device which allows the powered wheels on the same axle to

rotate at different speeds when the vehicle is taking a turn, etc. Such a differential is called an “open” differential. Most road cars come with open differentials and while they work great on the road, off the road they pose a serious limitation. Without getting into the internal components of a differential at this stage, let me just tell you that the primary function of a differential, which is to allow the wheels on the same axle to rotate at different speeds, becomes a weakness off the road when one powered wheel loses traction. All the power then goes to the freely spinning wheel, and you're stuck. Enter the locking differential. In simple terms, a locking differential is essentially

an open differential with some kind of a locking mechanism that “locks” the axle half-shafts together making them rotate as one unit, thereby turning both wheels at the same speed. That “locking” can be achieved through various mechanisms, which I'll discuss in the advanced stages of this series. For now, you need to understand the basics. Therefore, the crux is that you have open differentials in most cars and even in some proper 4WD vehicles, but a few may have some kind of locking mechanism built into them that either provides partial/limited or complete locking ability. For example, while the Jeep Wrangler Rubicon and Force Gurkha have proper selectable “lockers” that allow you to lock the axle half-shafts completely as one unit BEFORE entering the obstacle, the now-discontinued MLD (Mechanical Locking Differential) on the Mahindra Thar functioned more as an LSD (Limited Slip

Differential) allowing for “limited slip” (100 rpm difference between both wheels on the same axle) before automatically locking the axle half-shafts and then unlocking them when both wheels start rotating at the same speed. There are viscous coupling LSDs as well that never achieve 100 per cent locking, but like I said earlier, all that and more will be covered in the advanced stages of this series. But I must tell you a bit about BLD (Brake Locking Differential), which simulates the effect of a locked differential without any actual “locking” happening in the differential. The Thar and Jimmy both have it and its working is also quite simple. In four-wheel drive, whenever the system senses a difference of 100 rpm or thereabouts in wheel speed on the same axle, it brakes the freely spinning wheel, thereby automatically directing power to the wheel that has traction. However, again, unlike proper lockers, and just like the MLD, the driv-

er doesn't have any control over it. BLD works AFTER a wheel slips / loses traction. With proper lockers, you have the advantage of locking them BEFORE entering an obstacle where you think you'll spin a wheel or two otherwise. I should also add that you must NEVER lock the differentials on hard surfaces. In fact, you would never make that mistake in the first place if you know that you must never engage 4H or 4L on hard surfaces in any of the vehicles mentioned in this story. The Rubicon does have a 4H Auto mode where you can, but I had addressed that too in its exhaustive review last year. I would suggest that you read that as well, please. In Part 4 of this series, I would talk about suspension, and if it doesn't take up the entire page, I might also discuss approach, breakover, and departure angles. Until then (and forever) please don't jump dividers in your 4x4s unnecessarily. It's neither cool nor impressive.



STUDIO GHIBLI MEETS AI: HOW GENERATIVE MODELS ARE REIMAGINING THE MAGIC OF HAND-DRAWN WORLDS



THE NEXT
ABHISHEKANAND

For decades, Studio Ghibli has been a beacon of hand-drawn wonder — a universe where the wind dances through golden fields, spirits live in bathhouses, and even soot sprites have personality. With its rich, painterly aesthetic and emotionally layered storytelling, Ghibli has become synonymous with *nostalgia*, *nature*, and *the fantastical*.

Now, a surprising new medium is joining the frame: **Artificial Intelligence**.

In a time when generative models like **Midjourney**, **DALL-E**, and **Stable Diffusion** are evolving at breakneck speed, artists, hobbyists, and tech enthusiasts have begun to ask a curious question:

“What would it look like if Studio Ghibli was reimaged by AI?”

And the results? They’re magical, controversial, and incredibly telling of where art and technology are headed.

THE ALLURE OF THE GHIBLI AESTHETIC

Studio Ghibli’s signature visual style is instantly recognizable:

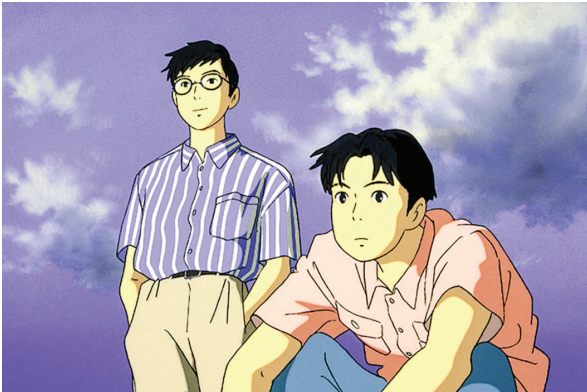
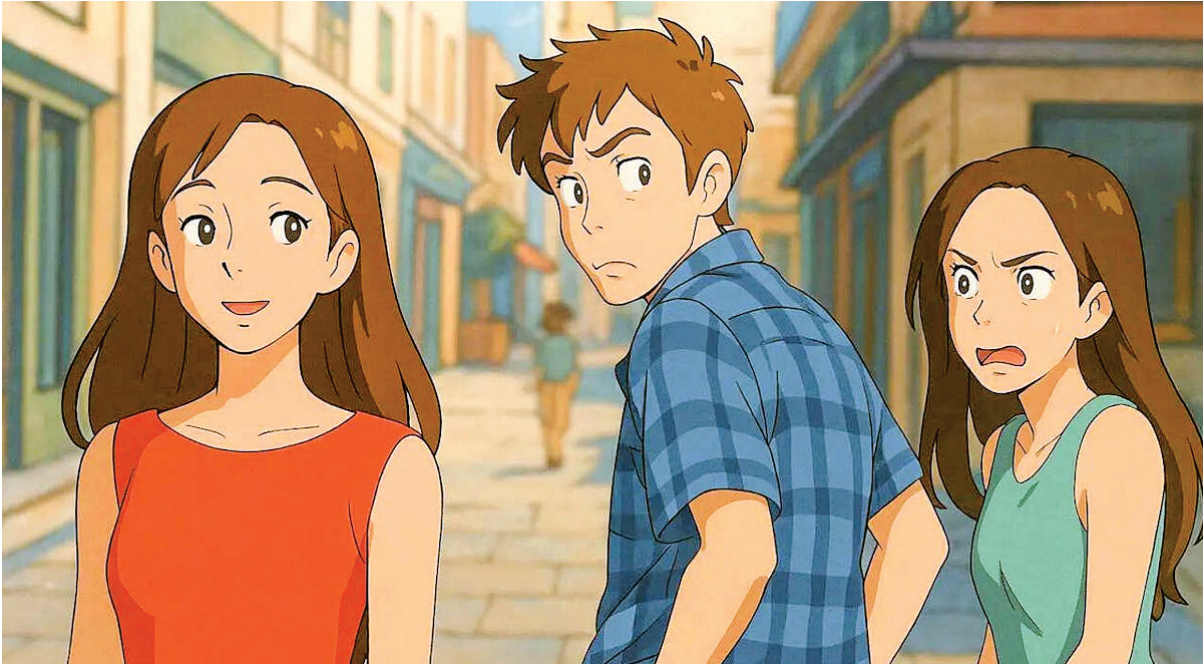
- Soft, watercolor-inspired palettes
- Lush, overgrown natural settings
- Floating castles and flying creatures
- Expressive characters with a quiet sense of wonder

It’s an art style that feels hand-touched and heart-crafted. And that’s exactly why it’s both intriguing and challenging for AI to replicate.

HOW AI IS RECREATING GHIBLI’S WORLD

Using prompts like “forest spirit in Studio Ghibli style” or “girl flying over fields in Ghibli-inspired anime look,” artists can coax AI tools to generate breathtaking imagery that feels like a lost frame from *My Neighbor Totoro* or *Spirited Away*.

Some creators are even training **custom models** using



ing Ghibli frames to achieve a more consistent look — making it possible to build entire dreamlike narratives

in Ghibli’s aesthetic without a single frame being hand-drawn.

CREATIVE APPLICATIONS: FROM FAN ART TO INDIE GAMES

- **Authors** are using Ghibli-style AI art to illustrate their fantasy novels.
- **Game developers** are building indie RPGs with backgrounds that look straight out of *Howl’s Moving Castle*.

- **Content creators** are turning selfies into whimsical Ghibli portraits using AI filters.
- **Designers** are using it to explore new branding aesthetics that combine nostalgia with futurism.

This fusion of *tradition and technology* is giving rise to a new subculture — one that honors the old while imagining the new.

THE CONTROVERSY: HOMAGE OR ARTISTIC

THEFT?

As with most AI-generated art, ethical concerns loom large:

- Is using Ghibli’s style without permission a violation of artistic integrity?
- Where is the line between inspiration and imitation?
- Do AI tools devalue the labor and emotion of traditional animators?

Studio Ghibli has long championed **human-centered creativity**, with Hayao Miyazaki famously rejecting the idea of computer-generated animation as soulless. For purists, the AI wave feels like a threat to the craft. For others, it’s a new kind of canvas.

A NEW ERA OF CO-CREATION

What’s emerging is not a replacement of traditional Ghibli art — but a *reimagining* of it. AI is becoming a **creative collaborator**, offering tools for new voices to tell their own Ghibli-esque stories. It’s not about *replacing* the past — it’s about *reimagining* it for the future.

And perhaps that’s what the Ghibli spirit is all about — seeing magic in the mundane, and dreaming up

new worlds with the tools we have.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The intersection of **Ghibli art and AI** is where heart meets algorithm — and it’s stirring up everything from awe to debate. Whether you’re an artist, a technologist, or just someone who once got lost in the fields of *Laputa*, this trend is worth watching... and maybe even contributing to.

Because who knows?

The next great animated story might begin with a prompt, not a pencil.

P.S. Want to wear the Ghibli Magic?

You can now buy **Ghibli art-inspired T-shirts** at [shop.beardnerd.com](#) — created for those who carry nostalgia with style.

This article is authored by Abhishek Anand, Founder of Skill Bud Technologies Pvt. Ltd., a company specializing in Website Development, Digital Marketing, CGI Ads, Social Media, and other related services including AR/VR, Web 3.0, Metaverse, and Generative AI. Abhishek is also an Author, Speaker, and Mentor, helping businesses grow through technology.

AI and Privacy: How much of our data is truly safe?



MANISH TEWARI

The digital world is increasingly becoming intertwined with artificial intelligence (AI) technology ranging from personalized advertisements to the AI-based softwares used for cybersecurity. As much as these automatic processes that make use of AI bring convenience and effectiveness, they also elicit data privacy concerns.

With the ever-growing personal data collected, stored, and examined, an essential inquiry arises: Is any of our data truly private?

THE ABILITY OF AI-OPERATED TOOLS TO STORE DATA:

SOMETHING GOOD OR BAD?

Data is the most crucial aspect of enabling effective AI omnipotence. AI works in terms of having large amounts of information available to be sorted, identifying trends, and making predictions from them. AI learning is dependent on the exploitation of all digital markers, for example: social media and financials. In as much as this dependence aids AI learning, obtaining the information brings about significant privacy impediments.

A good number of people and even companies claim to observe security protocols, and data breaches remain an issue of concern in our society today. Automatically-generated information databases powered by AI are hacked easily, even with extremely sophisticated safeguarding measures. Nobody is secure today due to the fact that AI is developed using unprotected data. Such systems leave people exposed to surveillance,



fraud, and identity theft.

THE GROWTH OF AI-POWERED SURVEILLANCE

Mass surveillance is one of the most sensitive technological advancements with the rise of AI.

Across the globe, facial recognition, predictive policing, and behavior tracking systems are being rolled out without proper public consultation and regulations in place. While pro-

ponents argue that these AI technologies increase security, they also have the potential to infringe on people’s privacy.

AI technologies are used by both governments and corporations to surveil the public, often engaging in unethical practices. The distinction between safeguarding the public and violating people’s privacy is becoming more and more irrelevant, which leads to emerging risks of abuse. A

lack of governance creates challenges in determining the boundary between security and individual freedom.

THE MYTH OF ANONYMITY IN AI SYSTEMS

A number of businesses claim that user data protected by anonymization cannot be traced back to an individual. AI, on the other hand, is able to construct identity from what was presumed to be ano-



nymized data. Research indicates that AI deployment in de-anonymization can perform its task accurately and single people out with remarkable ease using a few demographic markers. What this indicates is that data, even when fully stripped of identifiable information, can be cross-referenced with sufficient circumstantial evidence to obliterate one’s identity.

Not even encryption, arguably the most robust

form of data protection, is safe. In the field of cyber security, AI directed attacks are advancing rapidly, with the use of algorithms that employ machine learning to extract encryption layers and find loopholes in security systems.

AI is undoubtedly changing the digital world, but we must consider the adverse effects of privacy. Moving forward, working constructions of data security will have to be prioritized. There

is also the need to bring together business people, regulators, and leaders in technology to come up with workable ethical standards in AI that enhance, control and secure more the users’ data. The growth of AI must not infringe on personal privacy; rather, it must use the opportunity to increase protection of individuals’ private data.

The author is the Co-Founder of Spydra Technologies.

The Artificial Intelligence paradox: Will AI create jobs or destroy jobs?

KRISHNA MOHAN JHA

Will emerging technologies replace jobs? The question that sparks debate across all kinds of gatherings from Boardrooms to classrooms - from living room to coffee shop. The rise of AI has demonstrated its capability to write structured content, generate images/videos based on prompts, and swiftly analyse large amounts of data among many more tasks, prompting

concerns about job losses and economic shifts. Are these worries valid, or should we take a broader view?

Throughout history, innovations have caused anxiety. Yet each technological wave—from mechanization to digitalization—has ultimately expanded opportunities rather than eliminated them.

HISTORICAL PATTERN OF INNOVATION



FUELLING FEAR

The Industrial Revolution automated physical labor, causing immediate concern. Textile workers in 19th-century England even destroyed machines in protest. Nevertheless, economies adapted and expanded. Jobs transformed rather than disappeared, productivity increased, and new careers emerged.

Today’s changes follow this pattern. Automation handles routine tasks, freeing people to focus on creativity, strategy, and complex problem-solving where human capabilities remain superior.

TOOLS FOR PROGRESS

Rather than threatening livelihoods, new technologies enhance productivity. Healthcare benefits from faster diagnoses, leading to better outcomes and wider access to treatment. Data tools let professionals focus on applying insights rather than



collecting information.

Education becomes more personalized and accessible through digital platforms. Farmers use data to optimize yields and sustainability. Across sectors, technology amplifies human capabilities.

TOMORROW’S

WORKPLACE

As job requirements evolve, different skills become valuable. Adaptability, critical thinking, and interpersonal abilities gain importance. Ongoing education becomes essential for career relevance.

According to a McKinsey report, AI is expected to drive

around 12 million occupational transitions by 2030, a shift comparable to the workforce changes experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the World Economic Forum predicts that while AI and automation may displace 85 million jobs by 2025, they will also create 97 million new roles,

resulting in a net employment gain.

The challenge is not the technology itself but preparing for transition. Success requires collaboration between government, business, and education to build an adaptable workforce through training programs and supportive policies.

MOVING FORWARD

Past innovations have always sparked job concerns, yet consistently created growth and opportunity. Progress comes from seeing technology as a partner rather than a competitor.

The future workplace is not about machine replacement but human enhancement. Technology will help people accomplish more than previously possible, creating new possibilities rather than eliminating them.

Krishna Mohan Jha, Founder and CEO at Nine Triangles.

SUDHARSAN STARS AS TITANS CRUSH ROYALS BY 58 RUNS

TDG NETWORK
AHMEDABAD

In a commanding performance at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, the Gujarat Titans secured a comprehensive 58-run victory over the Rajasthan Royals in the 23rd match of the IPL 2025 season. This win propels the Titans to the top of the standings, marking their fourth consecutive triumph in the tournament.

Opting to bat first, the Gujarat Titans amassed a formidable total of 217 for 6 in their allotted 20 overs. The innings was anchored by a stellar knock from Sai Sudharsan, who scored 82 off 53 balls, showcasing a blend of aggression and finesse. He was well-supported by Jos Buttler and Shahrukh Khan, who contributed 36 runs each, ensuring the Titans maintained a brisk scoring rate throughout their innings. Despite the high score, the



This win propels the Titans to the top of the standings, marking their fourth consecutive triumph in the tournament.

Rajasthan Royals' bowlers had moments of success. Maheesh Theekshana and Tushar Deshpande both claimed two wickets apiece. However, their efforts

were marred by expensive spells, with each conceding over 50 runs, highlighting the challenging nature of the pitch for the bowlers. Chasing a daunting target

of 218, the Rajasthan Royals faced early setbacks, losing wickets at regular intervals. Shimron Hetmyer emerged as the lone warrior for the Royals, playing a valiant innings of 54 runs. His efforts, however, were in vain as the team struggled to build partnerships. The Gujarat Titans' bowling attack was disciplined and effective.

Prasidh Krishna was particularly impressive, delivering a double-wicket over that tilted the game firmly in the Titans' favor. Ravishrinivasan Sai Kishore also made significant contributions, dismissing Tushar Deshpande and bringing the Royals to the brink of defeat. In the end, the Rajasthan Royals were bowled out for 159, falling short by 58 runs. This defeat underscores the challenges they face in the tournament and the need to regroup ahead of their upcoming fixtures.

‘It was never about ego’: Virat Kohli reflects on his game

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Former Indian captain and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) batter Virat Kohli discussed his mindset, explaining how his on-field decisions were always guided by the match situation, not personal ambition. Kohli emphasized that his leadership style is not about ego but about understanding the game situation and adapting accordingly.

While speaking on JioHotstar, he explained that he takes the lead when he's in rhythm but readily steps back if someone else is better positioned to take charge. He clarified that his approach is not about overshadowing anyone but about prioritizing the team's success and playing according to the demands of the situation.

"If you look at how things panned out even recently, in one of the Champions Tro-



phy games, Shreyas (Iyer) took charge. It was never about ego. At that time, if I was in rhythm, in the flow of the game, I naturally took the initiative. If someone else was better placed to take the lead, they would do it. It was never about trying to overshadow anyone or suddenly feeling like I didn't have the ability. It's always been about understanding the game situation--and that's something I've always

taken pride in. I want to play according to what the situation demands." Virat Kohli said while speaking on '18 Calling 18' on JioHotstar.

Virat Kohli completed 13,000 runs in T20 cricket on Monday, becoming only the fifth player and first Indian to do so. Virat reached this milestone during his side's Indian Premier League (IPL) match against Mumbai Indians (MI) at Wankhede Stadium on

Monday.

During the match, Virat was at his attacking best, showcasing his shotmaking against spin and pace alike. He scored 67 in just 42 balls, with eight fours and two sixes. His runs came at a strike rate of 159.52.

So far in the IPL 2025, Virat has scored 164 runs in four matches at an average of 54.66 and a strike rate of over 143, with two half-centuries and the best score of 67.

He is the sixth-highest run-getter in the tournament so far. Now, in 403 T20s, Virat has made 13,050 runs at an average of 41.56, with nine centuries and 99 fifties to his name. His best score is 122*. The top run-getter in T20s is Chris Gayle, with 14,562 runs at an average of 36.22, a strike rate of over 144, 22 centuries and 88 fifties. His best score is 175*.

ISL Final: Juicy tactical battle ahead as Molina, and Zaragoza set sights on coveted Cup

TDG NETWORK
KOLKATA

The stage is set for a high-stakes tactical showdown as Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) takes on Bengaluru FC (BFC) in the final of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 season. The summit clash will unfold at the iconic Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK) in Kolkata on Saturday, according to the ISL Media Team.

At the heart of this clash are two Spanish masterminds--Jose Molina (MBSG) and Gerard Zaragoza (BFC)--both no strangers to the big occasion. Molina, who led ATK to the title in 2016, returns to the ISL finale in his first season back with MBSG. Zaragoza, formerly the assistant to Carles Cuadrat during BFC's 2018-19 championship run, now gets his moment in the spotlight as head coach.

There are quite a few facets where Molina and Zaragoza's fates align here. Besides their Spanish heri-



tage, it is their first full season with the club. While Zaragoza had joined Bengaluru FC midway through 2023-24, Molina entered the MBSG setup in the summer preceding this season.

The two tacticians have had successful previous spells in the league, suggesting that they were well-acquainted with the setup and structure, easing their transition and enabling them to hit the ground running immediately.

Molina, has won 23 of his 43 games in the ISL so far, with his victory percentage of 53.5% being the third

highest such rate for any head coach in the competition (min. 10 games) behind only Albert Roca (66.7%) and Des Buckingham (57.4%), is refraining from calling out the favourites for the final, despite the game occurring in their home turf, where MBSG have been unbeaten this season.

"I think in the finals, nobody is a favourite. Anything can happen. Of course, we believe in ourselves. We trust in ourselves and in what we are doing. We think that if we are at our best, we are going to get the trophy," he remarked in the buildup

to the match, as quoted from the ISL Media Team.

Zaragoza's men began the season with five consecutive wins and clean sheets and looked in strong contention to at least finish in the top two until about December. January came as a surprise for the Blues, though, with the side losing four of their five matches, even dropping out of the top six momentarily. Three wins and a draw in their last five league fixtures saw BFC settle for third place before storming past Mumbai City FC and FC Goa in the playoffs. The character shown by Zaragoza's men in overcoming a difficult phase, coupled with the contributions of seasoned hands such as Sunil Chhetri, Rahul Bheke, and Alberto Noguera, propelled them into the final. Zaragoza blended their experience seamlessly with the youthful exuberance of players like Vinith Venkatesh, Suresh Singh Wangjam and Namgyal Bhutia at different phases of the season.

Arsenal thrash Real Madrid, Inter edge Bayern in Champions League quarters

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

In a stunning night of Champions League quarter-final action, Arsenal delivered a commanding 3-0 victory over reigning champions Real Madrid, while Inter Milan edged Bayern Munich 2-1 in a high-stakes clash in Germany.

At the Emirates Stadium, Arsenal produced what many are calling a "complete performance" to dismantle Real Madrid in the first leg. Declan Rice struck two sensational free-kicks within 12 minutes, sending the home crowd into a frenzy, before Mikel Merino added a sublime third goal to seal the win. The electric atmosphere matched the intensity on the pitch, as Mikel Arteta's side outclassed the Spanish giants in every department.

The emphatic win also guaranteed England a fifth Champions League qualification spot for next season. Despite the heavy defeat, Real Madrid's Jude Belling-

UPCOMING FIXTURES

- Wednesday, April 9 – PSG vs Aston Villa, Barcelona vs Borussia Dortmund
- Tuesday, April 15 – Aston Villa vs PSG, Borussia Dortmund vs Barcelona
- Wednesday, April 16 – Real Madrid vs Arsenal, Inter vs Bayern Munich

One fan quipped, “This is probably one of the weakest Real Madrid teams ever and people think Arsenal are world beaters! Hate to break it to you but Arsenal aren’t all that either! Stay humble Gunners.”

ham offered a note of defiance, stating: "One place where crazy things happen is our house" — though history is against the Spanish club, who have never overturned a three-goal first-leg deficit in Champions League history.

A poll quickly circulated, asking fans: Are Arsenal now favourites to win the Champions League? While some supporters remained skeptical, others hailed the performance as a title-worthy statement. One fan quipped, "This is probably one of the weakest Real Madrid teams ever and people think Arsenal are world beaters! Hate to break it to you but Arsenal aren't all that either! Stay humble Gunners."

Yet Real Madrid have a knack for drama. They have lost the first leg of a major European tie by three goals or more six times in their history — and on half of those

occasions, they still managed to progress.

Meanwhile, over in Germany, Inter Milan stunned Bayern Munich with a 2-1 win at the Fußball Arena in Munich. The Italian side, led by manager Simone Inzaghi, put on a resilient performance to secure a crucial first-leg advantage. Lautaro opened the scoring with a breathtaking strike in the first half. Though Bayern pushed back and found an equaliser through Thomas Müller, Inter's Frattesi delivered a historic late winner that silenced the home crowd.

UNN reported that the "Nerazzurri" played a fantastic match and held strong against Bayern's persistent attacks. The second leg will be held at the San Siro on April 16, where a place in the Champions League semifinals will be decided.

In another result from the night, Arsenal's 3-0 victory over Real Madrid rounded off a dramatic evening and set up an intense second leg.

India could be a long-distance running champion country given...

RUPINDER SINGH
NEW DELHI

Running is the only sport which requires no equipment. Unlike games like golf, cricket, badminton, and tennis, runners only need a pair of shorts, vests, and shoes to start running. One look at all the results of the world's top long-distance races will easily tell you that the world's best runners come from poor African countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Moreover, most of these countries do not have any elaborate infrastructure like stadiums—they do their running on dirt tracks. India's main population is also very poor, and running is the perfect fit for them.

The poor also have the hunger to do well and train hard, as is required for excelling in running. However, somehow the powers that be in India rarely schedule races at times suitable for good performances.

In today's world of science, everyone knows that the best timings come in long-distance races run at 10 to 15 degrees Celsius. One look at the schedule of races in India shows they are organised at temperatures of 36 to 40 degrees, rarely giving an Indian runner the best opportunity to run good timings. Thus, if you look at our long-distance running records, they are mostly set abroad in good weather conditions provided by or-

ganisers there. To give you an example, Harry Wilson, a famous long-distance coach, came to train Indian athletes in the 1990s. He immediately sensed why our best athlete then, Bahadur Prasad, was clocking above 14 minutes in the 5000 metres. He told Bahadur Prasad, "I will organise races for you in England and you will easily clock much faster timing." True enough, Bahadur Prasad ran his first race in Birmingham and clocked 13:29, breaking his best time by 30 seconds. Not many runners get this opportunity, and no surprise that Bahadur Prasad's record stood for nearly 28 years till Sable broke it, followed by Gulveer recently.

Neeraj Chopra set to begin 2025 season in Doha

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

After an injury-marred 2024, a fully fit Neeraj Chopra is set to begin his 2025 athletics season at the Doha Diamond League, with his focus not just on distance but also on maintaining consistency, according to Olympics.com.

For his season opener, the reigning javelin throw world champion and Paris 2024 Olympics silver medalist returns to a familiar venue in the Qatari capital, where he has launched his last two seasons.

The Indian star won the 2023 edition with a throw of 88.67m and secured second place in 2024 with an effort of 88.36m, finishing behind Czech Republic's



Jakub Vadlejch, the Tokyo 2020 silver medalist.

"Last year taught me a lot but I was proud to be on the podium for India once again at the Olympic Games. I'm now fully fit and enjoying the hard work that Jan Zelezny and I are putting in," Chopra said, referring

Last season, Neeraj grappled with a groin issue before clinching silver at the Paris Olympics, where Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem claimed gold with an Olympic record.

to his coach, as quoted from Olympics.com.

Last season, Neeraj grappled with a groin issue

before clinching silver at the Paris Olympics, where Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem claimed gold with an Olympic record. He also finished second in the Diamond League Final, competing with a fracture in his non-throwing left hand.

"I know the fans expect big things from me when I compete (in Doha) - and with good conditions and a great atmosphere that's definitely possible - but I pride myself on my consistency, which I believe is one of my greatest strengths. For me, that's more important than just chasing a number," he said.

Across six events in 2024, Chopra made the podium each time winning twice and finishing runner-up on four occasions.

‘It was surreal’: Bhamidipaty reflects on her debut win for India at Billie Jean King Cup

TDG NETWORK
PUNE

Shrivalli Bhamidipaty, currently 345 in the WTA singles ranking, made sure India got off to the perfect start in their opening match at the Billie Jean King Cup Asia-Oceania Group I.

The 23-year-old from Hyderabad got the better of

New Zealand's Aishi Das, securing a 6-1, 6-1 victory on the opening day of the tournament that is organized by MSLTA in association with AITA and PMDTA at the Mhalunge Balewadi Tennis Complex in Pune.

Reflecting on her performance in her debut match for India, an emotional Shrivalli shared, as quoted

from a press release by Billie Jean King Cup, "It was emotional playing my debut match for the country. I was a little emotional on court but then I think I handled myself well. The team and the captain helped me a lot in that by cheering, and the crowd also backed us for every point. I think that's what helped me pull through the



match today."

"I was just trying to focus on every point that I play and just try to give my best in every point, while just thinking of the country," she added.

Shrivalli also shed some light on the emotions running towards the end of her match and said, "The feeling when I hugged my teammates after the win was

surreal. All of us being individual players, we've come to play as a team and the amount that we've bonded in the past week has been really good and exciting for all of us, and I've loved the atmosphere here."

Elaborating on her experience while representing her country, she also opened up about playing alongside her

teammates in this tournament. "We've been doing a lot of crazy stuff off-court, playing a lot of games and trying to understand each other. I think we've got a good blend of how everyone functions on the team, and we've been trying to be chirpy, and I think that's what helped us," she mentioned.