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KOLKATA HORROR REDUX: LAW STUDENT 'GANG-RAPED' ON CAMPUS

■ This incident comes less than a year after gang-rape and murder of a trainee doctor in RG Kar Medical College and Hospital

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

A first-year student of a law college in south Kolkata was allegedly "gang-raped" inside the institution by an alumnus and two senior students of the institution. All three accused have been arrested and produced before a court which remanded them to police custody for four days.

This incident comes less than one year after the State was rocked by months of protests over the gang-rape and murder of a trainee doctor in a State-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

The main accused Manojit Mishra is a former office-bearer of the Trinamool Congress' student wing, Trinamool Chhatra Parishad (TMCP) at South Calcutta Law College. He had graduated from the college in 2022 but remained a regular visitor to the campus. He is now a practising lawyer in the Alipore court. Apart from that, he was also appointed to a temporary post in the college on the recommendation of the college's governing body which is filled with Trin-



The three accused of raping a law student in her college premises in the city, being taken to the court, in Kolkata on Friday. ANI

amool leaders.

The law student was allegedly raped on Wednesday between 7.30 pm and 8.50pm. The arrests were carried out on Thursday night.

Bengal TMCP president Trinankur Bhattacharya said that the police will take action irrespective of the political colour of the accused.

"The main accused had called the victim to the campus on Wednesday evening. On her arrival, the main accused and his accomplices took her to a room where she was raped," said a police officer.

Despite the victim naming her tormentors in the FIR, the Kasba police station officers referred to as the accused "M", accused "J" and accused "P."

"Around 6pm, the main accused had first accosted her, the complainant said. She claims she was assured of being made the general secretary of the college union if she agreed to his demands," said an officer.

The student was allegedly told that she would have to give a "loyalty test". The exact nature of the test was not specified.

A little later, the student told the police, the main accused gave a proposal of marriage.

"The student refused, saying she was already in a relationship. Later on, when she tried to leave the college, she was stopped by the main accused and two others," said the officer.

The student was taken to a room where she was

'Burning evidence of the criminalisation of Trinamool:' Oppn

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

The political links of the main accused in the gang-rape of a law student on her college campus have given ammunition for the Opposition in Bengal to target the ruling Trinamool Congress. His social media profiles showcase multiple photographs with Trinamool bigwigs like Abhishek Banerjee.



The main accused, an ex-student of the college, was employed at the educational institute in a temporary capacity. He was appointed on the recommendation made by the college's governing body president and Trinamool MLA, Ashok Deb, the vice principal of the South Calcutta Law College told reporters.

"This is not simply a horrendous crime, this is a burning evidence of the criminalisation of Trinamool Congress," said the BJP's Suwendu Adhikari, leader of Opposition in the Assembly. "The student leaders of Trinamool's students wing have been misusing their power and have created an atmosphere of terror and anarchy on the campuses. This is Mamata's contribution to Bengal,"

"Leaders of TMC's students wing have been misusing their power and have created an atmosphere of terror and anarchy on the campuses."

he added.

Opposition parties in Bengal have been speaking against what they call criminalisation of politics in the State since the Trinamool came to power in 2011.

The main accused's Facebook profile says he has been in an organisational role in the Trinamool

BJP minister comes to defence of Hosabale, Opposition flays

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Amid the row over RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale's strong pitch for a review of two words, 'secular' and 'socialist', inserted in the Preamble of the Constitution during the Emergency days, an article published in an RSS-linked magazine Organiser said it is not about dismantling the Constitution but about restoring its "original spirit", free from the "distortions" of the Congress' Emergency-era policies.

Meanwhile, the Congress and other opposition parties on Friday flayed Hosabale call for a national debate on whether the terms 'secular' and 'socialist' should remain in the Preamble.

Union minister Jitendra Singh and senior BJP leader sought to defend the call by the second senior most functionary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), saying any right-thinking citizen will endorse it because everybody knows that these words were not part of the original Constitution written by Dr B R Ambedkar.

Addressing an event on Thursday in connection with the 50th anniversary of the imposition of Emergency, Hosabale said, "The preamble of the Constitu-



"Any right-thinking citizen will endorse it because everybody knows that these words were not part of the original Constitution written by Dr B R Ambedkar"

tion Baba Saheb Ambedkar made never had these words. During the Emergency, when fundamental rights were suspended, Parliament did not work, judiciary became lame, then these words were added."

The RSS leader said discussions were held on this issue later but no effort was made to remove them from the Preamble. "So whether they should remain in the Preamble should be considered," he added.

"The Preamble is eternal. Are the thoughts of socialism as an ideology eternal for India?" said Hosabale, who was also imprisoned during the Emergency.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the mask of the RSS has come off again as they want 'Manusmriti'. "The Constitution irks them because it speaks of equality, secularism, and justice," he said in a post in Hindi on X. "The RSS should stop dreaming... we will never let them succeed. Every patriotic Indian will defend the Constitution until their last breath," the former Congress chief asserted.

CPI(M) leader and Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Hosabale's call is a "brazen attempt to dis-

mantle the core ideals of our Republic".

The Left parties and RJD alleged that Hosabale's proposal was part of a conspiracy to change the Constitution.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the BJP/RSS attacked Ambedkar, Nehru, and others involved in the framing of the Constitution from November 30, 1949, onwards. "In the RSS' own words, the Constitution was not inspired by Manusmriti," he said in a post on X.

Citing the Constituent Assembly debate on the issue, the Organiser weekly stressed that Hosabale's call resonates with the democratic principles championed by B R Ambedkar and

Trump hints at 'very big' trade deal with India

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump said America is going to have a "very big" trade deal with India, hinting at significant progress in the negotiation process of a long-awaited bilateral trade agreement between the two countries.

"We're having some great deals. We have one coming up, maybe with India, a very big one, where we're going to open up India," Trump said during an event at the White House promoting passage of the GOP's tax and spending cuts legislation on Thursday.

"In the China deal, we're starting to open up China.



Things that never really could have happened, and the relationship with every country has been very good," Trump said.

The president, however, did not elaborate on the details of the deal signed with China.

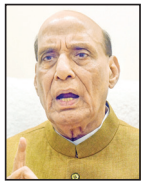
He said that every country wanted to make a deal and have a part of it, and his administration officials were

working overtime, making deals with countries.

"You remember a few months ago, the press was saying, 'Do you really have anybody of any interest?' Well, we just signed with China yesterday, right? We just signed with China. We have everybody. We're not going to make deals with everybody. Some we're just going to send them a letter and say thank you very much. You're going to pay 25 per cent, 35 per cent, 45 per cent. That's the easy way to do it, and my people don't want to do it that way. They want to do some of it, but they want to make more deals than I would do," he said.

'Constructive talks on bilateral ties with China'

BEIJING: In a significant diplomatic engagement, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held bilateral talks with his Chinese counterpart Admiral Dong Jun on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting held in Qingdao, China, on Friday. The meeting comes at a time when both countries are seeking to recalibrate their ties, strained since the 2020 military standoff along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.



DETAILS ■ P12

Tejashwi questions voter list revision

PATNA: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Tejashwi Yadav has questioned the Election Commission's decision to conduct a special revision of the voter list in Bihar months ahead of the assembly elections.



DETAILS ■ P2

Thackeray cousins announce joint protest on July 5 against Hindi 'imposition'

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Estranged cousins Uddhav and Raj Thackeray will unite for the cause of the Marathi language, in a joint morcha in Mumbai on July 5 against the "imposition" of Hindi and the state government's three-language formula for Classes 1 to 5.

The Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) on Friday said it will support the protest march, with Pawar asserting that the people of Maharashtra are



not anti-Hindi, but it is not right to impose the language on young students.

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena



(MNS) president Raj Thackeray will be seen together at the July 5 morcha, leaders of both the parties said on Friday.

■ P3

China expels naval chief in military purge

A senior General and a top Nuke scientist also removed from national legislature

AGENCIES
BEIJING

The purge of China's powerful defence and security establishment continued as top military officials, including a senior general,

chief of navy and a nuclear scientist, were expelled from the national legislature on Friday.

General Miao Hua along with Vice Admiral Li Hanjun, chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and Liu Shipeng, deputy chief engineer of China National Nuclear Corporation, have been removed from the National People's Congress (NPC), the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

Li is the latest of a string of PLA generals and a handful of defence industry executives to have been implicated in a sweeping crackdown in the military, the Post reported.

Both have been stripped of their membership of the legislature, the report said. State-run Xinhua news agency reported that the standing committee of the NPC, which concluded its session here on Friday, also voted to remove top General Miao Hua from

his position as a member of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the Chinese military, headed by President Xi Jinping.

Miao, the youngest general in the Chinese military hierarchy, has been under probe for serious violations of discipline since November last year. He was dismissed from the NPC in April this year.

Miao was also director of the Political Work Department of the CMC, a role

critical in managing Communist Party ideology and personnel changes within the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

His career advanced significantly after Xi assumed power, leading to roles in the Chinese Navy as a political commissar and eventually becoming the PLA's youngest admiral.

The defence ministry said Miao was being investigated for suspected serious violations of discipline.

■ P3



A large number of devotees gather to catch a glimpse of Lord Jagannatha as the Nandighosa Ratha begins to roll on the Bada Danda, at Jagannath Temple in Puri on Friday. ANI

TEJASHWI RAISES QUESTIONS OVER SPECIAL VOTER LIST REVISION IN BIHAR

Calls it a tactic to manipulate upcoming election outcomes in state.

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Tejashwi Yadav has questioned the Election Commission's decision to conduct a special revision of the voter list in Bihar months ahead of the assembly elections.

Addressing the media on Thursday, Yadav questioned the timing and feasibility of the exercise and alleged that the move is an attempt to bar the poor people from voting and manipulate the voter list.

"The Election Commission has announced a special revision of the voter list in Bihar... This means that the voter list of 8 crore Biharis have been sidelined and a new list will be generated.

'IMPRACTICAL' MOVE

- He alleges the move aims to exclude poor voters lacking required documents.
- Yadav calls the timing impractical, citing 8 crore voters and only 25 days.
- Claims CM Nitish Kumar and PM Modi are scared, trying to manipulate voter lists.
- Points out 73% of Bihar is flood-prone, complicating document submission.
- RJD plans to approach the Election Commission over these concerns.
- Election preparation tensions rise between RJD-led Mahagathbandhan and ruling NDA.



erated. Why is this being done 2 months before the elections? Is it possible to develop the voters' list for eight crore people within 25 days?... The documents demanded are such that the poor may not even have them," he said. Yadav raised concerns about the

documentation process and claimed that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are scared, and that's why they are taking such steps.

"The documents demanded are such that the poor may not even have them... Our delegation

will approach the election commission regarding this matter. CM Nitish Kumar and PM Modi are scared... They want the names of the poor to be removed from the voter list... They want to snatch the right to vote from the poor section of society," said the RJD leader.

Highlighting the challenges of conducting such a massive exercise during the monsoon season, Yadav noted that 73 per cent of Bihar is flood-prone.

"As monsoon is about to begin and a total of 73 per cent area of Bihar is flood-prone, so the question that arises is whether people will safeguard their life and assets or will provide documents to the election commission?" he asked. These developments came ahead of the assembly elections in Bihar, expected to take place later this year. Months ahead of the elections, the battle has been intensifying between the grand alliance Mahagathbandhan, led by RJD and Congress and the ruling NDA, which includes BJP, JUD, LJP (Ram Vilas) and HAM.

HAU row: Campus unrest escalates as students asked to vacate hostel

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The agitation at Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (HAU) in Hisar shows no signs of abating as students continue their protest against a series of controversial administrative decisions.

Two days after the students announced to lift their agitation claiming that the ministerial committee has acceded to their demands including sending the vice chancellor on six months of leave, the university campus on Friday witnessed another wave of unrest as the students accused the university authorities of close hostel and mess facilities during the summer session to suppress their agitation.

Even , the sloganeering students staged a demonstration outside the Dean Students' Welfare office and reiterated their demands, announcing they would wait for a government response until July



Students at CCSHAU, Hisar continue their protest on Friday.

1 before deciding on the next phase of their protest.

The protest, which initially began in response to scholarship cuts, has evolved into a broader movement against what students allege to be an environment of administrative high-handedness and repression. Tensions flared after allegations emerged that the administration forcibly vacated the girls' hostel and applied undue pressure on students. Videos circulating on social media have fueled public anger and brought national attention to the issue.

University authorities, however, maintain that the hostel closures are part of a routine

annual process. Dr. Rajbir Garg, Director of Research and Chairman of the Coordination Committee, explained that the 2024-25 academic session has concluded and the university is now observing its one-month summer break. He said hostels are vacated every year during this period to allow for repairs and maintenance, as clearly outlined in the Students' Handbook. Mess services are also suspended, he added, since many of the staff return to their home states during the vacation, and the university's Nehru Library is temporarily closed for physical verification of inventory.

UP govt transfers Rs 5L to prisoner after SC slams prolonged custody

SAMBHAV SHARMA
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court criticized UP jail authorities after a Muslim man's bail release was delayed for nearly a month. The state paid Rs 5 lakh interim compensation. The Court demanded accountability and a thorough probe, warning that similar negligence won't be tolerated. Next hearing: Aug 25.

The Uttar Pradesh government on Friday informed the Supreme Court that it has compensated a man whose release from Ghaziabad jail was delayed by nearly a month despite being granted bail.

The Supreme Court has scheduled the next hearing for August 25 to over a detailed investigation into the alleged negligence in the release of the Muslim man, who was jailed under Uttar Pradesh's Anti-Conversion Law.

The bench comprising Jus-



tice K.V. Viswanathan and Justice N. Kotiswar Singh recorded the compliance report submitted by the counsel representing the Uttar Pradesh government.

According to the report, the government has transferred Rs 5 lakh as interim compensation to the prisoner's account, in compliance with the Court's order.

However, the Court expressed displeasure over the conduct of the jail authorities and said that a penalty of Rs 5 lakh could be imposed on the officer found responsible.

In the previous hearing, the Court had strongly remarked that the case was a matter of personal liberty and such negligence would not be tolerated. The bench had asked

the Director General (Prisons) of Uttar Pradesh how such incidents would be prevented in the future.

The DG assured the Court that jail superintendents would be given instructions.

The Court directed that the scope of the investigation must determine whether the delay in the prisoner's release was intentional, who was responsible, and why the prisoner was kept in custody after May 27, 2025.

Justice Viswanathan firmly stated that the Court would not let the matter go, as many others could be languishing in jail under similar circumstances. The issue came to light when the prisoner filed a petition, stating that he was not released despite being granted bail in April because the bail order did not mention a specific subsection of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act.

'The ceasefire is intact, but we're still on alert': Israel-Asia chamber chief

BRYAN THOMAS
TEL AVIV

In an exclusive conversation with News X, Anat Bernstein-Reich, President of the Israel-Asia Chamber of Commerce, says that while the ceasefire has largely held, Israelis remain on edge due to the threat of renewed attacks. "We are back to normal, but until the war in Gaza ends and the remaining 50 hostages are released, life will not be normal," she said. Despite the calm, she added, "A siren can happen any moment due to missiles or drones from the Houthis in Yemen, Hamas in Gaza, or Hezbollah in Syria."

Speaking from Tel Aviv, Bernstein-Reich said her own safety isn't in question for now, but warned against complacency. "Personally I am safe. But safety is a relative notion. I could have been more safe in Switzerland," she remarked. On whether the situation is improving, she expressed cautious hope. "There's major international and internal pressure to conclude the war in Gaza. Iran has been hit hard—this will impact its terror proxies."

Laying out her hopes, she was unequivocal: "First, I want the hostages back. That is our moral obligation. I hope Iran realises Israel is here to stay and focuses on its own prosperity instead of terror. And I hope Hamas will stop ruling Gaza so Palestinians can rebuild under a leadership that truly wants peace." On the ceasefire itself, she concluded firmly, "The ceasefire is intact."

Will pad up and bat if captain tells me to: Kanhaiya on contesting Bihar polls

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Kanhaiya Kumar on Friday said that he will contest the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls if the party tells him to.

Using a cricketing analogy, Kumar said that just like batting, bowling, and fielding are responsibilities that have to be fulfilled on the cricket field, fighting polls is also a responsibility in politics.

"To fight polls, to make others fight polls and campaign, all are responsibilities that the party allots. If the party tells me to contest the polls then I will fight the elections also. Earlier also, when I contested the polls, it was on the orders of the party," he told the media in an interview when asked whether he will contest the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls slated later this year.



"If the captain tells me to sit outside and deliver drinks for those at the crease, I will do that. And if the captain tells me to, I will also pad up and bat," Kumar said on the possibility of him contesting assembly polls.

On the Congress projecting him as a prominent face in Bihar, Kumar said the party has given him a responsibility like it does to its lakhs of workers. It is like in a team where different people have a separate role, he added.

"Earlier, (MS) Dhoni was the wicketkeeper. Now (Rishabh) Pant is there," he

said, drawing a cricketing parallel.

Asserting that the party functions with collective effort, Kumar said the decision to contest polls should also be collective.

"I have been a strong votary of the principle that fighting an election is a collective decision. Like other responsibilities, fighting polls is also a responsibility. Like batting, bowling, and fielding are all responsibilities that have to be fulfilled, fighting polls is also a responsibility," he told PTI.

Kumar, a former president of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union, had unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha polls twice. He first contested general elections on a CPI ticket from Bihar's Begusarai in 2019 and then as a Congress nominee from Northeast Delhi in 2024.

NH-74 scam: ED seizes Rs 24.70 lakh in raids across Uttarakhand, UP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized cash amounting to Rs 24.70 lakh as well as other incriminating documents during searches conducted a day ago across Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in connection with in NH-74 scam case, the agency said on Friday.

The agency on Thursday had conducted raids at seven locations in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in the case linked to Dinesh Pratap Singh, Senior PCS officer currently working as Executive Director, Doiwala

Sugar Mill in Uttarakhand.

As per the federal agency, Dinesh alias DP Singh, then then Suspended Special Land Acquisition Officer (SLAO), Uttarakhand, "while working in the capacity of Competent Authority of Land Acquisition (CALA), entered into conspiracy with revenue officials, land consolidation officials, farmers, land owners, middlemen and others for misappropriation of the government funds by manipulating the use of land by way of passing backdated orders under section 143 of Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950."

Rahul assures political power to tribals within Cong to uplift them

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has said the Congress wants to strengthen the tribal community socially by politically empowering them with position, voice and support within the party.

In a meeting with the representatives of the tribal society a few days ago at his residence, Gandhi discussed their problems and later shared a video of the interaction in which he is heard saying, "We want to develop tribal leadership in the Congress across the country."

"I want to help the tribals for which the community



will have to get united and those actually fighting for the rights of the tribals need to come forward. We want to strengthen Adivasi leaders and want 10-15 tribal leaders should emerge in every state," Gandhi told the tribal representatives.

About the meeting, the former Congress chief said

that he assured the representatives that he stood with them in this "fight".

"My goal is to strengthen them socially by giving them political power, which will begin by giving them position, voice and support within the Congress party," Gandhi said during the meeting.

Toll rises to 4 in Rudraprayag bus tragedy

TDG NETWORK
RUDRAPRAYAG

The body of another pilgrim was retrieved on Friday from the Alaknanda River as SDRF personnel on board a raft scoured its swirling waters in search of pilgrims who went missing after a 31-seater bus taking them to Badrinath fell into the river near Gholtir between Rudraprayag and Gauchar a day ago.

The toll in Thursday's accident has mounted to four now with this recovery, Rudraprayag Superintendent of Police Akshay Prahlad Konde said.

Evacuated over 4,400 Indians from Iran, Israel: MEA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India has evacuated more than 4,400 Indian nationals from Iran and Israel so far in 19 special flights under Operation Sindhu launched on June 18 to bring home its citizens amid the ongoing conflict between the two countries, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

A fresh batch of 173 Indians evacuated from Iran reached Delhi late Thursday night in a flight from Armenian capital Yerevan, the MEA said in a post on X.



At his weekly media briefing a day before, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, in response to queries on Operation Sindhu, said New Delhi was assessing the situation on the ground and a decision on the future course of action would be taken based on it.

Mamata joins first Rath Yatra at Jagannath Temple in Digha

TDG NETWORK
PURBA MEDINIPUR

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday participated in the first-ever Rath Yatra of the newly inaugurated Jagannath Temple in Digha.

CM Mamata Banerjee performed the sacred ritual of sweeping the chariots, in which the chariot's platform is swept gently using a broom. The CM also performed the Aarti as the first-ever Rath Yatra at the Lord

Jagannath temple in Digha began.

The Rs 250 crore temple in Digha, constructed over 20 acres, was inaugurated by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on April 30, 2025. The temple, inspired by the 12th-century Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri, houses the same deities.

Meanwhile, in Panaji, Goa CM Pramod Sawant also participated in the Lord Jagannath's yatra in Panaji. Also, in Puri erstwhile King of Puri, Gajapati Maharaja



Dibyasingha Deb, arrived on Friday to perform the revered Chhera Pahanra ritual

during the annual Rath Yatra in Puri, Odisha

As part of the centuries-

old tradition, the Maharaja swept the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra with a golden broom before the deities embarked on their annual journey to the Gundicha Temple.

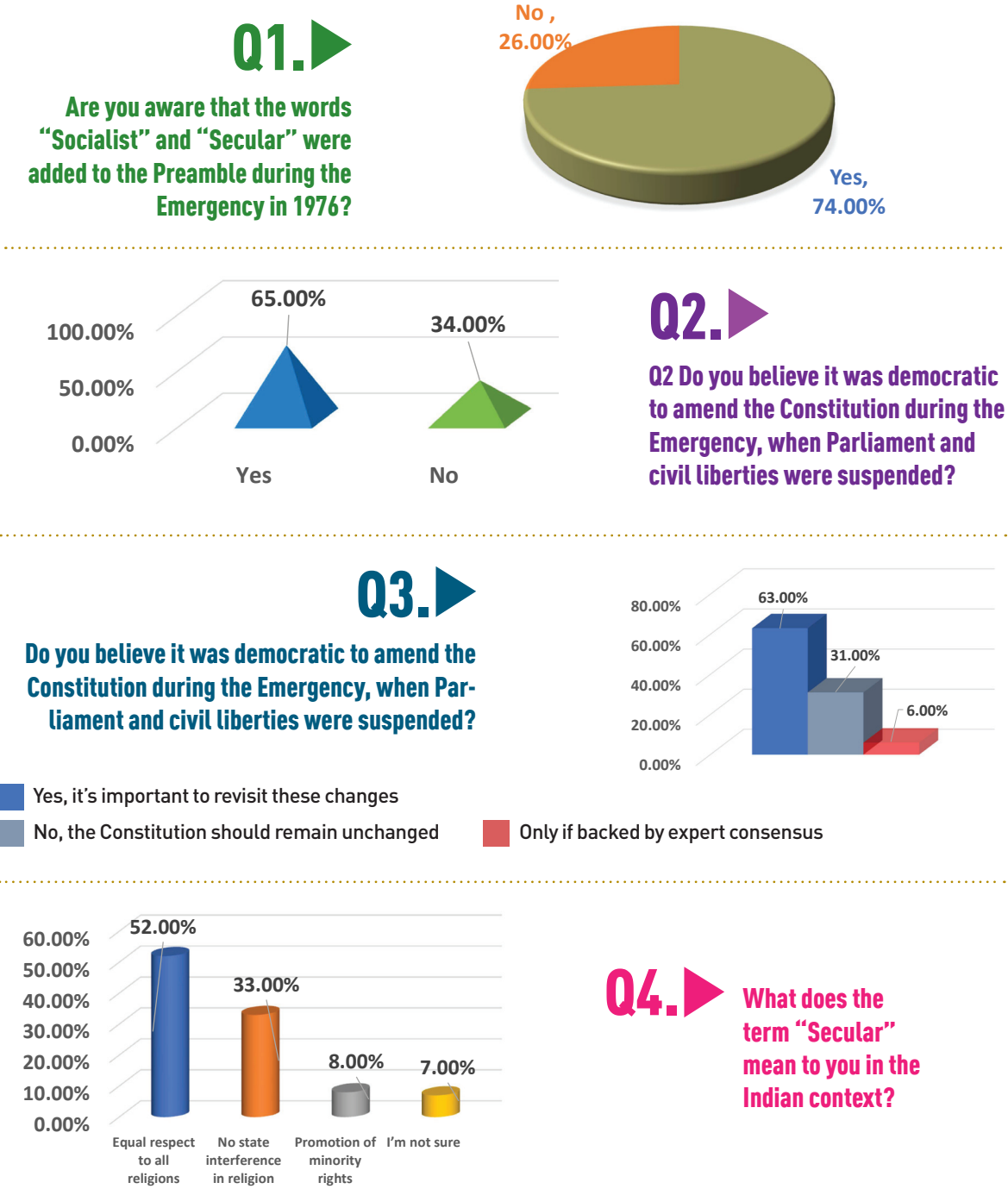
Meanwhile, in Chhattisgarh, Governor Ramen Dekka extended his greetings on the occasion of Jagannath Rath Yatra 2025.

In West Bengal's East Medinipur district, the first-ever Rath Yatra at the Lord Jagannath temple in Digha began.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON EMERGENCY-ERA AMENDMENTS

40% of people believe that ‘Socialist’ and ‘Secular’ should be removed from the Preamble

During the Emergency (1975–77), the 42nd Constitutional Amendment added the words ‘Socialist’ and ‘Secular’ to the Preamble. Introduced amid suspended civil liberties and centralised power, this amendment reshaped India’s constitutional identity, raising enduring debates on democratic processes, ideological shifts, and the legitimacy of Emergency-era legislative changes.



MANIPUR CRACKDOWN: POLICE ARREST INSURGENTS, RECOVER ILLEGAL FIREARMS

Manipur tensions rise as forces arrest suspects, recover weapons

NIBIR DEKA
IMPHAL

In a coordinated crackdown on criminal and insurgent activity, Manipur Police and security forces have arrested multiple individuals across the state over the past two days. The operations resulted in the recovery of illegal firearms, fake weapons, and various incriminating materials, reflecting heightened security efforts in the wake of renewed violence in the region.

Tensions escalated last week following two separate incidents of gun violence that left one elderly Meitei farmer injured and a Kuki woman dead. On June 25, a gun attack was reported from Phubala village in Bishnupur district, where 60-year-old farmer Ningthoujam Biren sustained a bul-

MANIPUR RAIDS: INSURGENTS HELD, WEAPONS FOUND

- Gun attack injures Meitei farmer in Phubala village; villagers allege shots were fired from hill ranges bordering Churachandpur.
- Md. Helan held with pistol and dummy gun in Mayang Imphal; accused of threatening locals with real and fake arms.
- Three insurgents from PREPAK, RPF/PLA, and KCP (PWG) arrested for extortion threats; firearms, phones, Aadhaar cards seized.



let injury to his arm while working in his paddy field. Eyewitnesses and officials claim that multiple rounds were fired from the nearby hill ranges bordering Churachandpur district.

In a related operation, on June 26, Manipur Police arrested 25-year-old Md. Helan of Irong Chesaba Salam Achouba in Thoubal dis-

trict. He was apprehended near the Wednesday Market area in Mayang Imphal West. From his possession, police recovered a .32 pistol loaded with four rounds of 7.65mm ammunition, a black leather holster, a dummy gun with a fake magazine, a Redmi Note 13 5G phone with a Jio SIM, and a brown wallet contain-

ing his Aadhaar card. Helan had allegedly used the real and fake weapons to intimidate residents in the locality. The crackdown also extended to active insurgent cadres linked to banned organizations. On June 25, a cadre of the proscribed outfit PREPAK (PRO), identified as Thangjam Puremba Singh alias Thapanba, aged

26 and a resident of Khurai Thangjam Leikai, was arrested from his home in Imphal East. A mobile phone and Aadhaar card were recovered from him. The following day, June 26, police nabbed a 43-year-old female cadre of the RPF/PLA, Loukrakpam Premi Devi, from Haobam Marak Ngangom Leikai in Imphal West. She was reportedly involved in issuing extortion threats and monetary demands to officials at the Lamphel DC office and local courier services. Items seized from her included a grey side bag, two mobile handsets, and her Aadhaar card. On the same day, an active member of the KCP (PWG), Shandham Roman Singh alias Yambung, aged 37, was also arrested from Shamurou Makha Leikai under Wangoi Police Station, Imphal West.

CBI must probe stamp duty scam: YSRCP

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA
ANDHRA PRADESH



Former Anantapur MP Talarangaiah has called for an immediate CBI investigation into the stamp duty scam involving Kalyandurgam MLA A. Surendrababu, orchestrating a massive fraud to secure hundreds of crores in bank loans through forged documents. Addressing the media at the YSRCP central office, Rangaiah demanded that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu write to the central government to initiate a CBI probe, asserting that a state-led Special Investigation Team (SIT) would be inadequate given the involvement of a ruling party MLA. “The primary accused is the MLA himself, who used his associate, ‘Mee Seva’ Babu, as a front to deflect blame,” Rangaiah stated, alleging a conspiracy to shield Surendrababu while scapegoating others.

Rangaiah revealed that the scam centered around fraudulent e-stamp duty payments to facilitate bank loans for Surendrababu's SR Constructions company. He also questioned how a mere Mee Seva operator could execute such a high-stakes fraud without the MLA's backing, pointing to their close association, including joint appearances at party events and social media evidence of their camaraderie. “If Surendrababu is truly innocent, he should resign as MLA and cooperate with the investigation,” Rangaiah challenged, emphasizing accountability. He further criticized the police

for failing to produce four arrested individuals, including Mee Seva Babu, in court even five days after their detention, raising concerns about transparency. “Where are these individuals? The police must present them before a magistrate immediately he demanded, or he will file a habeas corpus petition in the High Court,” he warned.

Highlighting the scale of the scam, Rangaiah noted its parallels with a previous nationwide stamp paper fraud involving a TDP leader, underscoring a pattern of financial misconduct under the party's regime. He dismissed claims by SR Constructions about their 27 years of experience, arguing that their failure to ensure stamp duty payments reached the state treasury exposed their negligence. “When you admit a scam occurred, why should we sling mud? The evidence speaks for itself,” he remarked.

RSS, BJP aiming to reshape democracy: Siddaramaiah on preamble controversy

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale's suggestion for the removal of “socialist” and “secular” terms from the Preamble of the Indian Constitution was not a “casual remark” but a “long-standing agenda” to reshape the country's democracy.

He highlighted RSS' persistent opposition to the mention of the terms secularism and socialism in the Constitution, which Siddaramaiah said were the “core values of the constitution”. He added that it was a part of the long-standing agenda of the Sangh to reshape India's democracy within their ideological purview.

“The RSS has always opposed the core values of our constitution - secu-



larism and socialism. Now, their leaders are once again saying these words should be removed from the Preamble. This is not a casual remark - it is part of a long-standing agenda to reshape India's democracy in their ideological image,” the Karnataka CM posted on X. He further attacked the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Centre, saying, “In the recent elections,

BJP leaders openly said they needed 400 seats to rewrite the constitution. The people of India saw through that agenda -- and gave them a resounding answer.”

Focusing on the rights guaranteed by the Constitution to the marginalised communities, the Karnataka CM said, “If not for these constitutional values, people like me would never have had the chance to study, speak, or serve. That is the power of justice, equality, and secularism.”

Siddaramaiah explained that the original Preamble didn't include “secular and socialist” since it was obvious that India would be a socially just democracy, and these terms were added later at a time when the RSS and its affiliates were attacking these values.

“The original Preamble didn't include those words. But that's because it was already understood that India would be a secular and socially just democracy.

Honeymoon horror: Police confident despite refusal of statements by accused

NIBIR DEKA
GUWAHATI

The Meghalaya police have shown confidence regarding cracking the case of the Honeymoon despite recent setbacks with two of the accused refusing to give statements to the police.

Speaking to reporters, Superintendent of Police (City) Herbert Kharkongor confirmed that two of the accused — Akash and Anand — were sent for recording statements before a magistrate but refused to do so. “They were not willing. It's their prerogative. But it's not an issue. We still have ample evidence to prove the case,” Kharkongor stated. He emphasized that the case



is not dependent on confessions alone. “Yes, confession to police is not admissible in court, and everyone knows that. But the material evidence we have — from the beginning till now — is strong. We are also awaiting the FSL (Forensic Science Laboratory) reports, which will further

strengthen the case.”

While the charge sheet is yet to be filed, the SP confirmed that investigations are ongoing. “Our investigation officer and the special team are working day by day. We are taking all necessary updates. Once everything is in place, we will file the charge sheet.

It will definitely be done within the mandated 90-day period.”

Earlier, Meghalaya Police had dismissed calls for narco-analysis tests on the prime accused in the high-profile murder case, Indore businessman Raja Raghuvanshi, in Sohra. The arrests are the latest development in the case pertaining to Indore-based businessman Raja Raghuvanshi's murder on May 23 in Meghalaya's East Khasi hills, while he was on his honeymoon. His wife, who went missing, was found weeks later in Ghazipur. Further investigation revealed that the murder was conspired by Sonam, her alleged boyfriend Raj Kushwaha and three others.

Siddaramaiah denies party rift in party after Rajanna's remarks

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday dismissed remarks made by Minister KN Rajanna suggesting possible political changes in the state, saying it is better to ignore such statements.

He clarified that Rajanna only mentioned there may be developments, not that anything specific would happen.

Speaking to reporters at Vidhana Soudha, Siddaramaiah said, “There is no internal dispute in the party. Minister KN Rajanna has said that there may be developments in state politics. He said that he did not say that something like this would happen. It would be better to ignore his statement.”

On the 516th birth anniversary of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar garlanded the statue of Kempegowda.

The Chief Minister called



him a visionary and the founder of modern Bengaluru.

Speaking after garlanding Kempegowda's statue located on the eastern side of Vidhana Soudha, the Chief Minister said, “Kempegowda was an efficient and far-sighted administrator. The global recognition that Bengaluru enjoys today is because it laid its foundation.”

The birth anniversary is being celebrated jointly by the state government, the Kempegowda Development Authority and the BBMP.

Siddaramaiah noted that during his previous term as Chief Minister from 2013 to

2018, his government had identified the exact date of Kempegowda's birth in consultation with Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji, following which the state has been observing Kempegowda Jayanti annually.

“Kempegowda's 516th birth anniversary is being celebrated in collaboration with the government, Kempegowda Development Authority and BBMP. During 2013-18, our government discussed with Nirmala Nanda Swamiji and found out the date of birth, and since then, the government has been continuously celebrating Kempegowda Jayanti.

TN CM Stalin slams BJP-AIADMK ties, says dividing people

TDG NETWORK
TIRUPATHUR

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Centre and the BJP-AIADMK alliance, accusing them of attempting to divide the people of the state along the lines of religious and caste.

Speaking to mediapersons in Tirupathur district, CM Stalin alleged that BJP, which has aligned with AIADMK, was engaging in “fake spirituality and political drama” to create division in the state. “Those in the Centre are trying to divide the people of Tamil Nadu in the name of religion, caste, etc., and they are doing this continuously. When they couldn't do it, they joined with AIADMK here,” Stalin said.

He further criticised BJP's rhetoric on religion, say-

ing, “BJP is speaking with AIADMK on their side, that religion is in danger in Tamil Nadu. The truth is, it's a dangerous situation for their alliance now.”

Stalin reiterated that Tamil Nadu has a long-standing tradition of social harmony, and its people would not tolerate attempts to disturb it for political gains. “Fake spirituality and political drama will not be accepted in religious things by anyone here (in Tamil Nadu),” he asserted.

On June 24, a political row erupted after Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin alleged biased allocation of Central funds favouring Sanskrit over other Indian classical languages including Tamil.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister wrote, “Sanskrit gets crores; Tamil and other South Indian languages get nothing but crocodile tears.”



UK thanks India, works to fix stuck F-35B fighter jet in Kerala

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

British authorities on Thursday thanked India for their constant support after the British F-35B fighter jet made an emergency landing at Thiruvananthapuram airport nearly a fortnight ago.

The High Commission spokesperson said, “We are working to repair the UK F-35B at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport as quickly as possible. We thank the Indian Authorities for their continued support”

The UK aircraft was unable to return to UK Aircraft Carrier, HMS Prince of Wales due to adverse weather conditions. Prioritising safety, the aircraft diverted to Thiruvananthapuram International Airport in India, where it landed safely.

The aircraft has subsequently developed an engineering issue whilst on the



ground, which precluded its return to the Carrier. Engineers from HMS Prince of Wales assessed the aircraft, and it was decided that the support of a UK-based engineering team was needed, according to a statement from the UK High Commission

The aircraft will be moved to a space in the maintenance repair and overhaul facility hangar once specialist equipment and UK engineering teams arrive.

The UK High Commission said, “throughout this diversion incident, we have worked closely with all Indian authorities, includ-

ing the Indian Air Force, Indian Navy and Thiruvananthapuram International Airport and are extremely grateful for their support.”

The High Commission further stated that continuing security and organisational support provided by India demonstrates close coordination and deepening relationship that exists between the Armed Forces of the UK and India.

Earlier, the Indian Air Force (IAF) confirmed that a British Royal Navy F-35B fighter jet made an emergency landing at Thiruvananthapuram airport on June 14 night.

Karnataka HC quashes criminal cases against Basavaraj Bommai over protest remarks

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

Karnataka High Court on Friday set aside two criminal cases filed against BJP leader and former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, which alleged he made objectionable remarks during a protest rally criticising the Waqf Board and the state government over alleged encroachment on farmers' and temples' properties.

Justice S R Krishna Kumar, delivering the order, allowed Bommai's plea to quash the proceedings that had been initiated by Shigaon police under Section 196(1)(a) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which pertains to promoting enmity between different groups on grounds such as religion or race.

Senior advocate Prabhul-

ing K Navadgi, representing Bommai, contended that the complaints lacked the essential elements required to constitute an offence under Section 196(1)(a). In response, Additional Special Public Prosecutor B N Jagadeesha argued that the video evidence of the protest prima facie suggested Bommai had committed the offence.

However, after reviewing the complaint and referring

Justice S R Krishna Kumar, delivering the order, allowed Bommai's plea to quash the proceedings that had been initiated by Shigaon police under Section 196(1)(a) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which pertains to promoting enmity between different groups on grounds such as religion or race.

to relevant Supreme Court and High Court precedents, the judge observed that the allegations were too vague

and lacked substance. It noted that aside from Bommai's statement -- “wherever a stone is thrown, Waqf

property is found” -- the complaint did not contain specific elements that could sustain charges under the said provision. Declaring that pursuing the case would amount to an abuse of legal process, the court quashed the proceedings against Bommai. The judge clarified that the relief is limited to Bommai and does not extend to other accused individuals named in the FIR.

CM FLAGS OFF 100 ELECTRIC BUSES, OPENS NARELA BUS DEPOT

Modern eco-friendly buses to boost Delhi’s public transport and cut pollution across nine city routes.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday inaugurated the Narela bus depot and flagged off 100 electric buses, which will operate on nine routes across the national capital.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Minister reiterated the government’s commitment to modernising the public transport system and affirmed the goal of revamping Delhi’s bus services and “bringing them back on track.”

“Today we have inaugurated the Narela Bus Depot and dedicated 100 Devi electric buses, which will operate on nine routes... These are equipped with excellent facilities... This depot was completed in just 3 months. Our goal is to transition Delhi’s public transport system to an electric mode, update the transport system, and ensure minimal inconvenience to the public,” the Chief Minister told reporters after the



100 ELECTRIC BUSES LAUNCHED FROM NARELA

- 100 electric ‘Devi’ buses launched to operate on 9 routes across the national capital.
- Narela depot built in 3 months, supporting expanded bus services, especially for rural Delhi.
- Part of EV push, with 280 electric buses planned by 2027 under new green policy.
- Free travel for women and advanced safety, comfort features included in the new fleet.

inauguration.

She was accompanied by Delhi Transport Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

MP Yogendra Chandolia.

Earlier, BJP MP Yogendra Chandolia mentioned that the Rekha Gupta-led Delhi government has kept rural

areas in mind and has also contributed to helping save the environment with the newly inaugurated electric buses. “Keeping the rural

areas of Delhi in mind, the Rekha Gupta government of Delhi has established a DTC depot here, and 105 small buses will be dispatched from here. This is the Delhi government’s contribution to saving Delhi’s environment. These are electric buses, and women will travel for free on these buses. These small buses will address the problem of traffic jams,” he said. He also mentioned the goal of full electrification of buses while taking a shot at the Aam Aadmi Party for spreading lies and not doing work for the people of Delhi, “In the coming times, all buses in Delhi will be electric to improve Delhi’s environment... They (Aam Aadmi Party) have nothing but lies; if they had worked on time, they would not be in the opposition today...”

On World Environment Day (June 5), CM Gupta had announced that 280 electric buses would be added to Delhi’s fleet by 2027 as part of a comprehensive electric vehicle (EV) policy.

AAP Govt failed to deliver on public transport, environmental issue: BJP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Yogendra Chandolia on Friday said that 105 electric buses were flagged off from a newly established Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) depot, developed by the Rekha Gupta government to serve the rural areas of the national capital.

Speaking to the media, the BJP MP stated that the initiative aims to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality, while ensuring free travel for women passengers.

“Keeping the rural areas of Delhi in mind, the Rekha Gupta government of Delhi has established a DTC depot here, and 105 small buses will be dispatched from here. This is the Delhi government’s contribution to saving Delhi’s environment. These are electric buses, and women will travel for free on these

buses. These small buses will address the problem of traffic jams,” Chandolia said.

The BJP leader also took a strong swipe at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), accusing them of making false promises and failing to deliver on their commitments to public transport and environmental issues.

“In the coming times, all buses in Delhi will be electric to improve Delhi’s environment... They (Aam Aadmi Party) have nothing but lies; if they had worked on time, they would not be in the opposition today...” he added.

Meanwhile, on World Environment Day, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced that 280 electric buses will be added to the city’s fleet by 2027 as part of a new electric vehicle (EV) policy.

Speaking to the media, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha

Gupta said, “We have decided to give 280 electric buses to Delhi. By 2027, the whole fleet of buses provided by the Delhi government will be electric. We are also bringing in a new EV policy.”

CM Gupta praised the new buses, calling them a tremendous asset for Delhi and highlighting their high comfort level and security features.

She said, “These buses are a tremendous asset for Delhi. This is a highly comfortable bus. Cameras and a panic button have been installed inside the bus. The buses have a low floor and are air-conditioned.”

CM Gupta criticised previous governments, saying, “The previous governments never paid much attention to the environment. Delhi was deprived of the ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam’ campaign under the last government.

Assembly to hold symposium to mark 50th anniv of Emergency

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Assembly will organise a special symposium at the Vidhan Sabha premises to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the imposition of the Emergency, officials said on Friday.

The event titled ‘Bharatiya Loktantra aur Samvidhaan ka Sabse Andhkaar-maya Daur: Na Bhoolein, Na Shama Karen’ under the banner of #SamvidhanHatyaDiwas, will be held on Saturday, a statement said.

The symposium will feature keynote addresses by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Jitendra Singh and former union minister Satyanarayan Jatiya, among others.



The event is envisioned as a national moment of introspection, aiming to revisit one of the most tumultuous and authoritarian phases in India’s democratic history, the statement added.

It will highlight the significance of upholding constitutional values, protecting civil liberties, and preserving the independence of democratic institutions. Delhi Assembly

Speaker Vijender Gupta emphasised that the symposium serves not only as a tribute to those who resisted the Emergency but also as a solemn reminder to the younger generation to stay vigilant, safeguard democratic values, and ensure such a dark chapter is never repeated.

A commemorative booklet titled ‘Apatkaal@50’ will also be released during the event.

Delhi should be smart and beautiful: Parvesh Verma

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Verma said the national capital had to be “smart and beautiful” and the government was working on infrastructure projects, including one on building the Yamuna riverfront.

Speaking at a function for women entrepreneurs in the real estate sector on Friday, Verma invited suggestions from those working in the real estate sector on how to develop these initiatives.

Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Verma also listed out several achievements of the BJP government at the Centre in the past 11 years in the field of women empowerment.

“Our goal is to make a



smart and beautiful city. The Delhi government is working on a Yamuna riverfront project and other projects. I invite suggestions from the real estate sector on how we can move further on this,” Verma said.

Giving a list of central government schemes for women’s empowerment, the minister said, “Be it Ujjwala Yojna, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhhi Yojna, Mudra

Yojna, Lakhpati Didi, Mission Shakti, women in defence etc.

There are so many empowerment schemes that have been launched which are bringing about a change on ground,” the PWD minister said.

Verma also said that the real-estate sector has traditionally been dominated by men, however there is a change and more women entrepreneurs are entering the field.

PWD Min stresses on women’s participation in real estate to cut litigation

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi’s PWD Minister Parvesh Verma on Friday stressed the need to increase women’s participation in the real estate sector, saying this will improve transparency and reduce civil cases related to properties.

Addressing a conference organised by realtors body Naredco’s women’s wing, he said, “Women can do anything today, then, why not real estate”.

Verma mentioned cases of lies, mis-selling and fraud in the real estate market.

“Most of the civil cases are related to real estate. If women will come into real estate, I think there will be

a reduction in these cases,” the minister said, adding that lies and mis-selling would also come down.

Verma was speaking at the 4th Naredco- MAHI convention.

He also sought support from the industry for the beautification of the national capital.

D Thara, Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, asked builders to focus on integrated infrastructure management of housing societies.

She spoke on the importance of water preservation and the development of green space in the housing complexes.

Drug abuse affects not only individuals, but also communities: Union Min Verma

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister BL Verma attended the ‘Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan’ programme organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in New Delhi on Thursday, as per a press release.

While speaking at the event, he said, “Repercussions of substance use are not confined to the individual and his family; they ripple outward, affecting communities and contributing to broad societal changes and social stigma.”

According to the official



statement, the Minister highlighted and appreciated the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) scheme of the Ministry and explained how the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) has helped reduce the demand for drugs. He hailed

the efforts of our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in building a Viksit Bharat by 2047, in which the message - ‘Say No to Drugs and Say Yes to Life’ - would play a seminal role.

The event took place at Bhim Auditorium, Dr Ambedkar International

Centre, 15 Janpath, New Delhi, and began at 11:00 am.

The programme aimed to raise awareness about the dangers of drug addiction and strengthen the government’s ongoing fight against substance abuse.

As per the release, the nukkad natak and pantomime performance during the event enlightened the audience on how substance use disorder is an issue that is adversely affecting the social fabric of the country. Dependence on any substance not only affects the individual’s health but also disrupts their families and the whole society.

Regular consumption

Nephew of gangster Manjit Mahal shot dead in ‘planned attack’ in Delhi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Deepak, the nephew of notorious gangster Manjit Mahal, was shot dead in a planned attack during his morning walk in Delhi’s Bawana area on Friday.

Police sources say the crime was carried out with full preparation by unidentified assailants, who had been watching Deepak and his movements for the last four days.

According to CCTV footage gathered during the investigation, the attackers had conducted a reconnaissance of Deepak’s house and his daily routine.

They found out that



Deepak regularly went on a morning walk with his family. On Friday morning, two bike-borne attackers took advantage of the situation and fired around six bullets at him, killing him on the spot.

The Delhi Police also suspect that the murder of Deepak might be orchestrated

by the Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu gang, believed to be operating from abroad, as part of a long-standing gang rivalry.

Deepak, a 43-year-old trader with no criminal background, was shot dead during a morning walk with his daughter in Delhi’s Bawana area on

Friday. In this attack, his daughter, who had come for a walk with the deceased Deepak, was also shot in the hand and is currently being treated in the hospital.

The long-standing feud between the two gangs had earlier claimed the life of property dealer Rajkumar Daral, a close associate of Manjit Mahal, who was gunned down in April in Paschim Vihar.

Deepak is a trader by profession. After completing his B’Tech, he got involved in trading and lived with his parents, wife and children in Nangal Thakran village of Bawana.

CM Rekha participates in Jagannath Rath Yatra in Hauz Khas

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday attended the 48th Jagannath Rath Yatra in Hauz Khas. CM Gupta was joined by BJP MP from New Delhi, Bansuri Swaraj.

While speaking to the reporters, the Delhi CM expressed gratitude for receiving the opportunity to participate in the Jagannath Rath Yatra. She mentioned that she prayed to Lord Jagannath that give his bless-



ings to Delhi and the country.

“Being a ‘sevak of the state of Delhi, today I was able to ‘jhadu gohar’ in front of

Lord Jagannath’s Rath Yatra and this Rath Yatra is being inaugurated by paying my respects to the Lord. We pray to Lord Jagannath that

his blessings remain on Delhi and the country”, Rekha Gupta told reporters.

The Delhi Police had issued a traffic advisory in view of the Jagannath Rath Yatra event. As per the advisory, the traffic movement in Hauz Khas will be diverted or regulated between 2 pm to 6 pm on Aurobindo Marg and its adjoining stretches.

According to the advisory, the restricted stretches include the IIT Flyover to AIIMS Loop with possible congestion on Outer Ring Road, Ring Road and August Kranti Marg.

August Kranti Marg.

“In view of the 47th Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath on 27.06.2025 (Friday) from 02:00 PM to 06:00 PM in Hauz Khas, traffic movement will be regulated/diverted on Aurobindo Marg and adjoining stretches. Restricted stretches include IIT Flyover to AIIMS Loop, with possible congestion on Outer Ring Road, Ring Road and August Kranti Marg. Kindly follow the advisory and plan your commute accordingly”, the advisory read.

Massive fire breaks out in paint factory in Delhi’s Bawana

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A huge fire broke out in the national capital’s Bawana area in the early hours of Friday with 25 fire tenders being dispatched to the accident spot to douse the blaze.

No casualties have been reported as of now, as per Delhi Fire Service.

According to Chief Fire Officer Pradeep Kumar, the fire department received information of a fire in a

paint company in Sector 2 of Bawana.

Two fire brigades were initially rushed but due to the intensity of the blaze more were sent to the accident site, the official said.

The DFS have called more teams from Hapur, Bulandshahr, Ghaziabad, and Meerut. Private fire-fighters were also called in. CPO Ghaziabad is also here. 25 fire brigades are already here, and more have been called in... The fire has not spread to other factories.

“We received information of fire in a paint company in

Sector-2, D-93 at around 5:30 am. Taking immediate action, two fire brigades were sent. Seeing the intensity of the fire, more fire brigades were sent. We have called in more teams from Hapur, Bulandshahr, Ghaziabad, and Meerut. Private fire-fighters were also called in. CPO Ghaziabad is also here. 25 fire brigades are already here, and more have been called in... The fire has not spread to other factories”, Pradeep Kumar told.

UP CM YOGI INAUGURATES YOUTH ADDA, UNVEILS CM YUVA APP TO TARGET JOBS

On International MSME Day, UP CM launches Youth Adda and CM Yuva app to promote self-employment

TDG NETWORK
LUCKNOW

On the occasion of International MSME Day, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday inaugurated the 'Youth adda' and launched a mobile application 'CM Yuva' in an effort to promote entrepreneurship in the state and help the youth with employ-

CM YOGI LAUNCHES YOUTH-FOCUSED INITIATIVES

- CM highlights MSME success: Over 90 lakh units supported under CM Yuva scheme; 55,000 youth already enrolled.
- Interest-free loans for youth: Up to Rs5 lakh provided through new app to boost self-employment and startups.
- ODOP model praised: CM showcases local success stories—Kannauj perfume, Lucknow Chikankari, Amroha dholaks—as proof of growth.
- Transgender inclusion push: New CM Yuva Abhiyan initiative to skill and financially empower transgender community.



ment.

The UP CM congratulated the small and big entrepreneurs of the state and more than 2 crore employees in the Mirco, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) across the state, while also highlighting that the state is moving towards the idea of 'One District One Product' which has helped various areas to develop products on their own.

"Perfume from Kannauj,

hardware from Aliganj, Chikankari from Lucknow, Dholak of Amroha, Barsuri of Pilibhit, today people have got a chance to move forward everywhere, people have moved forward," CM Yogi said during his speech at the program.

"If the government works without discrimination, then development comes fast in the state. We gave training and after training we are giving tool kits," he

added.

Talking about the CM Yuva app, the Chief Minister mentioned that more than 90 lakh MSME units have been started under the Mukhyamantri Yuva Swarozgar Yojana (CM-Yuva), which also helps people get an interest-free loan upto Rs 5 lakh. According to the CM, more than 55,000 people have joined the scheme.

"90 to 96 lakh MSME

units have also been given security guarantee. We have started an app in the name of CM Yuva. If any youth wants to do business, then under this we are helping up to 5 lakhs without interest. Today 55 thousand youth are connected with it,"

Highlighting the transformation the state has gone through, he said that prior to 2017, that is before the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government was formed, UP was known for mafia and goons, hitting out at the Opposition Samajwadi Party for leaving the state behind.

"Remember Uttar Pradesh before 2017, it was known for mafias and goons. It was the most dangerous state for entrepreneurs and women... The state never got recognition because of the family-oriented parties. For their own benefit, they left the state behind. People were not getting rooms in hotels even after paying money," the UP CM said.

Education foundation of developed society: Gujarat CM Patel

TDG NETWORK
GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel stated that education is the foundational pillar of a developed society and a progressive state. He emphasised that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always given special importance to schools, teachers, and education.

On the second day of the Kanya Kelavani Mahotsav and Shala Praveshotsav 2025, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of Ashadhi Beej, Chief Minister Patel visited the Primary School in Pundrasan village, Gandhinagar district. He welcomed 197 children into the school by gifting them educational kits. The Chief Minister also interacted affectionately with the young children, encouraging them to pursue learning with enthusiasm, said release.

CM highlighted that to



raise awareness about the importance and necessity of education and to build an educated future generation in Gujarat, Prime Minister Modi launched the state-wide Shala Praveshotsav initiative in 2003. As a result of this sustained effort, parents and communities today have come to deeply understand and value the role of education.

The Chief Minister stated that the Gujarat Government has launched several education-focused schemes to ensure no child is deprived of schooling due to

financial challenges. He urged parents to utilise these schemes and take responsibility for their children's education. He noted that government schools are now equipped with modern facilities, such as smart classrooms, and that improved teaching methods have led many students to shift from private to government schools. The Chief Minister also highlighted that communities are actively working to promote education, with the state government extending full support to such efforts.

'Worshippers of capitalism': AAP's Bharadwaj attacks BJP-RSS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party's Delhi state president Saurabh Bharadwaj on Friday accused the BJP and RSS of attempting to erode core constitutional values like socialism and secularism for the benefit of capitalist interests.

Terming BJP-RSS as "worshippers of capitalism," Bharadwaj said the ruling party along with the RSS have been selling and privatising everything and that is why they have a problem with the word socialism.

Bharadwaj's remarks came in response to RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale's recent comments demanding a move to reconsider the words "socialist" and "secular" in the Preamble of the Constitution.

Speaking to ANI, Saurabh Bharadwaj said, "Before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, many prominent leaders of the BJP claimed that the party will get 350 seats and they will change the con-



stitution. Due to that, the BJP got only 240 seats. Now, the RSS has started the same debate. There should be no problem with the words secularism and socialism."

"In the 11 years of the BJP government, all the country's resources have been handed over to capitalists... They are selling everything, privatising it. That is why they have a problem with the word socialism. Because they are worshippers of capitalism... This is a highly alarming indication for the country's impoverished population. Some capitalists get some capital, and

they are trying to run the whole country," Bharadwaj told ANI.

RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale had questioned the legitimacy of including the terms "socialist" and "secular" in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution on Thursday.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader and MP KC Venugopal also lashed out at the RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale's statement and claimed that the leader's remarks were an insult to the Constitution, a rejection of its values, and a direct attack on the Supreme Court.

Dattatreya Hosabale had earlier stated that the Emergency imposed in the country on June 25, 1975, was the "biggest blow to Indian democracy."

Hosabale was addressing a program on the 50th anniversary of the Emergency held at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, jointly organised by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (under the Ministry of Culture), Ambedkar International Centre.

Delhi LG approves police-hospital linking for medico-legal cases

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a major reform envisaged under the three new Criminal Justice Acts, Delhi LG, VK Saxena, has approved a significant proposal concerning the linking and re-distribution of police stations to hospitals across the National Capital Territory to handle Medico Legal Cases (MLCs) and conduct Post Mortem Examinations (PMEs).

According to a statement, this initiative is designed to ensure quicker, more efficient medical and forensic support to victims involved in cases such as rape, road accidents, and other emergencies requiring immediate medico-legal intervention. The approval follows an



extensive review and collaboration between Delhi Police, the Home Department, and the Health and Family Welfare Department of the GNCTD. The process began with Delhi Police submitting a consolidated list of police stations along with their corresponding designated hospitals, as well as alternative hospitals.

The Health and Family Welfare Department subse-

quently formulated a comprehensive proposal addressing the current needs and challenges in medico-legal case management, according to the statement.

A dedicated Committee was formed under the Health and Family Welfare Department to analyse and recommend an optimal linkage between police stations and hospitals, aiming to eliminate delays in providing urgent medical treatment and facilitating the medico-legal examination of victims.

The Committee's recommendations were then thoroughly examined by the Home Department in consultation with both Delhi Police and Health officials to ensure feasibility and effectiveness.

Following this, the draft notification outlining the re-distribution was vetted by the Law Department of GNCTD, which reviewed and suggested necessary amendments to align it with legal provisions.

This re-distribution is being implemented under Section 194(3) of the BNSS Act, 2023, and will serve to better align police stations with hospitals equipped to manage medico-legal cases and conduct post-mortem examinations. The aim is to ensure that victims of crimes and accidents receive immediate medical attention and that medico-legal procedures are conducted promptly and efficiently, minimising procedural delays that can hamper justice delivery.

Big reforms cleared in Assam Under Mission Basundhara 3.0

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

The Assam Cabinet under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma approved major land and council reforms under Mission Basundhara 3.0 on Friday.

According to Chief Minister's Public Relations Cell, Chief Minister Sarma after the cabinet meeting announced several decisions.

The State Cabinet approved the allotment of Government land in favour of 942 infrastructure projects of various State Government Departments in urban areas across 11 districts under Mission Basundhara 3.0.

The State Cabinet approved the allotment of



Government land to be followed by settlement in favour of 1,977 non-government educational, religious, and socio-cultural institutions across 12 districts under Mission Basundhara 3.0.

The state Cabinet approved the amendment of certain provisions of the Assam Panchayat (Constitution) Rules, 1995.

Additionally, it was proposed that the reservation

of the offices of President/Vice President of Zilla Parishad for SC, ST and women shall be done by way of lottery and rotation after excluding the Zilla Parishad in which the office of the President/Vice President has already been reserved for SC and ST by way of lottery and rotation.

The process of lottery shall be conducted in a public and open manner in the presence of representatives from political parties, administrative officials and all concerned stakeholders. This will bring equitable opportunity for all the Zilla Parishad Constituencies having Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes representation.

Pawar: India must clarify stand on West Asia tensions

TDG NETWORK
KOLHAPUR

Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar (NCP-SCP) president Sharad Pawar on Friday stated that India is losing its neutral stance in global matters, especially with Gulf countries, due to recent decisions taken by the central government.

He also criticised the way US President Donald Trump claimed credit for certain international developments without having proper authority, saying this has upset many countries, including those in Europe and the Gulf.

Speaking at the press conference, Sharad Pawar said,



"The plain and simple fact is that in the recent developments, certain decisions were made, and then US President Donald Trump came forward and made announcements about them even though he had no authority to do so. Despite that, he claimed credit for the developments, without disclosing with whom the discussions were held.

Uttarakhand CM meets Vice President Dhankhar in Nainital

TDG NETWORK
NAINITAL

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami met Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar in Haldwani, Nainital district on Friday. The Vice President was on a three-day visit to the state.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister also presented him with the state's local products.

Ahead of this, addressing the 156th Founders' Day celebration at Sherwood College in Nainital, Dhankhar urged students to set goals beyond personal success and dedicate themselves to the nation and society.

He said, "Don't have a narrow or self-centred goal, have a goal for society, for humanity, for the nation."



He called on the youth to adopt the spirit of "Nation always first" and uphold a sense of nationalism that is unconditional, saying it is the minimum expected of citizens of a country with 5,000 years of civilizational depth like Bharat.

"You will have to imbibe a spirit, Nation always first. We will have to subscribe to nationalism without qualification, unrestricted, because that is what Bharat, a unique

nation with 5,000 years of civilizational depth, deserves minimum," he added.

He said that accessibility and affordability of quality education are fundamentals for any democratic nation to achieve.

"Quality education, its accessibility and affordability are fundamentals for any democratic nation to achieve. Education is a gift of God. If you get a quality education, you are lucky.

HC grants temporary bail to 'new' mother to take care of baby in POCSO case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court granted 90 days' interim bail to a woman to enable her to take care of her barely two-month-old baby born in judicial custody. She has two minor children living with her in jail. She is an accused in a POCSO case lodged in 2019 at the Burari Police Station.

Justice Renu Bhatnagar granted interim bail to the ac-

cused Kushi after considering the facts that charges have been framed and the case is at the stage of prosecution evidence.

"The applicant is unable to properly take care of her new born child while being in judicial custody, the applicant is granted interim bail for a period of 90 days from the date of her release, on furnishing a personal bond in sum of Rs. 25,000 with one surety in the like amount," Justice Bhat-



nagar ordered on June 25.

The applicant was re-arrested on December 12, 2024. Earlier, she was granted regular bail by the trial court, but a non-bailable warrant was issued against her on September 24, 2024, due to her non-appearance before the court. Thereafter, she was declared a proclaimed offender. She was sent to judicial custody after her re-arrest. She gave birth to a child on May 12, 2025.

While granting interim

bail, the High Court also considered the medical report, which stated that the applicant, along with her two children, is currently lodged in Central Jail No. 6 of Tihar Jail complex. The medical status report states that at the time of her admission to jail, she was pregnant and delivered a child on 12.05.2025.

Advocate Indrapal Khokhar, counsel for the accused, submitted that the applicant has two minor children; one aged

around two years and the other is a newborn, while being in judicial custody. He further submitted that the applicant is unable to look after her minor children while being in judicial custody.

The trial will take considerable time, and therefore, during the pendency of the trial, the applicant be released on bail to take care of her minor sons or, in the alternative, the applicant be granted interim bail for 90 days, the counsel

prayed.

Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) and Advocate Bahuli Sharma, counsel for the prosecutrix, opposed the plea of the accused.

The APP contended that the charges have already been framed and the trial is at the stage of prosecution evidence. He further submitted that there is high apprehension that the applicant may again try to jump bail if released on interim bail.

INDIA REPORTS CURRENT ACCOUNT SURPLUS OF \$13.5 BN IN Q4 OF FY24-25

On annual basis the current account was in deficit at USD 23.3 billion (0.6 per cent of GDP) during 2024-25

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

India posted a current account surplus of USD 13.5 billion or 1.3 per cent of GDP in March quarter 2024-25 as compared with USD 4.6 billion in the year-ago period mainly on account of surge in services exports and higher remittances, according to RBI data released on Friday.

However, on annual basis, the current account was in deficit at USD 23.3 billion (0.6 per cent of GDP) during 2024-25, said the 'India's Balance of Payments during the Fourth Quarter (January-March) of 2024-25' released by Reserve Bank of India.

"India's current account balance recorded a surplus of USD 13.5 billion (1.3 per cent of GDP) in Q4:2024-25 as compared with USD 4.6 billion (0.5 per cent of GDP) in Q4:2023-24 and against a deficit of USD 11.3 billion (1.1 per cent of GDP) in Q3:2024-25," RBI said.

Balance of Payments is an



indicator of the country's external payment scenario.

Merchandise trade deficit at USD 59.5 billion in Q4:2024-25 was higher than USD 52 billion in Q4:2023-24. However, it moderated from USD 79.3 billion in Q3:2024-25.

"Net services receipts increased to USD 53.3 billion in Q4:2024-25 from USD 42.7 billion a year ago. Services exports have risen on a y-o-y basis in major categories such as business services and computer services," RBI said.

Personal transfer re-

ceipts, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, rose to USD 33.9 billion in Q4:2024-25 from USD 31.3 billion in Q4:2023-24.

It further said the net outgo on the primary income account, primarily reflecting payments of investment income, moderated to USD 11.9 billion in Q4:2024-25 from USD 14.8 billion in Q4:2023-24.

In the financial account, foreign direct investment (FDI) recorded a net inflow of USD 400 million in Q4:2024-25 as compared to

an inflow of USD 2.3 billion in the corresponding period of 2023-24.

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) recorded a net outflow of USD 5.9 billion in Q4:2024-25 as against a net inflow of USD 11.4 billion in Q4:2023-24.

There was an accretion of USD 8.8 billion to the foreign exchange reserves (on a BoP basis) in Q4:2024-25 as compared to an accretion of USD 30.8 billion in Q4:2023-24.

On Balance of Payments (BoP) during 2024-25, RBI said India's current account

deficit at USD 23.3 billion (0.6 per cent of GDP) during 2024-25 was lower than USD 26 billion (0.7 per cent of GDP) during 2023-24, primarily due to higher net invisibles receipts.

Net inflow under FDI at USD 1 billion during 2024-25 was lower than USD 10.2 billion during 2023-24.

During 2024-25, FPI recorded a net inflow of USD 3.6 billion, lower than USD 44.1 billion a year ago.

Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA said while the current account balance expectedly reported a seasonal surplus in Q4 FY2025, the size of the same overshoot expectations, amid a surprise dip in primary income outflows in the quarter.

Amid expectations of a widening in the merchandise trade deficit as well as a moderation in the services trade surplus in Q1 FY2026 vis-a-vis Q4 FY2025, "we expect the current account to revert to a deficit in the ongoing quarter", she said.

Investors' wealth surges by Rs 12.26 lakh crore in 4 days of market rally

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Equity investors became richer by Rs 12.26 lakh crore as stock markets surged for the fourth day in a row on Friday amid de-escalation in geopolitical tensions and softening crude oil prices in international markets.

On Friday, the BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 303.03 points or 0.36 per cent to reclaim the 84,000 level and settled at 84,058.90. During the day, the Sensex jumped 333.48 points or 0.39 per cent to 84,089.35.

In the past four days, the benchmark has jumped 2,162.11 points or 2.64 per cent.

Tracking optimism in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms soared by Rs 12,26,717.72 crore to Rs 4,60,09,217.58 crore (USD 5.38 trillion) in four trading days.

"Benchmark indices Nifty and Sensex closed on a firm footing in the green on Friday, capping off the week with robust gains. The rally was underpinned by de-escalation in geopolitical tensions post the Israel-Iran ceasefire and growing



GOLD PLUNGES RS 930 TO RS 97,670/10 G

NEW DELHI: Gold prices plunged Rs 930 to Rs 97,670 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday as traders rushed to selling amid easing off Middle East tensions and favourable reports about a trade deal between the US and China. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the

precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 98,600 per 10 grams on Thursday.

On Friday, gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by Rs 850 to Rs 97,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 98,050 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

optimism surrounding a prospective US-India trade pact, which acted as key macro tailwinds. On a weekly basis, both frontline indices logged gains of 2 per cent," according to Bajaj Broking market commentary.

On Friday, as many as 2,251 stocks advanced, while 1,760 declined and 154 remained unchanged on the

BSE.

From the Sensex pack, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, ICICI Bank, Reliance Industries, Bharat Electronics, Hindustan Unilever and Sun Pharma were among the major gainers.

In contrast, Trent, Eternal, Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank and Titan were among the laggards.

Adani Group now India's fastest growing brand

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Adani Group emerged as the fastest-growing Indian brand this year, with its brand value up by 82 per cent, according to the annual report on the most valuable and strongest Indian brands by Brand Finance.

The report attributed Gautam Adani-owned Group's growth to "aggressive and integrated infrastructure focus, surge in green energy ambitions, and increased brand equity across key stakeholders."

Adani Group, whose brand value rose by 82 per cent to USD 6.5 billion, is the fastest-growing Indian brand ranked in 2025, climbing from 16th place in 2024 to 13th in 2025, the Brand Finance annual report noted.

"This meteoric rise is underpinned by its strong financial performance across core sectors, notably infrastructure, energy, ports and logistics and renewables," the report read.

The group reported record



earnings, with 82 per cent coming from core infrastructure sectors like ports, logistics, power transmission, and green energy.

The annual Brand Finance report continues to reflect India's top brands driving global growth and influence.

The Brand Finance India 100 2025 ranking results remain stable, with leading brands maintaining strong market positions and experiencing notable uptick in brand value.

Coming to other Indian companies, Tata Group (brand value up 10 per cent to USD 31.6 billion) has once again secured its position as India's most valuable brand ranked by becoming the first Indian brand to cross the USD 30 billion threshold.

Middle class reeling under soaring health insurance premiums

ARZU SETH
NEW DELHI

The Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, demanding stricter regulations on insurance companies due to the increasing premium of health insurance. CTI chairman Brijesh Goyal stated that the premium hike, ranging from 15-20% in recent years, is proving to be a significant burden on the middle class and small traders.

CTI chairman Brijesh Goyal Said, The premium on health insurance is becoming very expensive. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) was formed by the Finance Ministry to monitor the policies and premiums of insurance companies, but its work has



not been satisfactory.

The premium of health insurance has increased by 15-20 percent in the last few years. Insurance coverage, which was 4.2 percent in 2021-22, came down to 4 percent in 2022-23. Life insurance coverage was also reduced from 3.2% to 3%.

Many people have discontinued their policies due to continuous premium hikes. The continuous premium hikes are severely impacting the middle class and small traders, straining their

household budgets and leaving many struggling to cope, Goyal added.

The Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) has demanded immediate action, requesting that a notice be issued to insurance companies and that they be held to stricter standards. CTI also advocates for establishing a clear guideline for health insurance premiums, as the current arbitrary increases by each company are causing significant distress to the common man.

JioBlackRock Broking receives SEBI approval

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

JioBlackRock Broking, a wholly owned subsidiary of Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers, has received regulatory approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to commence operations as a brokerage firm in India, a company statement said Friday.

JioBlackRock Broking aims to bring affordable, transparent, and technology-driven execution capabilities for Indian investors.

The broking entity's parent company, JioBlackRock Investment Advisers, is a



50:50 joint venture between Jio Financial Services Limited and BlackRock Inc.

Along with the recent regulatory approvals received by Jio BlackRock Asset Management and Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers to commence operations, the receipt of the broking license enables the Jio BlackRock joint venture to offer holistic investment solutions in India.

Marc Pilgrem, Manag-

ing Director and CEO of Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers, said: "We are delighted to receive SEBI's final approval for JioBlackRock Broking, which moves us closer to contributing to India's continued evolution from a nation of savers to a nation of investors. With JioBlackRock Investment Advisers, we will be able to offer personalised advice to retail investors. Now with bro-

kerage, we will also bring an execution platform for self-directed investors."

Hitesh Sethia, Managing Director and CEO, Jio Financial Services Limited, said: "These are exciting times for us. Even as JioBlackRock's Asset Management arm introduces innovative mutual funds to the market, and JioBlackRock Investment Advisers prepares to launch operations, the approval for the broking entity adds another dimension to our strategy of democratising investments in India, through easily accessible and digital-first solutions."

Skills report flags gaps in India's workforce

TDS NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Jayant Chaudhary, on Thursday unveiled a report titled "Skills for the Future: Transforming India's Workforce Landscape", developed by the Institute for Competitiveness (IFC), at an

event in New Delhi.

The independent report draws on publicly available data, particularly the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-24, and presents a detailed examination of India's skills ecosystem, highlighting critical mismatches between education, vocational training, and the evolving demands of industry.

In his address, Jayant

Chaudhary emphasized the need to view skilling not just as a supply-side effort but as part of a demand-driven, market-aligned and outcome-oriented framework. "We must deepen pathways between education, vocational training and industry. This includes recognising informal and experiential learning," he said.

He also proposed the development of a national

employability index to track how education and skilling are influencing employment prospects in a changing economic landscape.

Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, underlined the importance of approaching skilling as an academic discipline, calling for the creation of a robust body of literature backed by data and evidence.

Future Generali India Life Insurance Company Limited (FGILICL) and completed the discussions with Generali Group on Definitive Documents including Shareholders,



The monthly growth rates of urban and rural telephone subscriptions were 0.37 per cent and 0.14 per cent, respectively, during the month of May 2025.

The overall tele-density in India increased from 85.19 per cent at the end of April 2025 to 85.36 per cent at the end of May 2025.

The urban tele-density increased from 131.46 per cent at the end of April 2025 to 131.76 per cent at the end of May 2025, and rural telephone subscriptions also increased from 536.65 million to 537.39 million during the same period.

same period.

The share of urban and rural subscribers in the total number of telephone subscribers at the end of May 2025 was 55.48 per cent and 44.52 per cent, respectively.

In terms of Localised Service Area (LSA), eight circles had less tele-density than the all-India average tele-density at the end of May 2025. Delhi service area had the maximum tele-density of 274.29 per cent, and the Bihar service area had the minimum tele-density of 57.57 per cent at the end of May 2025.

Central Bank of India announces strategic ties with Generali Group

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Central Bank of India, one of the Country's oldest and most trusted public sector banks has successfully concluded the landmark acquisition of 24.91% equity stake in

Future Generali India Insurance Company (FGIICL) and 25.18% equity stake in

ventures in life and general insurance. This strategic partnership is aimed at enhancing insurance penetration across India, delivering innovative insurance products and ensuring deeper financial inclusion and enabling in achieving Governments mission of "Insurance for All" by 2047. Combining Central bank of India's vast customer base

Future Generali India Life Insurance Company Limited (FGILICL) and completed the discussions with Generali Group on Definitive Documents including Shareholders,

Future Generali India Life Insurance Company Limited (FGILICL) and completed the discussions with Generali Group on Definitive Documents including Shareholders, Trademark and Distribution Documents. This marks the culmination of a significant strategic initiative aimed at strengthening the Bank's presence in the insurance sector through its joint

and distribution network with Generali's global expertise in insurance solutions will provide customers with a robust portfolio of products tailored to Indian market needs.

Established in 1911, central bank of India is one of the oldest and most respected banks in the country with a network of over 4500 branches and 20000 plus touchpoints.

Indian stocks soar for fourth day over US trade deal hopes

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Indian stock indices stayed in the green for the fourth straight session, lending support from positive global cues, relative peace on the Israel-Iran conflict front, and a possible extension of the July 9 tariff deadline by the US administration.

The White House spokesperson hinted on Thursday that the reciprocal tariff deadline may be pushed further, but added that it was a decision President Donald Trump will have to take. President Trump, meanwhile, said a "great deal" was coming up with India, boosting investors' sentiment. The Indian negotiation team is currently in the US working on a bilateral trade deal.

India's strong domestic fundamentals, a responsive RBI, and good monsoon conditions are supporting the financial markets. US



markets are hitting all-time highs, and the US dollar is weakening; as a result, emerging markets like India are likely to benefit.

Sensex today closed at 84,058 points, up 303 points, while Nifty closed at 25,637 points, up 89 points. Among the sectoral indices, Nifty metal, pharma, PSU bank, oil and gas, and Nifty IT soared, while Nifty realty, consumer durables, and FMCG dipped, according to NSE data.

Indian stock markets outperformed global markets over the past few weeks, as volatility continued to reign in global markets over possible forthcoming US reciprocal tariffs.

TIME TO RECONSIDER? THE DEBATE OVER THE WORD ‘SECULAR’ IN INDIA’S PREAMBLE

OPINION

SIDDHARTHA DAVE



ROSS Sarkaryawah Dattatreya Hosabale has recently called for a national debate on the Emergency-era inclusion of the words “secular” and “socialist” in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. This statement has re-kindled a decades-old constitutional and ideological debate that cuts to the core of India’s national identity. At the heart of this renewed scrutiny lies the term ‘secular’, added to the Preamble through the contentious 42nd Amendment during the Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi between 1975 and 1977. Notably, these words were absent in the original Preamble drafted under the stewardship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and were never part of the vision articulated by the founding fathers during the Constituent Assembly debates.

The issue is not merely academic or semantic. The inclusion—or deletion—of this term influences how India is perceived, governed, and interpreted—as a civilizational state rooted in Dharma or a modern republic patterned after Western liberal democracies.

At a time when there is renewed interest in reclaiming the original spirit of the Constitution and aligning governance with India’s indigenous ethos, this debate

invites serious consideration. Has the term ‘secular’ fulfilled its intended purpose, or has it outlived its relevance—perhaps even distorted the spirit of the Constitution by becoming a tool for political convenience and selective application?

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEBATES: A TERM REPEATEDLY REJECTED

The drafting of the Constitution of India was a thorough and deliberative process. The Constituent Assembly spent nearly three years debating every aspect of India’s future constitutional structure. During these debates, the idea of incorporating the term ‘secular’ into the constitutional text was proposed on at least three distinct occasions. Each time, it was decisively rejected.

On 15 November 1948, K.T. Shah proposed an amendment to describe India explicitly as a “secular, federal, socialist” union. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar opposed this, asserting that the Constitution should allow future governments the flexibility to shape India’s economic and social systems without binding them to a specific ideological framework. Similar amendments proposed on 25 November and 3 December 1948 were also struck down. These rejections were not casual; they reflected a conscious decision by the Assembly to keep the Constitution ideologically neutral in its terminology, while embedding rights and values through enforceable provisions.

Ambedkar believed that India’s cultural and civilizational ethos already ensured religious pluralism and tolerance. Introduc-

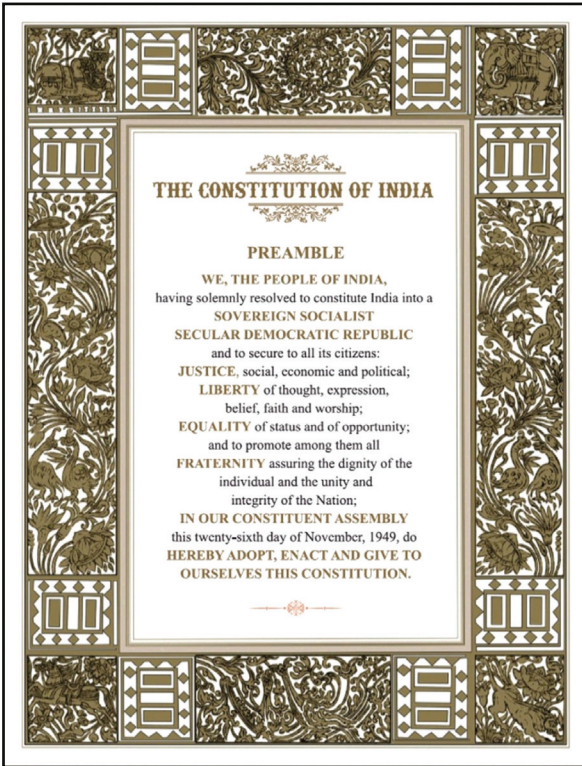
ing an abstract, Western-derived term like ‘secular’ could be superfluous, or worse, lead to misinterpretation. In a poignant statement, Loknath Mishra warned that the term could be used as a “slippery device to bypass the ancient culture of this land.”

THE 42ND AMENDMENT: EMERGENCY-ERA LEGISLATION AND ITS AFTERMATH

The word ‘secular’ was added to the Preamble not during India’s foundational debates, but at a time of great political turmoil. The 42nd Amendment, passed in 1976, was enacted when India was under a state of Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. During this period, democratic institutions were weakened, dissent was criminalized, and the press was censored. The amendment altered the Preamble to read: “India is a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic.”

Many critics argue that the inclusion of ‘secular’ and ‘socialist’ was a strategic move to consolidate political power and suppress opposition by appropriating the moral high ground. The fact that such a significant change was made without public consultation, parliamentary debate, or Constituent Assembly endorsement has been the core of the objection. The Preamble, which is considered the soul of the Constitution, was unilaterally altered, undermining its sanctity as a collective resolution of the people of India through their elected representatives in the Constituent Assembly.

It is worth noting that this was the only instance in India’s history when the Preamble was amended. It begs the question: if the Constitution already provided equal rights and freedoms for all religions through detailed provisions, what was the pressing need to insert a vague ideological term into its introductory declaration?



THE NATURE AND ROLE OF SECULARISM IN THE CONSTITUTION

Unlike in many Western democracies, the term ‘secular’ has not been clearly defined within the Indian Constitution. Outside of the Preamble, the word appears only once, in Article 25(2)(a), which allows the state to regulate “secular activities associated with religious practice.” This isolated usage does little to illuminate a comprehensive constitutional philosophy.

Nonetheless, the Indian Constitution does guarantee religious freedom, equality before law, and non-discrimination on the basis of religion. Articles 14 to 30, particularly Articles 25 (freedom of religion), 26 (freedom to manage religious affairs), 27 (freedom from taxes for religious purposes), and 28 (freedom from religious instruction in educational institutions), form a robust framework ensuring religious neutrality and inclusiveness.

The omission of the term ‘secular’ in the original Preamble was not due to oversight. Rather, the drafters believed that the essence of secularism—respect for all religions, non-establishment of any religion as state religion, and equal

treatment—was already enshrined in these enforceable rights. Adding the term later, under questionable circumstances, risks reducing the Constitution’s interpretative clarity.

CIVILIZATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE CULTURAL DISCONNECT

Secularism, as understood in its Western context, emerged from a unique historical struggle—namely, the conflict between the Church and the State. Martin Luther’s doctrine of “Two Kingdoms” and later Enlightenment philosophies in Europe gave birth to the idea of separation between religious and political authority. This is often referred to as “negative secularism,” where the state is expected to remain completely aloof from religious matters.

However, Bharat has always been home to a different tradition. The Indian civilizational ethos is one where religion and governance coexisted without rigid separation, but also without coercion. The idea of ‘Dharma’—not to be confused with religion—governed both rulers and subjects. Even under kings, religious plurality flourished. Thus, the Indian

model of spiritual pluralism precedes the Western idea of secularism by centuries.

Symbols of this civilizational continuity are everywhere. The original hand-drafted Constitution was richly illustrated with scenes from Indian epics and history. The page on Fundamental Rights bore an image of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana; the section on Directive Principles featured Lord Krishna delivering the Gita to Arjuna. The motto of the Supreme Court is “Yato Dharmastato Jayah”—where there is Dharma, there is victory. These are not accidental; they reflect an intentional rooting of modern democratic governance in India’s ancient moral traditions.

POLITICAL MISUSE AND SELECTIVE APPLICATION

Since the 42nd Amendment, secularism has often been invoked selectively, sometimes even cynically. The state’s treatment of religious communities has not always been neutral. One glaring example is the control of Hindu temples under various state governments, while religious institutions of other communities are allowed full autonomy. Similarly, the Right to Education Act mandates reservations in private schools, but exempts minority-run institutions from compliance. These inconsistencies create an imbalance that runs contrary to the idea of equal treatment.

The concept has also been used to justify policies perceived as “minority appeasement,” leading to social resentment and erosion of trust among communities. Rather than promoting harmony, secularism has in some cases been weaponized to marginalize majority voices, polarize electoral politics, and suppress traditional cultural practices. Critics argue that far from preventing communalism, the term has occasionally exacerbated it.

JUDICIAL ENDORSEMENTS AND THEIR LIMITS

The judiciary has upheld the 42nd Amendment in several cases. In the *Minerva Mills* case (1980), the Supreme Court described the inclusion of the word ‘secular’ as enhancing the Constitution’s philosophy. However, this judgment came just four years after the Emergency, and it is debatable whether the court had the space or hindsight to fully assess the long-term consequences of that controversial period.

In *Kesavananda Bharati* (1973), the Supreme Court laid down the Basic Structure Doctrine, holding that certain features of the Constitution—like democracy, republicanism, and judicial independence—could not be amended out of existence. Secularism was later interpreted as one such feature. However, this interpretation was philosophical rather than textual. The court saw secularism not as a specific word but as a value inherent in the Constitution’s ethos.

The Allahabad High Court, in *Hindu Front for Justice v. Union of India* (2023), dismissed a petition to remove the term from the Preamble, stating that secularism was embedded in the constitutional framework. Still, the question persists: Can a term added during an authoritarian phase truly reflect the democratic will of the people?

LEGISLATIVE PATHWAYS: RECLAIMING THE DEMOCRATIC MANDATE

Given that the judiciary has shown a tendency to uphold precedent, the more feasible route for deletion would be through a constitutional amendment passed by Parliament. Such an amendment would require a two-thirds majority in both Houses and ratification by at least half of the states. If passed, it would carry the weight of democratic legitimacy.

Yet even this path would

not be free of challenges. An amendment removing the word ‘secular’ would almost certainly be contested in the Supreme Court, where the Basic Structure Doctrine could be invoked to invalidate it. Therefore, unless the court is persuaded that the term’s removal does not undermine secular values themselves, but only reverts to the original spirit of the Constitution, the issue may find itself at a judicial dead end.

CONCLUSION: REVISITING OUR CONSTITUTIONAL COMPASS

The inclusion of the word ‘secular’ in the Preamble was an act borne not out of collective deliberation, but political expediency during a dark chapter of India’s democratic journey. While the principles of religious freedom, tolerance, and equality must be preserved and celebrated, the question remains: Should a term inserted during the Emergency continue to define the constitutional identity of India?

India’s secularism has never resembled the Western model. It is uniquely Indian—spiritual but not theocratic, pluralistic but not irreligious. Perhaps what India needs today is not the repetition of borrowed terminology but a return to the values inherent in its civilizational and constitutional foundations.

As Dr. Ambedkar wisely noted, “We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well.” To do that, we must ensure that every part of our Constitution—especially its identity-defining Preamble—reflects genuine consensus, not ideological imposition.

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Power of one bulb: Igniting a quiet environmental revolution

OPINION

DR KULDEEP SINGH AND
DR NEHA SETH



Today, grand infrastructure and billion-dollar investments in electric vehicles, hydrogen centres, and solar farms are often at the centre stage in the climate story across the globe, including India. Still, we run the danger in this scale-up competition of forgetting



one of our cheapest, most available, and immediately effective climate solutions: one 10-watt lightbulb. India has more than 250 million homes. If all these homes merely turned off just one LED light bulb for four hours daily, the savings would be over 3.6 ter-

watt-hours, almost 30% of Bhutan’s total electricity consumption for a year. But beyond wattage, the impact is revolutionary, 2.9 million tonnes CO₂ saved, equivalent to removing ~6,00,000 petrol vehicles from India’s roads. This can lead to a quiet and effective environmental revolution.

Lighting accounts for 20-30% of home electricity consumption. Homes comprise almost 24% of India’s overall electricity requirement. In other words, lighting practices, not solely lighting technology, are a climate policy necessity. Office corridors burn after-hours, skyscrapers glimmer all night, and motion detectors supplant awareness. Indeed, India’s UJALA initiative has been a success story. Over 360 million LEDs have been distributed since 2015, saving 47 billion kWh annually and eliminating 37 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions. However, whereas



technology has been deployed, behavioural inertia still exists. Smart technological solutions must go hand in hand with behavioural habits; technology alone cannot substitute for smart, consistent human behaviour.

Encouraging such behavioural shifts in electric-

ity usage can significantly reduce the need for additional investments in new power infrastructure by lowering peak demand. That’s a fiscal control that cannot be ignored for a country, particularly when all that needs to happen is a flip of a switch. One 10W LED lightbulb uti-

lised judiciously can save Rs 150 annually for every house, a small amount for each home, but an amount that totals Rs 3,750 crore for national savings when extrapolated across 250 million houses. This does not require subsidies, net metering, or mandating through policy. It requires

awareness and leadership through example, particularly from urban India, the population which consumes electricity at the highest per capita rate and has the lowest incentive for conservation.

On a global basis, behaviour change has been estimated to contribute as much as 20% of the reduction in emissions required to stay below 1.5°C warming in 2030, equivalent to 1.8 billion tonnes CO₂ in a year. This is, though, the most under-explored lever for change. It’s not a regressive act, but rather intelligent economics and good citizenship, to light only where we live. Like the “One Bulb, One Room” campaign, which could resonate throughout intelligent cities and satellite towns, individual small steps, monumental impact.

Let’s get the climate politics right. We praise electric SUVs and solar panels on roofs, but we don’t often commend the person who

switches off a light switch. Climate change consists not just of system change, but behavioural change. That has to start not just in policy circles but also around living room tables and board tables. The future chapter in India’s energy narrative can be as luminous as its switch from incandescent bulbs to LEDs; only if we combine that radiance with restraint, wisdom, and pride. The power of one bulb is symbolic of this grassroots revolution. It represents a choice to care, conserve, and live with intention. Let this be the new normal: light only where you are. In the struggle against carbon, the greatest watt is the one we will not use!

Dr Kuldeep Singh, Associate Professor, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune and Dr Neha Seth, Associate Professor, School of Management Studies, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.

RSS leaders have reignited the long-standing demand to drop the words “socialist” and “secular” from the Preamble of the Constitution, arguing they were inserted during the Emergency without full democratic consensus and do not reflect the original vision of India’s constitutional framers.

HOW 'SOCIALIST', 'SECULAR' WERE INSERTED IN CONSTITUTION



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, India entered the Emergency on June 25, 1975, citing internal turmoil. Government powers expanded—civil liberties were suspended, media was censored, political opponents jailed, and the judiciary weakened. Amid this backdrop, on December 18, 1976, Parliament passed the infamous 42nd Amendment—dubbed the “mini-Constitution”—which centrally reshaped India’s republic, curtailing individual freedoms, expanding the directive principles of state policy, and most notably amending the preamble. The change saw India’s definition shift from a “sovereign, democratic republic” to a “sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic”,

adding “socialist”, “secular”, and “integrity” to underline the state’s priorities. Critics branded it rushed and autocratic, passed under compromised democratic norms. When Emergency ended in 1977, the succeeding Janata government reversed much—through the 43rd and 44th Amendments and the Minerva Mills judgment—but notably left the altered preamble intact.

IDEOLOGICAL INTENT: --Socialist

Indira Gandhi’s politics were rooted in populist messaging—“Garibi Hatao”—and left-leaning rhetoric. She declared the Emergency alongside nationalizations and welfare expansions. Adding “socialist” served her agenda, embedding a pro-redistributive ethos into the state’s identity—while avoiding Soviet-style central

planning

But this was not the socialism envisaged by original framers. During constitution drafting, early attempts to include “socialist” (and “secular”) were consciously rejected—framers feared ideological rigidity would hamper democratic choice

Secular

Though Indian constitutional philosophy implied neutrality toward religions, the explicit term “secular” was not adopted in 1949, partly due to concerns over

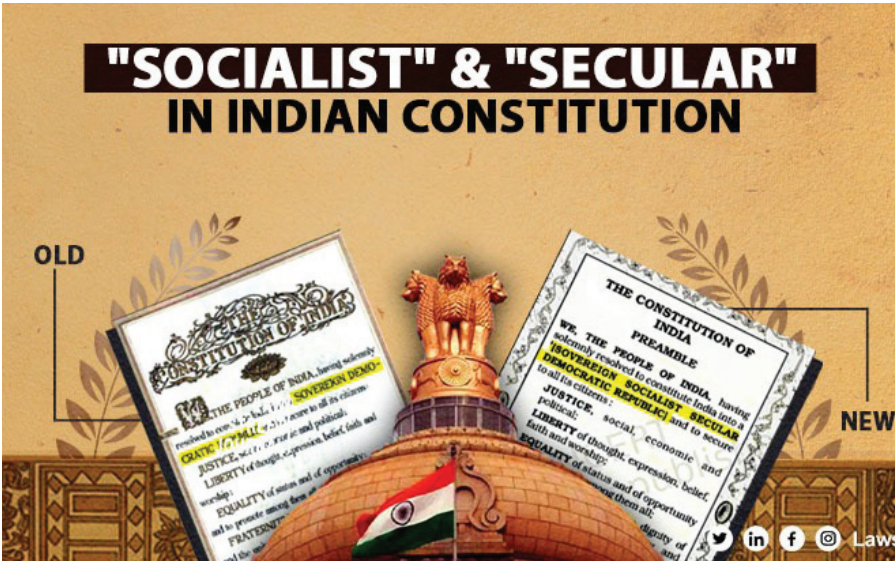
Western interpretations. The framers preferred implicit guarantees of religious freedom via Articles 25–28. By 1976, amid political consolidation and communal tensions, Indira Gandhi’s regime reckoned it prudent to make India’s secular identity overt, especially as a counterpoint to Hindu nationalist narratives.

RSS CRITIQUE: OVERREACH UNDER EMERGENCY

The RSS, including general



RSS



The RSS aims to symbolically excise colonial-era ideology, asserting constitutional purity and criticising Congress’s emergency overreach.

secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, contends that these amendments were forged under duress—during a period when democracy was paralyzed, freedoms curtailed, and institutions compromised

Hosabale emphasizes that Ambedkar had not included these terms in the original draft, and their retroactive insertion in the Preamble—amid civil rights suppression—is a form of constitutional fiction. He questions whether socialism is eternally necessary or if secularism, as defined today, was intended by architects

He also suggests the Congress should apologise for Emergency abuses that undermined republican norms

CONSTITUTIONAL COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

However, removing these terms faces formidable counters: India’s Supreme

Court has recognized that secularism and socialism are part of the “basic structure” of the Constitution, immune from amendment

In Dr Balram Singh v. Union of India (2024), the Court upheld their inclusion and affirmed Parliament’s power to amend even the Preamble under Article 368.

The Court clarified that India’s socialism is distinctive—a welfare state model preserving private enterprise. Secularism, too, is uniquely Indian: the State treats all religions impartially without being anti-faith

Prior precedents like Kesavananda Bharati enshrined the doctrine of basic structure—ensuring that certain constitutional ideals remain inalterable

THE PREAMBLE DEBATE

Though the exact phraseology was inserted under emergency, the underly-

ing values are not alien to present-day India. Even before the amendment, the Constitution embedded principles of welfare, equality, and religious neutrality in its Articles and Directive Principles.

Critics argue that the 1976 insertion merely made explicit what was already implicit. Proponents of removal say the timing and method—during authoritarian excess—tainted their legitimacy.

POLITICAL STAKES: RSS VS CONGRESS

The continued presence of “socialist” and “secular” has become flashpoints in current politics:

The RSS aims to symbolically excise colonial-era ideology, asserting constitutional purity and criticising Congress’s emergency overreach.

The Congress and other parties view any attempt to

bars deletion of core constitutional ideals confirmed by the Supreme Court—unless the Court redefines its own doctrine.

Politically, any repeal would invite fierce resistance. Civil society, opposition parties, and even moderates from within BJP-aligned circles may object—viewing the move as ideological regression.

A BALANCING ACT

Arguments for removal stress the emergency’s tainted context, ideological fixity, and the symbolic importance of historical truth.

Arguments against highlight constitutional recognition of these principles, their essential role in limiting State power, and their value in pluralism and social justice.

Though removing the words cannot erase the ideals embedded in India’s democratic ethos, it could erode faith in constitutional continuity and re-open wounds from a troubled era.

REFLECTION, NOT ERASURE

The RSS push invites India to reflect on its constitutional evolution—prompting questions about when, how, and by whom national identity is shaped.

But constitutional restraint, judicial affirmation of secularism and socialism as core pillars, and national interest in unity and pluralism caution against symbolic erasure.

Instead, the debate calls for deeper deliberation on how these ideals translate into action—through governance, justice, and inclusive growth—rather than their removal.

After all, real adherence to secularism and socialism is measured not in words, but in actions. Whether India chooses to revise its preamble or not, the lasting test will be whether its political and civic institutions uphold these ideals in letter and spirit.

TO SUM UP

Emergency-Era Amendments

- **Context:** During the Emergency (1975–77) under PM Indira Gandhi, civil liberties were suspended and institutions weakened.
- **42nd Amendment (1976):** Amended the Preamble to add “socialist” and “secular”, altering India’s identity to a “sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic”.
- **Criticism:** Passed under duress; critics call it an undemocratic move lacking consensus.

RSS’s Stand

- **Demand for Removal:** RSS leaders, including Dattatreya Hosabale, want these terms dropped, citing lack of original intent and Emergency-era overreach.
- **Ideological Argument:** Claims the framers, including Dr. Ambedkar, deliberately left out these terms to avoid ideological rigidity.
- **Call for Apology:** RSS seeks a formal apology from Congress for constitutional changes during the Emergency.
- **Origins of the Terms**
 - **“Socialist”:** Added to reflect Indira Gandhi’s populist welfare agenda (e.g., *Garibi Hatao*), not Soviet-style communism.
 - **“Secular”:** Introduced to explicitly declare religious neutrality, though already implied through Articles 25–28.

Legal and Constitutional Position

- **Basic Structure Doctrine:** Supreme Court (Kesavananda Bharati, Minerva Mills) protects socialism and secularism as essential constitutional features.
- **Recent Ruling (2024):** In *Dr. Balram Singh v. Union of India*, Court upheld the inclusion and Parliament’s power to amend the Preamble, within basic structure limits.
- **Interpretation:** Indian secularism = equal respect for all religions; Indian socialism = welfare-state model, not total state control.

Debate on Legitimacy

- **For Removal:** Critics argue the terms were inserted under authoritarian conditions, lacking moral legitimacy.
- **Against Removal:** Supporters say the amendment merely made explicit values already embedded in the Constitution.

Political Stakes

- **RSS/BJP:** Views removal as constitutional purification and rejection of Congress-era imposition.
- **Congress & Allies:** See it as an attack on India’s inclusive, secular democratic fabric.

Challenges Ahead

- **Legal Hurdle:** Requires constitutional amendment via Article 368, but basic structure limits scope.
- **Political Resistance:** Strong opposition likely from civil society, legal community, and opposition parties.

Reflection Over Revision

- The debate highlights a need to reflect on constitutional evolution.
- Real test lies not in words, but in upholding these ideals through inclusive, just governance.



Indira Gandhi

PREAMBLE
“WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:
JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY, of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY, of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;
IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.”

remove these terms as an attack on Ambedkar’s secular legacy and constitutional inclusivity.

For the RSS and BJP, this debate serves to reframe political identity, shifting emphasis from emergency-era excesses to constitutional renewal.

THE POSSIBILITY

Legally, removing them would require amending Article 368. But basic structure jurisprudence

BEYOND THE DIVIDE OF WORK AND LIFE



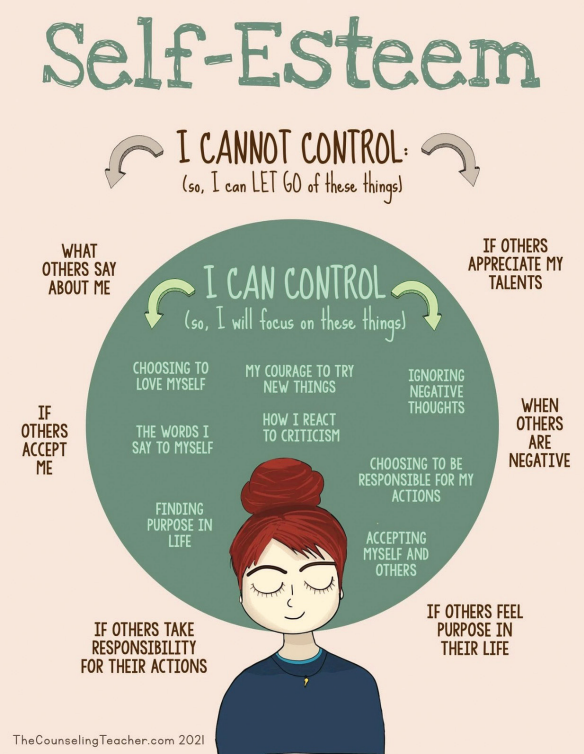
DR. PUSHP KUMAR JOSHI

Today, one gauges their success with respect to the job they have, making one place work at the center of their lives. The growing emphasis on climbing the career ladder and the societal expectations attached with respect to it has led to people to view it as the core of their identity. “You should study well and find a good job for yourself.” This happens to be a mantra that each person tends to hear from the time they are young. Imbibing this thought from the time they are young, it becomes deeply ingrained in their minds. It is seen as an ultimate measure that they see it as the pinnacle of success. Tying one's identity solely to their career has been extremely normalized in the society to an extent that one's visiting card- a small tangible object that briefs one's role and position gets transformed into a representation of their entire identity. Their role and company becomes a definition to them, thus overlooking other important factors such as their humanistic qualities. If work is a subset of life, then why do we talk about



work-life balance? Why does one need a job? The very reason it comes into necessity is to fulfil the basic needs for financial stability, security, and the means for a peaceful living. However, if these were the only purposes, people today wouldn't be living a life where they prioritise their work over every other facet of life including their own well-being. In modern society, the importance placed on one's job gets escalated to a level where one's sense of self-esteem and confidence gets based on their professional achievements. Their work life would dictate their emotions- where accomplishments and validations in this arena makes them happy and setbacks give birth to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. This can lead to the overshadowing of the importance of other crucial aspects of life such as family,

relationships, and health. The sacrifices made in the pursuit of career success are numerous and far-reaching. Quality time with loved ones, which is essential for emotional connection and personal fulfillment, often takes a backseat to work commitments. Over time, this imbalance leads to strained relationships, feelings of isolation, and a diminished sense of well-being. Physical health, too, often suffers as a result of prioritizing work above all else. In the rush to meet expectations, many individuals turn to unhealthy eating habits, irregular sleep patterns, and the constant pressure to perform takes a toll on rest. Exhaustion becomes a norm, and self-care is relegated to the bottom of the priority list. Over time, this chronic neglect of one's physical and mental health



can lead to burnout, stress-related illnesses, and a general sense of emptiness. When work dominates one's life in this way, it no longer exists as a means to support a fulfilling existence, it becomes the en-



The boundaries between work and personal life blur to the point where it's difficult to distinguish one from the other. Work is no longer just something you do; it becomes who you are.

tirety of the existence itself. The boundaries between work and personal life blur to the point where it's difficult to distinguish one from the other. Work is no longer just something you do; it becomes who you are. This narrow definition of self, tied exclusively to professional success, not only limits personal growth but also diminishes the richness of life outside of work. Work is just one facet of life. While it can provide fulfillment, purpose, and financial security, it does not define the entirety of who we one is. Yet, in a culture that prioritizes career achievement and external

validation, it's easy for individuals to lose sight of this broader perspective. Today, consumed in the rate race, many people are grappling with multiple problems with regard to their mental health such as depression and anxiety. One is subjected to worries and internal conflicts. While a physical injury is immediately recognized and treated, an internal or emotional struggle is often invalidated due to the stigma attached to it. The fear of failure is so ingrained in one that they forget the fact that failure is not fatal. It is high time a shift in this perspective takes place. In a world that celebrates

career success above all else, it becomes vital to step back and recognize that true fulfillment lies not in the professional accolades we collect, but investing efforts and finding happiness in the multiple facets of life such as our relationships, work, and passions. Only by reclaiming time for ourselves, by seeing work as just one part of life rather than its entirety, can we find true peace and happiness. *The writer of the article is Adjunct Professor, the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Raipur, Retd. CMD, HPCL and Dana Najeeb Independent Scholar, IIM Raipur*

SAGARMAL GOPA: A FORGOTTEN HERO OF INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE

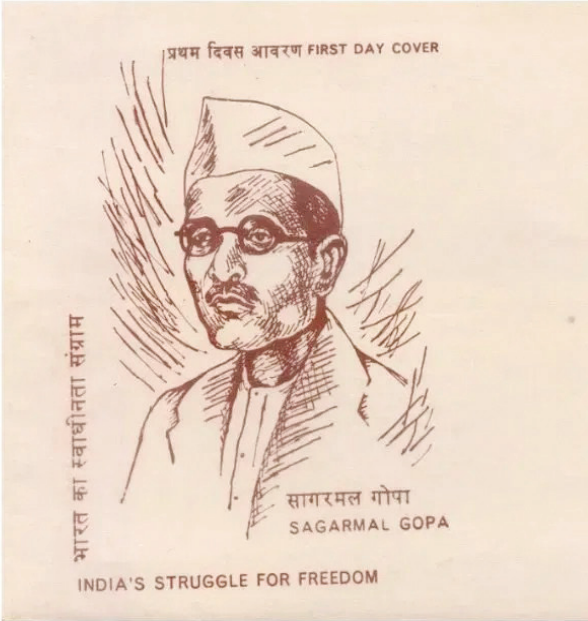
TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Sagarmal Gopa, a courageous freedom fighter, author, and human rights activist, remains one of the lesser-known martyrs of India's independence movement. Born in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, he defied the privileges of his birth and chose the perilous path of truth, justice, and rebellion against feudal tyranny. His legacy, marked by defiance, intellect, and ultimate sacrifice, demands wider recognition. Gopa was born into a family closely associated with the royal family of Jaisalmer. Living under their patronage, the Gopa family enjoyed the privileges and comforts offered by the rulers. A similar comfortable life awaited Sagarmal. However, he made a conscious choice to reject these comforts, turning instead to a life of resistance against injustice. This decision, especially given his background, exemplifies extraordinary moral courage. From an early age, Gopa was devoted to education. At just 15, he established a library to cultivate a reading culture among his peers. His sharp intellect and sense of justice drew him into the freedom movement early. At the age of 20, he actively participated in the national Non-Cooperation Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. His studies and activism opened his eyes to the arbitrary rule and oppressive nature of princely states like Jaisalmer, which were often more autocratic than the British colonial

government. The ruling elite suppressed dissent ruthlessly and allowed no space for civil liberties. Gopa responded to this with powerful writing, daring speeches, and organized resistance. His courage as a writer was especially remarkable. Sagarmal Gopa wrote fearlessly against the injustices of the Jaisalmer state, using both prose and poetry to express dissent. He authored a bold and provocative book titled Jaisalmer Rajya Ka Goonda Raj (“How Goons Rule in the Kingdom of Jaisalmer”), in which he denounced the brutalities of the royal family. Such an audacious critique was almost unthinkable in those days, especially for someone of noble descent. In addition, he penned Azadi Ke Deewane, a tribute to the spirit of fellow freedom fighters. Through these works, he not only documented historical events but also galvanized support against tyranny. His speeches, too, were marked by passion and clarity, making him a powerful orator. Predictably, Gopa's activism invited severe reprisals. His father lost his job, and the family was expelled from Jaisalmer. They relocated to Nagpur, where Sagarmal continued his activities. He built connections with activists across India and championed the cause of oppressed people in other princely states. His increasing influence led to him being banned not just in Jaisalmer, but also in Hyderabad. Despite being forced into exile, Gopa never gave up his attachment to Jaisalmer. At a time when

Predictably, Gopa's activism invited severe reprisals. His father lost his job, and the family was expelled from Jaisalmer. They relocated to Nagpur, where Sagarmal continued his activities.

Prajamandal movements were taking shape to create democratic spaces in princely states, Gopa sought to establish such a movement in his home state. It is believed that he received assurances of safe passage if he returned to Jaisalmer. However, these assurances were deceptive. Upon his return, Gopa was arrested and imprisoned. For nearly six years, he endured incarceration marked by psychological and physical torture. The authorities repeatedly tried to extract a false confession and a written apology, but he remained resolute. His refusal to bow to tyranny became an enduring symbol of resistance. As the freedom movement gained momentum nationwide, and Prajamandal efforts intensified locally, Gopa's popularity and ideological influence became a matter



of grave concern for the Jaisalmer state. Fearing his growing legacy, the authorities escalated the brutality. He was subjected to more intense torture, culminating in one of the most horrific acts—blistering hot oil was poured over his body. He succumbed to his injuries on April 4, 1946, at the age of 45. The administration attempted to cover up the incident, calling it a suicide. However, the official narrative was widely disbelieved. Gopa's unwavering commitment and the circumstances of his death left no doubt that he was tortured to death because he dared to speak truth to power. Sagarmal Gopa's story shares striking similarities with that of Sri Dev Suman, another young intellectual and freedom fighter who died in prison under similar circumstances while resisting the unjust rule of the Tehri kingdom in the Himalayan region. Both were brilliant writers and fearless activists, embodying the intellectual

spirit of India's freedom movement. However, while Suman received significant posthumous recognition in Uttarakhand, Gopa remains relatively unknown, even within Rajasthan. There have been some gestures of honor in his name. A postage stamp was issued to commemorate him, and a stretch of the Indira Gandhi Canal was named after him. Yet, such acknowledgments are insufficient in conveying the depth of his contributions and the inspiration his life offers. More efforts must be made to include Sagarmal Gopa's legacy in educational curricula and public discourse. His writings, courage, and ultimate sacrifice deserve a central place in the narrative of India's freedom struggle. In an age when civil liberties and human rights remain topics of critical importance, Gopa's life serves as a timeless reminder of the price some pay for speaking out. His legacy continues through the books he wrote, the causes he championed, and the example he set. He was not just a revolutionary but also a visionary who believed in a just and enlightened society. To remember him is to remember the importance of integrity, courage, and sacrifice in public life. Sagarmal Gopa's life and martyrdom must not fade into the footnotes of history. He is not just a regional hero of Jaisalmer but a national icon of resistance and righteousness. Let future generations know his name, read his works, and draw strength from his example.

WHY INDIA SHOULD BE WARY OF STRATEGIC DRIFT IN BANGLADESH’S POWER CORRIDORS?

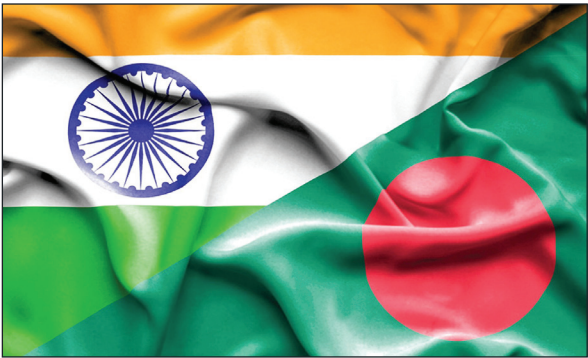
Bangladesh’s growing ties with China and Pakistan, political crackdowns, and strategic reorientation away from India signal a potential shift in South Asia’s balance — prompting New Delhi to tread carefully and stay alert.

TDG NETWORK

The trilateral dialogue between China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh in Kunming, Yunnan, emerged as a symbolic inflection point—signalling subtle shifts in the region’s strategic alignments. The meeting, which was conducted last week and brought together Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, Bangladesh’s Acting Foreign Secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique, and Pakistan’s Additional Foreign Secretary Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, highlighted Beijing’s ambitions to recalibrate South Asia’s geopolitical architecture and hinted at its growing efforts to draw Dhaka closer into its expanding sphere of influence.

Interestingly, Bangladesh’s response was marked by restraint. It notably withheld full endorsement of the proposed Joint Working Group (JWG), which was intended to operationalise a broader trilateral agenda. Citing the need for further high-level consultations, Dhaka expressed reservations about the wide-ranging scope of the initiative—reflecting a measured caution rather than outright opposition.

Amid the backdrop of increasingly strained ties between India and Bangladesh over the past year—exacerbated by the political transition in Dhaka—there has been mounting media speculation that the trilateral meeting was a calculated move to diplomatically sideline India. On June 26, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md



TDG EXPLAINER

Touhid Hossain clarified Bangladesh’s position, categorically ruling out the formation of any new alliance with China and Pakistan. Emphasizing the informal and non-political nature of the engagement, he stated, “We are not forming any alliance. It was a meeting at the official level, not at the political level... There was no element of formation of any alliance.” He also underscored that the meeting was not intended to target any neighbouring country, implicitly allaying concerns in New Delhi.

Dhaka’s restraint reflects a delicate balancing act—one that seeks to explore emerging partnerships while avoiding a premature rupture with New Delhi, its long-standing strategic ally. For India, nevertheless, the broader signals are increasingly disquieting. This trilateral engagement occurs at a time when Dhaka’s strategic divergence from New Delhi is becoming increasingly apparent. Despite resisting formal institutionalisation through the

JWG, Bangladesh, China, and Pakistan collectively agreed to deepen cooperation across a sweeping array of sectors, from trade and investment to the digital economy, maritime affairs, education, and public health.

Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus’ renewed advocacy for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) adds a revealing dimension to Bangladesh’s ongoing strategic recalibration. With India having long withdrawn from SAARC over Pakistan’s continued support for cross-border terrorism, and has shifted its focus to the more pragmatic and cooperative BIMSTEC, Dhaka’s push to resuscitate the defunct regional bloc raises deeper questions.

At a time when BIMSTEC is gaining institutional traction, Yunus’ emphasis on SAARC points to a deliberate reorientation of foreign policy—one that seeks to court stakeholders less aligned with New Delhi, signalling a subtle



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting with the Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Professor Muhammad Yunus. File Photo

yet significant divergence from the strategic path charted by its predecessors.

From recalibrated foreign policy overtures, evolving defence priorities, and the interim government’s controversial appointments to its widening crackdown on dissent, the patterns point to a Bangladesh amid strategic assertion.

A striking development in this trajectory is the potential appointment of Lt Gen (retd) Abu Tayub Md Zahirul Alam as Bangladesh’s Deputy National Security Adviser, a move widely seen as emblematic of the Yunus-led interim government’s evolving ideological tilt. Zahirul Alam, a polarizing figure with well-documented links to Pakistan’s ISI and a record of promoting anti-India sentiment, represents more than just a personnel choice; he embodies a broader strategic departure from Bangladesh’s traditionally secular, India-aligned orientation.

During his tenure as Commandant of the National

Defence College, Zahirul Alam courted controversy by reportedly granting access to Pakistani military officers, a decision that raised concerns about his proximity to Islamabad’s strategic establishment. His nomination also casts into sharp relief the growing ideological chasm between Zahirul Alam and Bangladesh Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman who has championed timely elections, civilian oversight, and the apolitical character of the armed forces. Their contrasting visions reflect a deeper struggle over the country’s strategic future and suggest a conscious shift away from the pluralist, India-friendly legacy of the Awami League (AL) era.

Compounding Bangladesh’s evolving strategic recalibration is a deepening internal crackdown that has further destabilized the domestic political landscape. The Yunus-led government’s ban on all activities of the AL, the country’s oldest and most historically

significant political party under the Anti-Terrorism Act has drawn sharp criticism. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the ban as a violation of fundamental freedoms.

The recent arrest of Sabina Akter Tuhin, a former AL Member of Parliament, alongside the detention of independent MP Mohammad Faisal Biplob, tied to the political unrest of the previous year, suggest a systematic purge of dissenting voices under the interim regime.

Against the backdrop of an increasingly volatile domestic landscape, defined by hardline appointments, a crackdown on political dissent, and the deferral of elections Dhaka’s current reticence to endorse a new alliance among Bangladesh, China, and Pakistan projects diplomatic caution. Yet beneath this veneer of restraint, an unmistakable recalibration of Bangladesh’s geopolitical bearings now confronts us with growing clarity.

IN A NUTSHELL

Trilateral Meeting Signals Shift
China, Pakistan, Bangladesh met in Kunming recently.
Meeting shows China’s push to expand influence in South Asia.
Bangladesh cautious, withheld full approval of Joint Working Group (JWG).
Dhaka calls for more consultations before finalizing plans.
Bangladesh Denies New Alliance
Officials say no formal alliance with China and Pakistan formed.
Meeting described as informal and non-political.
Despite this, Bangladesh agrees to deeper cooperation with China, Pakistan.
Cooperation areas: trade, digital economy, maritime, education, health.
Regional Realignment: SAARC vs BIMSTEC
Bangladesh pushing to revive SAARC regional bloc.
India prefers BIMSTEC due to Pakistan tensions.
Bangladesh’s move suggests distancing from India’s preferred regional focus.
Strategic and Political Shifts
Possible appointment of Lt Gen Abu Tayub Md Zahirul Alam as Deputy NSA.
Alam linked to Pakistan’s ISI, known for anti-India views.
This appointment marks a shift from Bangladesh’s India-friendly stance.
Contrasts with Army Chief’s support for civilian oversight and elections.
Domestic Political Crackdown
Interim government banned Awami League under Anti-Terrorism Act.
Arrests of former MPs and opposition figures ongoing.
Political suppression and delayed elections heighten instability.
Implications for India
Bangladesh balancing new ties while avoiding full break with India.
Yet, strategic divergence from India is growing.
India must monitor Bangladesh’s changing alliances closely.
Shift may weaken India’s regional influence and security cooperation.

Does Starmer’s hard power strategy risk losing Britain’s global edge?

TDG NETWORK

When Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte lavished praise on Donald Trump, critics called it “toadying,” “slavish,” and “cringe-worthy.” Yet words carry little cost. It’s far more significant—and costly—when leaders like Keir Starmer shift from diplomacy to defence, pouring billions into military hardware under American influence.

Starmer’s recent commitment of £1.3 billion for a mere dozen U.S.-supplied aircraft symbolizes this pivot from soft to hard power. Worse, he bound their use to Washington’s approval—effectively enrolling the UK into the U.S. Air Force. It echoes the same strategic pivot once prompted by Tony Blair’s infamous war in Iraq and David Cameron’s unexpected approval of aircraft carriers he planned to scrap. Now, Britain’s new strategic review warns of domestic attack threats, justifying this costly military buildup and even echoing Rutte’s warning that Britons should “learn to speak Russian.”

Yet no nation, Russia included, has ever threatened invasion. Alarmism has incubated a defence industry that thrives on manufactured threats. The investment in weaponry—while ensuring homeland defence—is disproportionate. Britain needs



Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte

cybersecurity to protect critical infrastructure, but pouring public funds into hardware builds illusions of enemy lines drawn across Norfolk.

The collapse of the Soviet Union should have ushered in an era of soft power triumph—investing in cultural exchanges and diplomacy to integrate Russia. In the 1990s, many Western envoys witnessed a bipartisan Moscow enthusiasm: officials, intellectuals, and families embraced engagement. Yet NATO’s eastward expansion and rhetorical belligerence alienated Moscow. With every claim that “we can’t be too safe,” barriers went up. Meanwhile, Russia consolidated, strengthened by resentment.

Joseph Nye, the father of soft power, emphasized that cooperation always outperforms coercion, and that democratic values, human rights, and opportunity are “deeply seductive.” Britain, with its language, universi-

ties, and media reach, was uniquely placed to wield such influence. A decade ago, the Institute for Government ranked the UK number one in global soft power; more recent indexes place it among the top three, a testament to its international appeal.

This struggle underscores that geopolitical power today is won through influence, not arms. Yet UK policy appears to be regressing. Starmer’s plans include the most severe overseas aid cuts in history, slashing budget from 0.5 % to 0.3 % of gross national income—and crippling the BBC World Service, which once reached 320 million listeners in 40 languages. The service has lost 500 jobs since 2022. I recall Chinese students in Harbin huddled around a shortwave radio, practising their English via the BBC—an act of cultural diplomacy far more effective than any missile.

British universities have become global magnets: nearly 390,000 non-EU

students enrolled last year, though numbers are already down 19 % from 2023 and falling. If figures continue to drop, this will weaken both soft power and the economy. Britain benefits more from foreign students and cultural exchange than it does from naval power.

Soft power thrives on connections—cultural, academic, financial, and diplomatic. That positive influence fosters internal dissent and reform within authoritarian regimes. By contrast, isolation breeds repression; Russia’s intellectual elite, once a check on Putin, have retreated into silence or driven into exile, leaving “sabre-rattling” hardliners unopposed.

Starmer’s growing fixation on defence over diplomacy is a dangerous departure. Soft power remains Britain’s strongest strategic asset. It glues nations together without drawing battle lines along its borders. Critics should ask: is this hard-power turn worth the cost—financially, morally, and geopolitically? Britain must decide whether it wants to lead with influence or drill its defences to global paranoia. If it chooses the latter, it risks morphing from a beacon of diplomacy into just another military arm of U.S. foreign policy—expensive, insecure, and severed from the rich network of global goodwill it once commanded.

Can \$30 billion and a nuclear deal reset US–Iran relations?

TDG NETWORK

In a dramatic reversal of past policy and a surprising diplomatic move, the United States under President Donald Trump has reportedly extended a sweeping economic and diplomatic package to Iran, offering up to \$30 billion in civilian nuclear investment, partial relief from long-standing economic sanctions, and access to billions in frozen overseas assets—all in a renewed attempt to revive nuclear negotiations and de-escalate tensions following a devastating military conflict with Israel. This overture, coming on the heels of a fragile ceasefire that ended nearly two weeks of aerial warfare, represents a profound shift from Washington’s previous strategy of “maximum pressure,” which relied almost exclusively on economic sanctions and military threats to deter Iran from continuing its uranium enrichment program. Instead, Trump’s administration now appears to be promoting what officials have termed a “carrots-based deterrence strategy,” centered on providing incentives for Iran to accept strict limits on its nuclear ambitions.

THE DETAILS OF THE OFFER: BILLIONS, BUT NO ENRICHMENT

At the heart of the U.S. proposal is the establishment of a fully civilian nuclear pro-



Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and United States President Donald Trump. File Photo

gram in Iran—but one that would operate entirely without uranium enrichment capability, a long-standing point of contention. The financial package, valued between \$20 billion and \$30 billion, would be financed primarily by Gulf allies such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, minimizing the financial burden on Washington while securing greater regional buy-in. In exchange, Iran would be required to dismantle enrichment infrastructure at key nuclear sites, allow for unrestricted inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and commit to permanently abandoning any pathway to nuclear weapons. Additionally, the United States has proposed easing targeted sanctions and unfreezing billions in Iranian assets held in foreign banks, signaling a willingness to relieve economic pressure if Tehran complies with the terms.

However, American officials have made clear that one condition is non-negotiable: there will be no enrichment allowed inside Iran, not even at low levels or for research purposes.

IRAN’S REACTION: CAUTION, DEFIANCE, AND CALCULATIONS

While Iran has yet to officially reject or accept the U.S. proposal, the early signs suggest that Tehran remains deeply skeptical of Washington’s intentions, particularly given the recent airstrikes on its nuclear facilities and the killing of several senior scientists and military figures. Iranian leaders have questioned the credibility of the U.S. offer, accusing the Trump administration of using economic diplomacy to cover up acts of aggression. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a defiant televised speech, dismissed claims that Iran’s nuclear infrastructure had been de-

stroyed and asserted that the country had “slapped America’s face” during the conflict.

THE BIGGER PICTURE: TIME-SENSITIVE STAKES FOR REGIONAL PEACE

The success of this offer may depend on how much Iran trusts not just the current U.S. administration, but also the broader Western commitment to a fair, verifiable, and sustained agreement. Trump’s team insists that the offer is time-bound, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio reportedly drafting a preliminary agreement for Iran to review—though it remains unclear whether this framework has any legal weight without broader international support or United Nations endorsement. Critics warn that if Iran stalls or perceives the offer as a trap, the situation could quickly deteriorate again, possibly faster and more violently than before. On the other hand, if Iran chooses to accept the deal, the path to economic recovery, diplomatic normalization, and long-term regional stability could finally become achievable. The next few weeks may well determine whether this \$30 billion gamble leads to renewed peace or yet another round of confrontation in a region long plagued by mistrust, militarization, and missed opportunities.

RAJNATH MEETS CHINESE DEFENCE MIN, SAYS ‘INCUMBENT TO AVOID NEW COMPLEXITIES’


He urged peace at LAC, rebuilding trust, reviving talks, & avoiding new bilateral tensions

TDG NETWORK
BEIJING

In a significant diplomatic engagement, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held bilateral talks with his Chinese counterpart Admiral Dong Jun on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers’ Meeting held in Qingdao, China, on Friday. The meeting comes at a time when both countries are seeking to recalibrate their ties, strained since the 2020 military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. Sharing details of the meeting on social media platform X, Singh described the interaction as “constructive and forward-looking” and said that both sides engaged in meaningful discussions on bilateral issues. “Held talks with Admiral Dong Jun, the Defence Minister of China, on the side-

BORDER DIPLOMACY

- **TCall for Stability:** Singh emphasized the need to maintain peace along the LAC and avoid adding “new complexities” to bilateral ties.
- **Trust-Building:** He urged concrete steps to bridge the trust deficit post-2020 Galwan clash.
- **Border Resolution:** Singh advocated reviving border mechanisms like the Working Mechanism and Special Representatives’ talks.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a meeting with Chinese Defence Minister Admiral Dong Jun on the sidelines of the SCO Defence Ministers Meeting, in Qingdao China. Source: X

lines of SCO Defence Ministers’ Meeting in Qingdao. We had a constructive and forward-looking exchange of views on issues pertaining to bilateral relations,” Singh posted. The Indian defence minis-

ter emphasized the need for both countries to maintain the recent positive momentum in bilateral engagement and to avoid further complicating the relationship. “It is incumbent on both sides to maintain this positive mo-

mentum and avoid adding new complexities in the bilateral relationship,” he said.

A key topic during the discussions was the necessity of maintaining peace and tranquillity along the

US to hold QUAD Foreign Ministers meeting on July 1: State Department

TDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON

Secretary of State Marco Rubio will host the Foreign Ministers from the QUAD countries on July 1 in Washington DC for the QUAD Foreign Ministers Meeting, the Principal Deputy Spokesperson for US Department of State Tommy Pigott announced on Thursday (US local time). Making the remarks during a press briefing, Pigott said, “Next week, Secretary Rubio will host foreign Ministers from Australia, India and Japan for the 2025 Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting on July 1 in Washington, DC. The



Secretary of State Marco Rubio

secretary’s first diplomatic engagement was with the Quad, and next week’s summit builds on that momentum to advance a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific. This is what American leadership looks like: strength, peace

and prosperity”. Dhruva Jaishankar at ORF Washington DC, spoke to ANI about the expectations and impressions on the American priorities for the QUAD Summit. “US relations with its Quad partners have been complicated of late, given differences with Japan over defense spending, Australia over AUKUS, and India over Pakistan. For these reasons, even maintaining the Quad agenda going forward is difficult, despite the US concentrating the groups’s focus on security, prosperity, tech, and homeland security,” he said.

Khamenei warns of future strikes, says Trump exaggerated US attack

TDG NETWORK
TEHRAN

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei claimed that US President Donald Trump had “exaggerated” the impact of recent strikes on Iranian nuclear sites, while warning of further retaliation, The Times of Israel reported. In a televised address on Thursday, Khamenei made his first appearance in more than a week after reportedly going into hiding amid an Israeli air campaign that killed many of his top generals.

Indo-China border. In a statement, the Ministry of Defence said the two ministers had an “in-depth discussion on the need to maintain peace and tranquillity along the Indo-China border,” highlighting the strategic importance of avoiding further conflict in the sensitive region.

Rajnath Singh also brought up the issue of restoring normalcy along the LAC, and called for bridging the trust deficit that has emerged since the Galwan Valley clash in 2020. “He also called for bridging the trust deficit created after the 2020 border stand-off, by taking action on the ground,” the ministry noted.

A notable development highlighted during the meeting was the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, which had been suspended for nearly six years.

IDF says strikes crippled Iran’s nuclear plans, missile arsenal

ARVIND PALAWAT
ISRAEL

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Spokesperson Brigadier General Effie Defrin on Friday outlined the extent of damage inflicted on Iran’s nuclear and missile programs during recent military operations, stating that Israel had been “left with no choice” but to carry out the strikes, The Jerusalem Post reported. Defrin said that Israel had previously attempted to prevent Iran’s nuclear and missile development “behind the scenes.”

US sounds alarm on China’s missile arsenal and ‘Kill Web’ threat

TDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON DC

Leaders in the US Air Force have expressed worries regarding the missile capabilities of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and its development of a “kill web,” noting that the forthcoming budget request from the US Department of Defense emphasizes enhancing defenses in the Indo-Pacific due to the escalating threat from China, as reported by the Taipei Times.

Experts in the US believe that a full-scale invasion by China is both risky and improbable, suggesting that Beijing is more likely to adopt coercive measures such as political warfare or blockades to achieve its objectives. High-ranking officers from the Air Force and the US Space Force, including US Secretary of the Air Force Troy Meink and Chief of Space Operations General Chance Saltzman, participated in a Senate subcommittee hearing to discuss the defence budget for the upcoming year. Both Meink and Saltzman



remarked that the PLA is making progress in its ballistic missile capabilities. They noted that China possesses over 900 short-range missiles capable of targeting Taiwan, along with 400 land-based missiles that can reach the first island chain. In addition, they highlighted China’s arsenal of 1,300 medium-range ballistic missiles that can strike the second island chain, 500 intermediate-range ballistic missiles that can reach parts of Alaska and Australia, and more than 400 intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear payloads globally, according to the Taipei Times report.

Saltzman expressed his greatest concern regarding China’s “kill web,” which allows the PLA to monitor US joint forces and operations from significant distances. He mentioned last March that China had already deployed over 470 intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance satellites, which contribute information to a sophisticated sensor-to-shooter kill web. This type of “kill web,” which connects sensors directly to strike units, speeds up attack execution through data sharing and automation, facilitating strikes to be carried out within seconds.

Israeli military strikes Hezbollah base in Lebanon

TDG NETWORK
TEL AVIV

The IDF (Israel Defence Forces), on Friday morning, attacked, in an airstrike, a site used to manage the Hezbollah terrorist organisation’s fire and defence system in the Beaufort Ridge area of southern Lebanon. This site is part of an underground project that was taken out of use following IDF attacks on the site. In recent days, the IDF identified attempts to restore the site by the terrorist organisation Hezbollah, and therefore, the terrorist infrastructure in the area was attacked.

‘Iran can never develop or acquire a nuclear weapon’: US secretary of state

TDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke to Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on the developments taking place in the Middle East, the Spokesperson of the US Department of State said on Thursday (US local time). According to the State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce, Rubio emphasised in his call to the Pakistani Prime Minister that “Iran can never devel-

op or acquire a nuclear weapon”. Bruce said, “Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke today with Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif regarding events in the Middle East. Secretary Rubio emphasised Iran can never develop or acquire a nuclear weapon. The two leaders acknowledged the importance of working together to promote a durable peace between Israel and Iran and maintaining regional stability.” Operation Midnight Hammer

by the US targeted three key nuclear sites in Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan in Iran. After the strikes on nuclear facilities in Iran, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dan Caine, said Operation Midnight Hammer was designed to “severely degrade Iran’s nuclear weapons infrastructure.” Dan Caine, while holding a press briefing at the Pentagon, had said, “At approximately 6:40 PM EST, 2:10 am Iran time,

the lead B-2 two dropped GBU 57 MOP (Massive Ordnance Penetrator) weapons on the first of several aim points at Fordow”. “... On the President’s orders, US Central Command, under the command of General Erik Kurilla, executed Operation Midnight Hammer, a deliberate and precise strike against three Iranian nuclear facilities... This operation was designed to severely degrade Iran’s nuclear weapons infrastructure,” he had further remarked.

B’desh interim govt forms committee to investigate allegations in last three polls

TDG NETWORK
DHAKA

The interim government of Bangladesh has formed a committee to investigate allegations of irregularities, corruption and administrative involvement in the 2014, 2018, and 2024 general elections and make recommendations on ensuring fair elections in the future, a notification said. The five-member panel led by former high court justice



Bangladesh interim government chief Mohammad Yunus

Shamim Hasnain will submit a report by September

30 on allegations that the three elections were manipulated to secure victories for the then-ruling Awami League party by systematically depriving citizens of their voting rights, BD NEWS 24 quoted the cabinet division notification as saying on Thursday. The notification said the rule of law, democracy, and fundamental human rights were reportedly undermined during the elections,

which faced widespread criticism both domestically and internationally. It said the committee would analyse reports from election observers, domestic and international monitoring bodies, civil society organisations, and media regarding the 2014, 2018, and 2024 elections and collect and review expert opinions on the overall integrity and acceptability of these elections.

ANOTHER CHAPTER OF CONFLICT OPENS IN WEST ASIA AS THE US ATTACKS IRAN

Global affairs experienced roller-coaster events this week. The conflict between Iran and Israel reached a climax following the US’s attack on three critical nuclear sites in Iran using its deadly B-2 stealth bombers. This attack was unforeseen, especially since just a day prior, Trump had declared a “two weeks of diplomatic pause” before making any decisions regarding an attack on Iran. The US subsequently referred to this operation as “Operation Hammer,” aimed at dismantling Iran’s nuclear facilities. Although Iran reported minimal damage and the IAEA indicated no radiation around the sites, it was clear from various images, videos, and news reports that Iran likely suffered significant losses after American bunker

buster bombs struck the three vital nuclear sites. In response, Iran launched attacks against Israel, followed by an assault on the US base in Qatar. Notably, Iran provided advance notice of its attack on the base, given Qatar’s status as a close ally. The entire situation took another unforeseen twist when Trump declared a “truce” between Israel and Iran. Nevertheless, both nations violated the ceasefire and resumed hostilities against one another. Despite Trump’s announcement of a ceasefire, the conflict appears far from resolution. Meanwhile, Indian defence minister Shri Rajnath Singh refrained from signing the joint declaration at the SCO summit held in China this week, citing the absence of any reference to the horrific Palahgam attack. Shri

WORLD RECAP
ANSHU JOSHI



Singh also conveyed a firm message against adhering to double standards in addressing the issue of terrorism. The recent escalation of tensions between Israel and Iran began when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that Iran might soon develop its nuclear weapons. Following this revelation, Israel conducted airstrikes on Tehran two weeks ago. It was cited that Iran had not adhered to its nuclear commitments, with its uranium enrichment levels reaching approximately 60 percent. Once uranium is enriched

to 90 percent, it is classified as weapons-grade. It is important to highlight that uranium for civilian nuclear power is typically enriched to around 3-5 percent. In early June, the US Institute for Science and International Security also indicated that Iran could transform its stockpile of 60 percent enriched uranium into weapons-grade uranium within a month’s time. This was estimated to be sufficient for Iran to manufacture nine nuclear weapons. This scenario also raised concerns in the US, which ultimately launched an attack on Iran. On June 22, the US Air

Force launched an attack on three significant nuclear facilities located in Iran. The targeted sites included the Fordow Uranium Enrichment Plant, the Natanz Nuclear Facility, and the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Centre, all of which were struck using GBU-57A/B Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP) bombs weighing 14,000 kg, commonly referred to as ‘bunker buster’ bombs, deployed by B-2 Spirit stealth bombers. These massive bunker buster bombs are exclusively operated by the US, being the only munitions capable of penetrating the concealed sites effectively. This operation, designated as ‘Operation Midnight Hammer’, marked the first offensive manoeuvre by the US in the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict. Prior to the at-

tack, the US misled Iran by relocating the B-2 bombers to Guam, a US base situated over 7,500 kilometres from Iran. Nevertheless, the primary targets remained the three nuclear facilities within Iran. The US asserted that significant damage was inflicted upon Iran; however, satellite imagery and subsequent analysis suggested that Iranian nuclear assets had been relocated to alternative sites prior to the assault. In response, Iran declared that it would not forgive the US for this aggressive action. Shortly thereafter, the world observed Iranian aerial assaults on Israel. Analysts speculated whether Iran would activate its regional proxies and launch attacks on US bases in the area. However, President Trump announced a ceasefire be-

tween Israel and Iran, expressing thanks to Iran for notifying the US about its attack on the US base in Qatar. Although hostilities continue, there appears to be a temporary halt in direct confrontations between the US and Iran. The US has also called for regime change in Iran, while Iran has vowed to take stringent measures against those it perceives as aggressors. While the conflict in the West Asian region appears not to be ending any sooner, the Indian Defence Minister has asserted that terrorism and the nations that support it should be viewed through the same perspective in the SCO summit. During his participation in the SCO summit hosted by China, the Indian Defence Minister explicitly advocated for decisive

measures against terrorism and the countries that endorse and facilitate terrorism. Also, he declined to sign the joint declaration due to its reference to the issue of Baluchistan and the omission of the horrific Palahgam terror attack on India. Subsequently, it was explained that a member nation had opposed the inclusion or condemnation of the Palahgam attack in the declaration. If Pakistan claims to have no involvement in the attack, the question remains: why does it shy away from denouncing the attack or the perpetrators? Violence results solely in devastation for humanity. It is a critical moment for the leaders in global politics to recognize that the burden of war will also rest upon them. I can only wish for peace to triumph!

KAMAL, AYUSHMANN AMONG GLOBAL ARTISTES INVITED TO JOIN OSCAR'S VOTING BODY

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) has invited Indian stars Ayushmann Khurrana and Kamal Haasan to become Oscar's esteemed voting members, reported Variety. Along with them, the prestigious film body has also invited recent Oscar winner Kieran Culkin and Mikey Madison.

Along with nominees Ariana Grande, Fernanda Torres, Sebastian Stan and Jeremy Strong, a total of 534 distinguished artists and executives have been invited to join the Oscars as it's voting members.

Recognised for their exceptional contributions to



the art and science of film-making, Kamal Haasan and Ayushmann Khurrana represent a diverse array of talent and global cinematic perspectives, reported Variety.

Ayushmann Khurrana

is known for his work in critically acclaimed films such as 'Andhadhun', 'Vicky Donor', 'Bala', and 'Article 15'.

As for Kamal Haasan, the actor is one of the legendary stars of the Indian cinema

industry. He has over three decades of experience in the film industry and is still considered one of the most successful artists in India. He was last seen in 'Thug Life', which was directed by Mani Ratnam.

Rashmika Mandanna to headline 'Mysaa'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Actor Rashmika Mandanna will feature in an upcoming Pan-India project from Rawindra Pulle, titled "Mysaa".

The 29-year-old actor shared the news with a poster on her Instagram handle on Friday. She called her role "fierce, intense and extremely raw".

"I always try to give you something new. Something different... something exciting. And this... This is one of those. A character I've never played before... A world I've never stepped into and a version



of me that even I hadn't met till now," she wrote in the caption.

"It's fierce.... It's intense and it's extremely raw.. I am so nervous and super

excited, I genuinely cannot wait for you to see what we're going to be creating. This is just the beginning."

The film is produced by Unformula Films.

Mandanna's latest work is "Kuberaa". Directed by Sekhar Kammula, the film released on June 20 and stars Dhanush in the lead role, alongside Jim Sarbh.



Alia Bhatt poses for her social media. (Instagram)

Rekha recreates her 'Umrao Jaan' look

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood actress Rekha's cult film 'Umrao Jaan' is all set to enchant the audience once again on June 27.

Director Muzaffar Ali and Rekha hosted a special re-release screening of the film today in Mumbai. The event was graced by AR Rahman, Tabu, Anil Kapoor and others.

Rekha stunned everyone in a traditional white outfit with golden embroidery that reminded of her iconic character of Umrao Jaan from the film.

She posed for the camera with the director and ace music composer AR Rahman.

Rekha can also be seen dancing with Anil Kapoor in a fun moment.

Superstar Aamir Khan looked dashing in a black outfit as he arrived to attend the screening of the film.

Tabu and Rekha can be seen hugging each other at the event. The 'Crew' actress dazzled in her red traditional outfit.

The event was also attended by Hema Malini, Kabir



Bedi, Khushi Kapoor, Nushratt Bharuccha, Jackie Shroff and others. Recalling working in the cult film, Rekha said earlier, "Umrao Jaan is not just a film I acted in -- she lives within me, breathes through me, even now. At the time, none of us could have imagined the timelessness of the film, the way it

would gently etch itself into the soul of Indian cinema. To see it return to the big screen is like watching an old love letter being opened by a new generation. My heart is full." Rekha won the National Award for her impeccable performance in the film as a courtesan-poetess in 19th-century Lucknow.

BRAIN PICKING



Life is not a bed of roses, you have to learn to handle the thorns

—KAJOL DEVGAN

(Indian Actress)

Vir Das to be honoured at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Comedian and actor Vir Das has been announced as one of the key guests of honour at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), where he will be recognised for his contributions to entertainment and comedy.

The 16th edition of the festival, which aims to showcase and celebrate Indian cinema for Australian audiences, will take place from August 14 to August 24 in Melbourne, Australia.

Reacting to the announcement, Das said it was "incredibly humbling" to be recognised by IFFM.

"A festival that celebrates the diversity and strength of Indian storytelling.



Comedy has always been my lens to view the world, and to be able to share that journey with audiences across the globe and now be celebrated for it is truly special. I'm looking forward to being part of the festival and engaging with fellow artists and film lovers in Melbourne," he said in a statement.

Vir Das began his career as a stand-up comedian and later appeared in films such as Badmaash Company (2010), Delhi Belly (2011), and Go Goa Gone (2013).

Singer Rebekah Del Rio no more

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES

Singer Rebekah Del Rio, who achieved cinematic legend with her performance of "Llorando" in David Lynch's 2001 opus "Mulholland Drive," has passed away.

She breathed her last on June 23 at her residence in Los Angeles. She was 57 years old, as per Variety.

Del Rio's death was con-



firmed through the Los Angeles Coroner's Office.

Lynch was first intro-

duced to Del Rio by their mutual CAA agent Brian Loucks in the mid-'90s. The singer was working under a country record deal in Nashville, Tenn., which she had landed off of her recording of "Llorando," a Spanish-language cover of Roy Orbison's "Crying." Upon their meeting, Lynch asked Del Rio to perform the number and covertly recorded her.

REVIEW: MAA *****

MAA



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Indian cinema is still learning to make horror movies, and we haven't come of age when it comes to making the cinema that scares us. However, in the past, many attempts have been made, and probably each with

a slightly better effort; something cannot be denied. Produced by Ajay Devgn and Jyoti Deshpande under Ajay Devgn FFilms, and directed by Vishal Furia, the mythological thriller cum horror film MAA makes one such attempt in contemporary cinema.

Modern times and technologies, amalgamated with mythological stories from the deep-rooted belief systems of Indian culture have been a recent trend and new experiments in Indian cinema. Unlike Hollywood, where there are many franchisees in Horror cinema, only a few exist

and are currently developing in Indian cinema.

It's in the post-credits, that you figure out that MAA is a prequel to the 2024 film Shaitaan and then reconnect with the film's story that is built around the feminine energy, and young girls. There is a mythological connection between the demon Rakta Beej, who was killed by Goddess Kali but in the process, one drop of the demon's blood fell in Chandrapur, a small village in Bengal, making the genesis of the story of MAA.

MAA touches on the rampant issue of female infanticide that existed yesteryears and still clouds the minds of people as far as gender preference in India is considered.

Ambika (Kajol) is the mother determined to protect the progeny irrespective of the nature of challenges that exist, is also highly intuitive and emotionally well-balanced. Ambika is also one of the names of the female goddess Kali, and she justifies her role fully in the film.

Kajol in her expressions perfectly plays a laptop-wielding modern mom, who is protective about her daughter as well as the Goddess Kali-like fierceness while fighting with the antagonist Joydev (Ronit Roy), the evil. Kajol's husband Shuvankar (Indraneil Sengupta) died while returning back to his wife Ambika and daughter Shweta (Kherin Sharma), after per-

forming the last rites of his father at Chandrapur. Joydev (Ronit Roy) coaxes Ambika to come to Chandrapur, as he is seeking Shweta, something that's revealed much later in the film.

There are moments of shock, horror, and surprise elements at many times in the film, which are credited to excellent sound and editing. Music adds to the graphics and visual effects to give you shudders often and get you under the grip of the fear. While the first half is a bit slow, the second half of the film covers up a few layers in the story, and some of it is unpredictable too adding up well for a thriller like this.

MAA is an important take

on patriarchy, female children, social issues, rituals, and customs. Also, at the same time the misunderstanding and misinterpreting the divine by distorting the message and creating social practices against basic human values by the male dominance is also highlighted in the film.

Kajol has delivered an outstanding performance in the film and remains in control almost in all parts of the film. Maa is also a great visual treat with the dances, colours, rhythms, and music of Kali Puja, a prominent part of the Bengali culture.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals



5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW IF YOU HAVE PCOS



DR. SHOBHA GUPTA

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is more than just a hormonal imbalance — it's a complex health condition that affects millions of women worldwide. From irregular periods to unexpected weight gain and persistent acne, the symptoms can be both confusing and frustrating. But understanding your body is the first step toward managing it. It is caused by a complex interplay of hormonal imbalance between the hypothalamus,

pituitary gland, ovaries and the various other organs in the body.

The resulting signs and symptoms might include:

- Fertility issues
- Menstrual disturbance
- Mood changes
- Excessive hair growth
- Acne
- Obesity

If you've been diagnosed with PCOS or suspect you might have it, here are five essential things you should know to take control of your health and feel your best every day.

1. DIFFICULTY IN GETTING PREGNANT

Anovulation, which is essentially the failure of the follicles in the ovaries to release eggs, is one of the main problems connected to PCOS. Menstrual abnormalities or occasionally the entire lack of periods



(amenorrhea) may be the result of this. As you may see, this would not only make it challenging to organise your sexual activities and watch the timing of your ovulation, but it might also make it impossible for fertilisation to

take place.

2. START WITH THE BASIC

Obesity is one of the main effects of the hormonal imbalance associated with PCOS. It has been demonstrated

that a small weight loss of 5-10% of body weight could aid in ovulation improvement and the regulation of reproductive hormones. The initial line of treatment should be lifestyle management, and it may only need

doing basic things like eating well and exercising regularly to trigger ovulation and aid in conception.

3. KNOW THE TREATMENT OPTIONS

To trigger ovulation, you can occasionally need medication assistance. This can be accomplished using a variety of techniques, from straightforward pills or hormonal injections to more sophisticated reproductive treatments like IVF. The most important point to remember is that PCOS-related ovulation issues can be resolved with very potent medicines. therefore do not give up! We are always eager to speak with you and go over your options.

4. EARLY PREGNANCY SCREENING

First of all, congratulations! Getting to where you are

might not have been an easy road. An early glucose tolerance test is necessary to make sure that your blood sugar level is kept under control because PCOS can be linked to diseases like insulin resistance, which increases your risk of developing gestational diabetes. It's vital to undergo an early ultrasound scan because fertility treatments can raise the possibility of multiple pregnancies.

5. ENJOY YOUR PREGNANCY

Despite all of the aforementioned "precautions," the majority of PCOS patients would go on to become pregnant and give birth to a healthy child. And there isn't a single reason why you shouldn't achieve the same result. Being pregnant is a unique stage of life

that should be celebrated to the fullest extent possible.

"Living with PCOS can be challenging, but with the right knowledge and lifestyle choices, it is absolutely manageable. Understanding these five key aspects can empower you to make informed decisions about your health, from diet and exercise to stress management and medical care. Remember, every woman's journey with PCOS is different — so be patient with yourself and stay consistent. With the right support and awareness, you can lead a healthy, balanced, and fulfilling life" said Dr. Shobha Gupta.

The author is Medical Director and Founder Mumma's Blessing IVF and Birthing Paradise in Vrindavan and Mother's Lap IVF Centre New Delhi

Fibroid cases rising in young women due to obesity and modern lifestyle

NIKITA KAMDAR

Reproductive health problems are becoming a matter of concern now. There has been a surge in uterine fibroid cases among young women, in their 20s-30s. Since the fibroid occurrence has several studied and proven associations, the exact cause is not fully understood. Various factors, including obesity, sedentary lifestyles, genetic mutations, and hormonal influences like estrogen and progesterone, can increase the chances of fibroids. Another emerging contributor is delayed childbearing. The longer a woman goes without pregnancy, the more menstrual cycles she experiences, exposing her body to higher estrogen levels over time, which can fuel fibroid growth. While not all fibroids cause symptoms, untreated cases can lead to infertility. Timely diagnosis and treatment involving medication or even a minimally invasive surgery can help manage fibroids and preserve fertility.

Uterine fibroids are non-cancerous growths seen around the uterus. They vary in size and number and



are influenced by hormonal changes, especially estrogen and progesterone. Types of fibroids are intramural fibroids, the most common, which grow within the muscular wall of the uterus, often causing pressure and pain. Submucosal fibroids develop beneath the uterine lining and cause heavy, prolonged periods. Subserosal fibroids grow on the outer wall of the uterus, inducing bloating or urinary issues. Pedunculated fibroids can grow either inside or outside, causing sharp pain if the stalk twists. Hence, it is necessary to consult the expert for timely intervention.

Dr Shweta Wazir, Senior Consultant - Obstetrician & Gynaecologist,

Motherhood Hospitals, Gurgaon, said, "Currently, cases of fibroids are spiking in women aged 20-30 due to risk factors like obesity, family history, poor dietary habits, stress, early menstruation, lack of physical activity, and hormonal imbalance. Each month, 2-3 women in their reproductive age group are diagnosed with fibroids, and the common symptoms reported are heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding, pelvic pain or pressure, frequent urination, pain during intercourse, and difficulty in conceiving.

According to the Indian Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology Research, nearly 30% of women under 35 now

report fibroid-related symptoms. Fibroids can cause chronic pain, heavy bleeding, and fatigue, affecting one's physical health and daily routine. They may lead to stress, anxiety, or depression when fertility is impacted or quality of life declines."

Dr Shweta Wazir added, "Depending on size, symptoms, and fertility plans, treatment may involve medication to regulate hormones, and MRI-guided focused ultrasound can also be done. Fibroids can hurt one's fertility by blocking the fallopian tubes, altering the shape of the uterus, or affecting embryo implantation. Treatment options like myomectomy, hormone therapy, or assisted reproductive techniques (like IVF) can help women to conceive.

Elective fibroid removal is done during a C-section when fibroids are found and removed to prevent future complications. Early detection via regular check-ups will be beneficial for women in their reproductive years. Lifestyle changes such as weight management, exercise, and a healthy diet can also reduce the risk of fibroids. Women, don't neglect fibroids and seek prompt management with the help of an expert."

Empowering women in construction: How technology can bridge the gap and unlock opportunities



SAKSHI KATYAL

Women are stepping into more roles across the construction sector, from planning and design to engineering and on-site coordination. With over 40 million workers, India's construction industry has room to grow women's presence in skilled and supervisory positions. As digital systems and automated tools become more common, they're streamlining operations, improving safety, and making information more accessible. These advances reduce barriers that once restricted women's participation due to physical demands or outdated practices. With targeted training and the right workplace support, technology can make construction a more inclusive and balanced field.

TECHNOLOGY IS RE-SHAPING ROLES

With tools like Building Information Modeling (BIM), drones, AR-based training, and automation, many construction tasks have moved beyond physical execution to data management, simulation, and remote supervision. These roles rely on precision and decision-making, not physical strength, which opens up space for more diverse participation.

Online training and certification platforms, backed by both government and private groups, are offering programs in safety, site planning, digital construction tools, and project oversight. Since many of these are remote, women can access them despite social or family restrictions.

LABOUR MANAGEMENT IS BEING RE-WRITTEN

Among all functional areas in construction, labour management has seen the most noticeable shift through digital tools. Delays caused by mismatched labour sup-

ply, unclear task allocation, or subcontractor gaps can now be tracked systematically.

Contractors receive real-time updates on labour needs across multiple sites via mobile apps. Subcontractors can log availability, view work orders, and confirm task completions—all without back-and-forth calls. This speeds up deployment and reduces idle time.

Daily reports now show headcounts, attendance, and progress metrics. With access to these dashboards, general contractors have better control over site operations and workforce efficiency. Digitised contractor databases also help with compliance checks, cost comparisons, and performance tracking.

BETTER COORDINATION, CLEARER WORKFLOWS

Modern construction software offers a shared dashboard for engineers, architects, site teams, and developers. Task lists, material status, drawings, and approvals are available in one place. Teams in different locations can work off the same information, and mobile compatibility means real-time updates from site to office.

For government and large infrastructure projects, this visibility supports better oversight and accountability across stakeholders.

HIRING, SAFETY, AND RETENTION

Shifts in hiring practices, workplace safety, and employment flexibility are gradually making construction more accessible to women. Recruitment is moving toward skill-based assessments rather than resume-based filtering, helping widen access for candidates with the right capabilities but limited formal experience. This approach helps level the field and supports more balanced representation.

On project sites, safety is gaining attention in day-to-day operations. App-based grievance systems now enable workers to report issues discreetly and in real time, improving accountability and response. These tools help employers maintain

safer environments and stay aligned with stricter regulatory standards.

Retention, especially among women, often depends on flexible and predictable work arrangements. As automation takes over some repetitive or physically demanding tasks, companies are introducing part-time and rotational shift options. These models support women returning from career breaks or managing dual responsibilities, offering a more sustainable path to long-term employment in the sector.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ENTRE-PRENEURSHIP

Tech-led construction start-ups are offering women founders new roles at the top. Many of these businesses work in areas like modular building, 3D printing, and green construction—segments still forming their systems and norms. This makes them more open to change and diversity.

However, access to capital remains uneven. Women-led firms still face tougher scrutiny from financial institutions. Dedicated funds and incubators focused on women in infrastructure and smart city services are helping close this gap.

DATA-DRIVEN INCLUSION

Large contractors are now using software to track gender diversity, retention patterns, and promotion rates. Targets are being replaced with accountability—firms are measured by how many women they retain and support into middle and senior roles.

Workforce data is shaping real outcomes. The more visibility that exists around who gets hired, promoted, or retained, the easier it becomes to remove systemic bias.

LOOKING AHEAD

The focus must now move from access to consistency. More women are joining planning teams, heading client portfolios, running digital coordination roles, and managing contracts. Tech adoption has played a large part in this shift.

The author is Co-Founder, Captech Technologies

The importance of staying hydrated during pregnancy

DR PREETINDER KAUR BEDI

Staying hydrated during pregnancy is of paramount importance for the health and well-being of both the mother and the developing baby. Water plays a crucial role in supporting many physiological changes that a woman experiences during pregnancy, including increased blood volume, amniotic fluid production, and metabolism. As the body works harder to nourish and sustain a growing life, its demand for water significantly increases. Adequate hydration helps regulate body temperature, supports digestion and nutrient absorption, reduces the risk of urinary tract infections, and promotes healthy skin. Failure to meet these increased hydration needs can lead to complications that may affect both maternal and fetal health.

One of the most significant reasons to maintain hydration during pregnancy is the increase in blood volume. A pregnant woman's blood volume expands by up to 50% to support the placenta and deliver essential nutrients and oxygen to the fetus. Water is a major component of blood, and

without enough fluid intake, the body may struggle to produce the additional blood required. Dehydration can lead to low amniotic fluid levels, which may result in complications such as restricted fetal growth, preterm labor, or even birth defects. Additionally, low fluid levels can affect the baby's movement and development, potentially resulting in the need for medical interventions.

Hydration also supports proper digestion and reduces common pregnancy discomforts such as constipation and bloating. During pregnancy, hormonal changes slow down the digestive system, which can make constipation more likely. Drinking enough water helps keep the digestive tract functioning smoothly and prevents stool from becoming hard and difficult to pass. Moreover, water aids in the absorption of essential nutrients, including vitamins and minerals that are critical for fetal development. Without proper hydration, the efficiency of nutrient absorption can decrease, potentially affecting both maternal energy levels and fetal growth.

Another key reason to pri-



oritize hydration is its role in preventing urinary tract infections (UTIs), which are more common during pregnancy due to hormonal changes and the pressure the growing uterus places on the bladder. Drinking enough water helps flush bacteria from the urinary tract, reducing the risk of infection. Left untreated, UTIs can lead to serious complications such as kidney infections or preterm labor. Thus, maintaining proper fluid intake can act as a simple yet powerful preventative measure.

Hydration also influences a pregnant woman's energy levels and cognitive function. Fatigue is a common complaint during pregnancy, especially in the first and third trimesters. Dehydration

can exacerbate tiredness and lead to dizziness, headaches, and difficulty concentrating. By keeping hydrated, women can support their overall physical and mental stamina during this physically demanding time. Furthermore, water helps regulate body temperature, which is particularly important as many women experience increased body heat and sweat more during pregnancy. Maintaining the body's internal temperature through adequate fluid intake helps prevent overheating and promotes overall comfort.

In addition, staying well-hydrated contributes to skin health and helps manage pregnancy-related swelling. Pregnant women often experience edema, or swelling in the hands, feet, and ankles, due to fluid retention. While this may seem counterintuitive, drinking more water actually helps reduce water retention by assisting the body in flushing out excess sodium and waste. Hydration can also minimize the appearance of stretch marks and maintain skin elasticity, contributing to overall physical comfort.

To ensure proper hydration, most pregnant women

are advised to consume at least 8-12 cups (64-96 ounces) of fluids per day, though individual needs may vary depending on activity levels, climate, and overall health. Water is the best choice, but herbal teas, milk, and hydrating fruits and vegetables like watermelon, cucumber, and oranges can also contribute to daily fluid intake. It's important to recognize the signs of dehydration—such as dark urine, dry mouth, fatigue, and dizziness—and take proactive steps to address them.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Staying hydrated during pregnancy is essential for supporting multiple physical and metabolic demands of the body, ensuring healthy fetal development, and minimizing common pregnancy-related issues. It is a simple yet powerful habit that can make a significant difference in maternal and fetal health. By prioritizing hydration, expectant mothers can contribute to a healthier and more comfortable pregnancy experience. *The author is Senior Consultant- MBBS, MD, DNB- Obstetrics & Gynecology, Apollo Cradle and Children's Hospital, Motinagar- Delhi.*

THE COURAGE TO BE IMPERFECT



DAVID GOODMAN

In spiritual terms, as we aim for some kind of spiritual perfection, it can seem daunting, unreachable, and our own imperfections can block the way forward as we are reluctant to look closely at them and reveal them to others. However, imperfections can be embraced. In Japan, they make a work of art out of broken bowls; they mend the fractures with gold, and celebrate the imperfections.

If we consider other terms for the word perfection, the path can take on another appearance all together. The word 'flawless', for example, is beautiful. A dia-

mond that is flawless is one that reflects and refracts light. The word 'ideal' is a state of being the best possible version of something. 'Unblemished' is free of all damage or blemishes. 'Superb' is outstandingly great. All of these words make reaching our highest possible spiritual stage seem far more tangible. When we understand what it is we are trying to achieve, in real terms, then the journey to spiritual perfection seems possible. When we understand what perfection really is, then the steps we take in a state of imperfection, are just part of the journey and we can find the courage to accept, or even embrace the imperfections, because as we travel on, they become fewer and fewer.

If, however, we become 'perfectionists', appalled at our own failings, brought down by our mistakes, dropping our head in despair, we will not be able to even see the destination, and fear of failing further will root us to the ground,



We all recognise our imperfections, but they can be removed by connecting with the true self, and with the Supreme Source of perfection.

frozen and self-absorbed. We have all made mistakes, and will continue to do so, until we stop making them. Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, is said

to have made more than 1,000 attempts, in other words 1,000 failures. He did not see them as failures, but as learning. He famously said that he had simply

found 1,000 ways that did not work. When we embrace imperfection, we are being authentic, we give ourselves the opportunity to focus, to be creative, to

rethink and start again. But we never start again at the beginning. Each mistake becomes part of our experience, to build upon.

We all recognise our im-

perfections, and those on a spiritual journey wish to smooth away the imperfections, to reach a better, or the best version of ourselves. We can only be ourselves, we cannot be someone else; comparison kills appreciation of the self, kills self-respect and kills self-belief. Each one of us is unique. We are all actors in this drama of life, and no-one can play my part better than me.

So, what is spiritual perfection? It is the return to the original self. The original self is unpolluted, unspoiled, unblemished, perfect. If we were to look at a river as it reaches the ocean, having passed through a massive industrial city, it would be hard to describe it as beautiful. However, if we trace the source back to the mountain where it originated, the water would sparkle, be fragrant from the herbs that frame its banks, and be totally clean and pure. So, was the dirt and debris of the river or in the river? It was not there at

the beginning, so it has all accumulated in the river, on its journey. The same is true of the soul. The soul, a luminous, conscient, spark of eternal light has, in its journey through lifetimes, acquired distortions, flaws, blemishes. The original state of the soul is of peace, wisdom, happiness, and purity, all of which has simply been covered up. The blemishes can all be removed, through meditation, through a connection with the true self and a connection with the Supreme Source of perfection. We can return to our original state of perfection. It takes time, and most importantly, consistent practice, but it is possible. We can accept the imperfections as we continue onwards, because we know they will slowly dwindle away until the soul sparkles with power and light once more.

David Goodman is a former dentist and co-ordinates activities for Brahma Kumaris in Leeds, UK.

The key to ultimate freedom



JILLIAN SAWERS

This world, in truth, is a grand drama on a cosmic stage. Each soul plays many parts across lifetimes. Just as an actor puts on different costumes for different scenes, the soul takes on new bodies and roles. Shakespeare's timeless line captures it well: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." The drama may appear real, but the soul behind the role is always ultimately untouched and unchanged.

The soul is eternal, and in its purest state exists in a vast, luminous dimension beyond time and sound. Souls in that state are radiant beings of light, suspended in complete peace and contentment. These souls are untouched by thought, desire, or the senses. There is nothing to gain, nothing to lose. They simply are — overflowing with silence, love, and bliss. In this

state of wholeness, there is no striving, no story — just the serene awareness of being.

Then comes a shift. One by one, each soul enters a physical body, taking its seat behind the eyes to look out at the material world. Compared to the soul's star-like form of light, the body is dense and huge. Yet the soul observes it all with wonder: the movement of air, the play of light, the variety of form. Initially, this observation is pure and silent. There are no labels or judgments — just childlike appreciation.

But over time, the soul becomes immersed in the world of the senses, of roles, relationships, and stories. It begins to identify with the body and forget its true self. The temporary becomes the focus, and the eternal is forgotten. This forgetfulness is the source of all sorrow, fear, and confusion. What was once understood to be a costume becomes mistaken for the self. What was once a play becomes mistaken for real life.

The tragedy is not in the drama, but in the forgetting. If an actor forgets they are acting, the role takes over completely. Attachments deepen, fears grow, and sorrow becomes inevitable. Relationships, roles, and possessions become bondages when seen as permanent. But when seen as just parts of a

play, they can be appreciated without being clung to.

Remarkably, even difficult roles — like being born into a body that is weak or different — can be used by the soul for its own growth. Just as actors sometimes choose challenging parts to develop their craft. From the soul's perspective, there is no shame or failure in playing any role — only the opportunity to experience, learn, and evolve.

Everything in the physical

The soul is eternal, and in its purest state exists in a vast, luminous dimension beyond time and sound. Souls in that state are radiant beings of light, suspended in complete peace and contentment. These souls are untouched by thought, desire, or the senses. There is nothing to gain, nothing to lose. They simply are — overflowing with silence, love, and bliss. In this state of wholeness, there is no striving, no story — just the serene awareness of being.



True liberation comes by remembering who we are, while playing our part in the drama of life.

world — the body, relationships, possessions, and even national identities — is ultimately part of the stage set. It is all temporary, changing, and illusory. Kingdoms rise and fall. Bodies grow and decay. Roles begin and end. But the soul remains. The only real life is the one happening in consciousness.

Waking up to this truth restores freedom. We can then move through life with clarity and detachment. Joy and sorrow lose their grip. There is space to love deeply without fear of loss, to act fully without ego, and to observe everything with grace. Even death is seen not as an end, but simply as a change of costume.

While the script of life may be unknown, our attitude and perceptions are always a choice. A soul rooted in its true identity is never a victim of circumstance.

True liberation comes not by leaving the world, but by remembering who we are while playing our part in it. To live as a soul first, and then as an actor, is to live in harmony, peace, and absolute freedom.

Jillian Sawers is a professional self-development trainer and has a YouTube channel called 'The Department of Silence'. She is based in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, at the headquarters of the Brahma Kumaris.

To change your destiny, think differently



DR. GIRISH PATEL

The experiences we have in our life since childhood, and the way we perceive and respond to them, create neural pathways in our brain, or a neural map. Over time, this map or blueprint becomes entrenched in the mind. Just as a building is constructed according to its blueprint, this mental blueprint determines, to a large extent, our future experiences in life.

This does not mean that once this neural blueprint is made, we are trapped in it, with no way out. The neural pathways can be changed, and it is not too difficult to do so. All it needs is some

practice. The key to bringing about this change is recognition of the fact that what we think in any situation is our choice. The situation is not to blame for our thoughts. We would have noticed that two people facing the same situation react differently to it. For example, suppose two people are about to go out, and suddenly it starts raining. One person might think, 'My goodness, it had to rain just now!' Meanwhile, the other person could decide to get wet and enjoy the shower. In both cases the situation is the same, but the annoyance and the enjoyment are the products of the two individuals' different ways of thinking.

Our mental conditioning can have a debilitating effect. I have seen cases where people facing a problem prefer to remain stuck with it rather than take a bold step and bring about a change in their life that will solve the issue. They are unwilling, or afraid, to try something new even when it offers obvious advantages, and choose to continue with what is familiar to them, despite the at-



What we think in any situation is our choice.

tendant difficulties. The reason is inability to change their way of thinking, consider new possibilities, and imagine a different way of doing things.

For our own good, we have to be clear about what is ultimately beneficial for us, and decide

our priorities accordingly. Is material success all that matters? I once met someone who had risen to a high position in his profession, but he was so unhappy that he broke down while talking about his woes. Of what good is it to spend the

better part of your life chasing a goal, finally achieve it, and still end up miserable?

Spirituality helps us determine what is of value in the long run. Happiness, peace, and contentment matter more than the metrics of material success. This

does not mean we should not have any goals in life — the key is to choose the middle path. Once we have set a goal for ourselves, we can work towards it in a natural way, with focus and dedication, but not obsessively, at the cost of everything else. We can take out time to exercise, meditate, study, and relax. This will keep us balanced, and we will enjoy the pursuit of our goal, instead of being overwhelmed by it. Happiness will then be an everyday experience for us, not something that has been put off until the day we have got the coveted job, won a promotion, or bought that large house.

When we live a balanced life, we are not upset even if we fail to achieve a goal, because it is not the all-consuming purpose of our life. Moreover, the wisdom gained from living sensibly will always stand us in good stead.

Dr. Girish Patel is a well-known psychiatrist based in Mumbai, and a student of Rajyoga with the Brahma Kumaris.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Focus on growth and that which is not growing will fall away. If I want to grow something new inside myself, I must shift the focus of my energy and attention away from the old. I must stop trying to fix or manage a weakness. Instead, when I put all my energy into growing a new habit, the old habit naturally falls away. Today let me focus on growth.

AYUSH, TANVI STORM INTO QUARTER-FINALS OF US OPEN 2025 BADMINTON TOURNAMENT

AGENCIES
IOWA

Indian shuttlers Ayush Shetty and Tanvi Sharma marched into the quarter-finals of the US Open 2025 badminton tournament here after registering victories in their second-round fixtures.

Fourth seed Ayush Shetty, 34th in the badminton rankings, had to endure through three games before finally getting the better of his compatriot Tharun Manneppalli, world No. 54, by a 21-12, 13-21, 21-15 scoreline in the men's singles round of 16.

The Indian badminton player will face Kuan Lin Kuo of Chinese Taipei in the final eight on Friday, as per the Olympics.com.

Meanwhile, Tanvi Sharma marched into the women's singles quarter-finals fol-



lowing a dominating 21-18, 21-16 straight games win over Thailand's Pitchamon Opatniputh, the world No. 58 and the 2023 junior world champion.

Tanvi, the junior world No. 2 and 66th in the senior rankings, will face Karu-

pathevan Letshanaa of Malaysia in the quarters.

The world No. 50 Letshanaa made it to the top eight after ousting India's Aakarshi Kashyap in the second round. The Malaysian won the hard-fought match 21-17, 20-22, 21-13.

Qualifier Ira Sharma's run also concluded following a 22-20, 11-21, 21-12 defeat at the hands of Ukrainian seventh seed Polina Buhrova, who was also responsible for knocking India's Shriyanshi Valishetty out of the BWF Super 300 tourna-

ment in the opening round.

Anmol Kharb also bowed out after losing 23-21, 21-10 to Denmark's sixth-seeded Line Christophersen in the pre-quarters.

Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra's run in women's doubles concluded with a 21-10, 21-14 loss to the USA's Laura Lam and Allison Lee, ending India's challenge in the event.

Third seeds Hariharan Amsakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi, however, kept themselves alive in the men's doubles competition after beating Canada's Jonathan Lai and Nyl Yakura 21-10, 21-17.

With India's mixed doubles charge having ended on Wednesday, Hariharan and Ruban are the only Indian doubles badminton team still in contention at the US Open.



Manchester City top their group. Al Ain secure a first win and Real Madrid and Al Hilal secure the final spots in the Round of 16 as the group stages of the @FIFACWC come to an end.

WPL franchise UP Warriorz part ways with coach Jon Lewis

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW

UP Warriorz parted ways with their head coach Jon Lewis following a three-year-association in the Women's Premier League (WPL).

Lewis had a fine start to his run with the franchise, taking them to the playoffs during the inaugural WPL season in 2023, but lost to the Mumbai Indians (MI). In 2024, they finished second-last, with three wins in eight games. In the latest season, the team had to deal with skipper Alyssa Healy injured and Deepti Sharma captaining the side.

Warriorz finished at the bottom of the tournament this year, with three wins in eight games, as per ESPNcricinfo.

Giving him a farewell, Warriorz posted on their official Instagram, "From day one, you believed in us. Through the highs, the learnings, and everything in between -- Thank You, Coach Jon Lewis, for leading with heart, calm, and belief. You'll always be a part of the Warriorz Family."

Overall, under Lewis, the team managed to win nine out of 25 matches. They also hold the record for the high-



est total in WPL: 225 runs against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) earlier this year, with Aussie youngster Georgia Voll (99* in 56 balls) shining with the bat.

Lewis was performing dual roles, as he had been England's head coach for the women's team since November 2022. But he stepped down from the spot after Australia won the women's Ashes by a clean sweep of 16 points to nil.

Before being a coach, Lewis was a massive feature of English cricket for two decades and was a consistent

wicket-taker for Gloucestershire, in the main, and Surrey and Sussex, where he ended his career in 2014.

Prior to becoming a prominent coach, Lewis played top-flight cricket in England for close to two decades, and was a consistent wicket-taker for Gloucestershire, in the main, and Surrey and Sussex, where he ended his career in 2014. He also turned out in a Test, 13 ODIs and two T20Is. He took 849 scalps in 251 matches in first-class cricket and 25 scalps in international cricket.

Good start for Diksha Dagar, Vani Kapoor in Germany

AGENCIES
WINSEN

Diksha Dagar was 2-under with three holes still to play in the first round of the Amundi German Masters at the Par-73 Green Eagle Golf Courses. She was T-13 but the round was still in progress. She was the top Indian as nine Indians are playing the event this week. Diksha was lying on T-13.

Vani Kapoor opened with a steady 1-under 72 in the first round and was lying T-20.

Diksha had four birdies against two bogeys. Diksha had two birdies and two bogeys on the front nine and then added two birdies on the 12th and the 13th to get to 2-under.

The early leader was England's Alice Hewson, who had a bogey-free 5-under 68 and she was sharing the lead with Helen Briem



of Germany, Kiwi Amelia Harvey and Sweden's Elinor Sudow. Three others were at 4-under. Vani Kapoor had two birdies against one bogey and all that action happened on the front nine and she had pars on all nine holes of the back nine.

Among the other Indians, Avani Prashanth, who has played the event as an amateur in the past, carded even par 73 while Tvesa Malik

was even through 13 holes.

Avani's even par 73 includes four birdies against two bogeys and one double bogey. Things did not go well for Sneha Singh and Amandeep Drall, who shot 5-over 78 each, while Hitaa-shree Bakshi was also 5-over but had 10 holes to play. Neha Tripathi finished 10 overs. Vidhatri Urs had a disastrous time and was 10-over through just nine holes.

Saptak Talwar falters on back nine, shoots 1-over

AGENCIES
LE VAUDREUIL

India's Saptak Talwar endured a difficult first round at the Le Vaudreuil Golf



Challenge here, carding 1-over 73 to stay in tied 80th place in the standings.

Frenchman Robin Sciote-Siegrist led by one stroke after shooting a round of 7-under 65. He opened his campaign on the 10th hole with a birdie and followed that with birdies on the 12th, 14th and 15th holes, besides his sole bogey of the round on the 17th hole.

He quickly recovered

from the dropped shot with his fifth birdie of the day on the 18th. On the front nine Sciote-Siegrist had six quiet holes before closing the round with three consecu-

tive birdies on the seventh, eighth and ninth holes.

Talwar started his day on the front nine and dropped a shot on the second hole and quickly recovered the shot with a birdie on the fourth and another on the seventh and turned in 1-under.

On the back nine back bogeys on the 10th and 11th holes ruined what looked like a promising opening to the week.

Neeraj surprises fan with all-expenses paid trip to NC Classic in Bengaluru

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

Double Olympic-medallist Neeraj Chopra showed his signature humility and generosity once again - this time, by surprising a fan with an unforgettable gesture ahead of the inaugural edition of the Neeraj Chopra Classic, set to take place at the Kanteerava Stadium, in Bengaluru on July 5.

Ranjith Kumar Ravichandran, a javelin enthusiast from Coimbatore, had responded to a Tweet on social media, expressing his dream of attending the NC Classic in Bengaluru and requesting Rs 2000 to help



cover his expenses.

Neeraj's response, posted on X (formerly Twitter), stunned not just Ranjith but fans across the country. In his Tweet, Neeraj offered him a VVIP experience and

a room at Radisson Hotels, which are partners to the NC Classic.

The tweet went viral soon after, garnering many likes and shares. Neeraj's act captured the spirit of the NC

Classic, India's first-ever World Athletics Category 'A' Javelin competition, and underscores his commitment to making the sport accessible to all. The NC Classic will host 12 of the best javelin throwers from around the globe, including the likes of Paris Olympics silver medalist Anderson Peters and former World Champion Julius Yego. Tickets to the blockbuster event are available on District by Zomato.

Recently, Chopra claimed his second title after standing triumphant in the javelin throw contest at the 64th Ostrava Golden Spike event on Tuesday.

Our target isn't just Asian Cup, but also World Cup: Midfielder Sangita Basfore

AGENCIES
CHIANG MAI

For the Blue Tigresses, the AFC Women's Asian Cup isn't only about competing against the continent's elite, but also a pathway to the FIFA Women's World Cup, according to the official website of the AIFF.

"Our target is the World Cup," echoed midfielder Sangita Basfore, as quoted from the official website of AIFF.

"The AFC qualifiers feel like World Cup qualifiers. We all want to qualify for Brazil," she added.

For the FIFA Women's World Cup Brazil 2027, the AFC Women's Asian Cup



Australia 2026 serves as the qualifier, with the top six teams from the tournament securing their berths in the 32-team World Cup.

The first hurdle is these AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers in Chiang Mai, where India made the perfect

score the opening goal, and I did. That was a great feeling. I made a good run, and the cross from Soumya was perfect. When I scored, I thanked her right away," said Sangita.

Given the quality gap between India and Mongolia, perhaps the deluge of goals was expected from the start. Coach Crispin Chettri's message to the girls was clear -- celebrate every single goal together. "Every time someone scores, we all go to them. That creates team bonding. If we keep doing this from the beginning, the upcoming matches will get easier as we play more like a team," said Sangita.

Pulling off decisive wins, Services dominate 6th Junior National Boxing C'ships

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) stamped their authority at the 6th Junior (U-17) Boys and Girls National Boxing Championships, emerging as overall champions in both Boys and Girls categories. In a tournament that showcased India's promising next generation of boxing talent, Services reclaimed the team title in the Boys division and pulled off a decisive victory in the Girls category, toppling defending champions Haryana, who finished second

across both.

Backed by clinical performances across weight classes, the Services contingent wrapped up the week-long event at the National Boxing Academy in Rohtak with nine medals in each category. Their Boys squad tallied six golds, two silvers, and a bronze to reassert their dominance, while the Girls team delivered four golds, four silvers, and one bronze. Maharashtra completed the podium in the Boys championship, while Manipur finished third in the Girls division, said release.

On the girls' side, several familiar names from India's recent success at the Asian U-15 & U-17 Championships delivered once again. Delhi's Ahaana Sharma continued her blazing form in the 50kg final with a clean sweep. Khushi Chand of Uttarakhand clinched a narrow 3-2 win in the 46kg division, while Haryana's Anshika reaffirmed her dominance in the 80+kg category.

Services' dual team triumph was powered by a series of dominant final bouts across both divisions. In the Boys' competition, Udhm Singh Raghav, a re-



cent medalist in the Asian U-17 Championships, won

gold in the 54kg category, while Sahil Duhan (60kg),

Priyansh Sehrawat (70kg), Jaideep Singh Hanjra

(80kg), and Rahul (80+kg) also secured top-podium finishes. Lakshay Balhara's 4-1 victory over Aman Siwach stood out, as did Haryana's Aditya, who edged past Tikam Singh in a closely contested 52kg final.

SSCB's girls team was bolstered by sharp wins from Naitik (52kg), Chandrika Pujari (54kg), Harsika (60kg), and Hamoor Kaur (66kg), the latter scoring a third-round stoppage. Prachi Khatri's powerful RSC victory in the 80kg class, along with title wins by Himanshi (70kg) and Jiya (48kg), further highlighted the depth of

India's emerging female talent. Manipur's Lanchenba Singh, who defeated Services' Piyush 3:2 in the 50kg category, was adjudged the Best Boxer in the Boys' category, while Lucky Bagdwal (57kg) of Uttarakhand was named the Most Promising. In the Girls' division, Haryana's Divya (63kg) and Jammu & Kashmir's Bareena (70kg) claimed the Best and the Most Promising awards, respectively. Pooja Duhan from Haryana was named the Best Referee, while Rajasthan's Vishal Nirwan was awarded the Best Judge honour.