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MISSPELLING 'LOKTANTRA'
AS 'LOKTANTAR'



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INDIA INKS LANDMARK TRADE DEAL WITH UK



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hand with his British counterpart Keir Starmer after Britain's Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathan Reynolds and Union Minister Piyush Goyal signed a free trade agreement, at Chequers Estate, in U.K. ANI

■ Pact cuts tariff on 99% of Indian exports, unlock thousands of jobs

■ British whisky, cars and an array of other items will be cheaper now

AGENCIES
LONDON

India and the UK on Thursday inked a landmark free trade agreement that seeks to boost both the economies, slash tariff lines across 99 per cent of Indian exports, unlock thousands of jobs and cut tariffs on British whisky, cars and

an array of other items. The pact, officially named as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), was signed by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and British Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds in the presence of the prime ministers of India and the UK.

The mega deal was for-

malised shortly after British PM Keir Starmer hosted his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi at Chequers, the countryside residence of the British PM that is located 50 kms northwest of London. The CETA, firm up after three years of negotiations, is expected to ensure comprehensive market access for Indian goods across all sectors and India will gain from tariff elimination on about 99 per cent of tariff lines (product categories) covering almost 100 per cent of the trade values, officials said. "I'm really pleased and privileged to welcome you here today on what I consider to be a historic day for

"Our landmark trade deal with India is a major win for Britain. This is about putting more money in the pockets of hardworking Brits...."

Keir Starmer
UK Prime Minister

both of our countries, and the delivery of the commitment that we made to each other," said Starmer, as he greeted the Indian prime minister. In his remarks to the media, Modi said the UK and India are "natural partners" ■ P3

CETA (COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT)

AGRICULTURE

India to get duty-free access in several agri goods in the UK, such as fruits, vegetables, cereals, turmeric, pepper, cardamom, and processed goods like ready-to-eat food, mango pulp, pickles, and pulses.

- Over 95% of agricultural and processed food tariff lines will attract zero duty.
- Duty-free access is expected to boost agri exports by over 20 per cent in the next three years, contributing to India's goal of USD 100 billion agri-exports by 2030.
- Provisions related to Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) will streamline certification, cutting down time and cost for exporters.

MARINE

- The CETA eliminates UK tariffs on India's marine products.
- Despite the UK's USD 5.4 billion marine import market, India's share remains at just 2.25 per cent,

underscoring a significant untapped opportunity.

- With existing UK tariffs on Indian shrimp ranging between 4.2 per cent and 8.5 per cent, the FTA's tariff elimination is expected to unlock rapid growth, particularly in shrimp, tuna, fishmeal, and feeds.

PLANTATION SECTOR

- Duty-free access to instant coffee will help Indian businesses compete with other European suppliers of instant/value-added coffee, such as Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands.
- FTA will create a powerful springboard for boosting exports of value-added coffee products, particularly Indian instant coffee, to the UK.

OILSEEDS

- With reduced tariffs and streamlined procedures, Indian Oilseed exporters can become

■ P3

'EK PED MAA KE NAAM'



King Charles III meets the Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an audience at the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk, England. His Majesty was given a tree to be planted this Autumn, inspired by the environmental initiative launched by the Prime Minister, 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam', The Roayl Family said in a post on X

London, New Delhi will work together to extradite economic offenders

LONDON: With India seeking extradition of a number of billionaire fugitives from the UK, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday

said the concerned agencies of the two sides will continue to work in "close" coordination and cooperation ■ P3



Opposition MPs create ruckus in Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

'We are going to come for you': Rahul's explicit threat to ECI

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, on Thursday once again targeted the Election Commission (EC) accusing it of "enabling" electoral fraud in Karnataka and issued a stern message saying that if you think you can get away with it, you are mistaken and we are going to come for you.

Rahul Gandhi made the remarks while speaking with the media in Parliament.

The former Congress President said that this is a



Rahul Gandhi speaks to the media at Parliament House complex on Thursday. ANI

serious issue as the Election Commission is not functioning as Election Commission of India.

He said that today the poll panel made some statement that is "complete nonsense". The Congress leader said

that the fact of the matter is that the Election Commission is not doing its job.

"Now, we have concrete 100 per cent proof of the Election Commission allowing cheating in a seat in Karnataka. Not 90 per cent, when we decide to show it to you, it is a 100 per cent proof," Rahul said.

He said that we just looked at one constituency and we found this. "And I am absolutely convinced that constituency after constituency this is the drama that is taking place. Thousands of thousands of new voters. How old are they 50, 45, 60 ■ P3

'Baseless' charges: ECI

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Thursday dubbed the claims of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of cheating in Karnataka during last year Lok Sabha polls as "baseless" and issued fiery responses to him wondering why such baseless and threatening allegations are being made against CEC when no appeal has been filed by the grand old party last year.

The Election Commission spokesperson in a fiery response referred to Rahul Gandhi's warning as unwarranted threatening statements made by Leader of Opposition in

the Lok Sabha against CEC Gyanesh Kumar on Karnataka Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

The spokesperson said: "As far as electoral rolls of Karnataka Lok Sabha 2024 are concerned, not a single appeal was filed with DM or CEO of Karnataka, a valid legal remedy available to Congress under Section 24 of RP Act 1950.

"As far as conduct of Lok Sabha elections 2024 are concerned, out of 10 Election Petitions, not a single Election Petition was filed by any losing Congress candidate as a legal remedy available to the party under Section 80 of RP Act 1951," the spokesperson said. ■ P3

Next V-P likely to be someone with RSS background

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The next Vice President of the country is likely to be someone with RSS background. The RSS may also have its say in the selection of the candidate. According to sources, BJP now does not want to take any risk of making an outsider the Vice President.

Discussions have started between BJP and RSS on ■ P3

Mumbai train blasts: SC stays HC order, but no re-arrest

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the Bombay High Court verdict acquitting all 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train bomb blasts case but said they need not return to jail.

The top court further directed the Bombay High Court judgement not to be treated as a precedent. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh issued notice to all the accused in the case and sought their responses on the appeal filed by the state government.

"We have been informed that all the respondents



have been released and there is no question of bringing them back to the prison. However, taking note of the submission made by the solicitor general on the question of law, we are inclined to hold that the impugned judgment shall not be treated as a precedent. To that extent, there shall be a stay of the impugned judgment," the bench said.

During a brief hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Maharashtra government, sought a stay on the high court judgment saying it would affect pending trials under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

Justice Sundresh enquired if all the accused have been released from jail, noting some accused persons were Pakistani nationals.

"They were not arrested," a counsel for the state informed.

On July 21, a special high court bench of Justices Anil Kilar and Shyam Chandak acquitted all the 12 accused,

saying the prosecution utterly failed to prove the case and it was "hard to believe the accused committed the crime".

Of the 12, five had been sentenced to death and seven to life imprisonment by the special court. One of the death row convicts died in 2021.

More than 180 people were killed when seven blasts ripped through Mumbai local trains at various locations on the western line on July 11, 2006.

The Maharashtra government challenged the high court judgment on grounds, including that the recovery of RDX from an ■ P3

Tejashwi plays hardball, says open to boycott Bihar polls

AGENCIES
PATNA

Playing hardball on special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday asserted that the option is open for his party and its allies to "boycott" the assembly polls in the state due later this year.

In response, NDA leaders claimed that Yadav's comment indicates the opposition party has "conceded defeat".

The leader of the opposition hardened his stance during an interaction with



Tejashwi Yadav, speaks to the media in Patna on Thursday. ANI

journalists outside the assembly, minutes after telling the House that he was "not opposed to SIR per se", but the manner in which the Election Commission was carrying out the exercise gave rise to many misgiv-

ings. "The option is open for boycott of elections. We will take a decision after discussing the matter with other parties. What is the point in contesting elections if we are ■ P3

WHO SAID WHAT
IN PARLIAMENTTECHNICAL DEFECTS
IN AIRCRAFT: GOVT
REPORT

New Delhi: Five Indian airlines reported 183 technical defects in their aircraft to the aviation regulator DGCA this year till July 21, including 85 by Air India Group, according to the government. IndiGo and Akasa Air reported 62 and 28 technical defects, respectively, while SpiceJet reported 8 defects, as per data shared by the civil aviation ministry in a written reply to the Lok Sabha on Thursday. Air India and Air India Express together reported 85 technical defects, respectively.

SPEAKER
CONDEMNS UPROAR
IN PARLIAMENT

New Delhi: Opposition parties continued their protest in the Parliament complex on Thursday and disrupted proceedings in both Houses during the ongoing Monsoon Session, demanding a discussion on the special intensive revision (SIR) of the Bihar electoral roll. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla criticised the conduct of the Opposition, and expressed concern over the message such behaviour sends to new parliamentarians. "Is this what you're teaching the next generation - sloganeering, placard-waving, desk-thumping? These weren't the values your party once upheld."

LOK SABHA LOP TO
VISIT GUJARAT

New Delhi: Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee chief Amit Chavda announced on Thursday that Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi will visit the state on July 26. Chavda informed that Rahul Gandhi will land at the Vadodara airport in the morning of July 26 and will participate in the training program being held in Anand. The state Congress chief said that the party is celebrating the year 2025 as an organisational year, for which a day training camp has been organised in Anand.

UJJWAL NIKAM
SWORN IN AS RAJYA
SABHA MP

New Delhi : Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam, known for handling the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack trials, took oath as a member of the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. The Special Public Prosecutor was nominated to the upper house by the President on July 13. Nikam took the oath in Marathi shortly after the Upper House was convened at 11 AM today, with Deputy Chairman Harivansh on the chair. Apart from Nikam, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Meenakshi Jain, and Sadanandan Master were also nominated to the Upper House under Article 80(1)(a) of the Constitution, read with clause (3) of the same article. The nominations come in the wake of vacancies created by the retirement of previously nominated members.

BJP MOCKS OPPN FOR MISSPELLING
'LOKTANTRA' AS 'LOKTANTAR'

Mocking the opposition parties over the spelling of 'loktantra' (democracy) in the banner

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday took a dig at the opposition parties for displaying a banner with incorrect spelling of 'loktantra' in Hindi during a protest on Parliament premises, saying those who do not even know how to write the said word have come out to give lessons on democracy.

This came after several MPs of the opposition INDIA bloc, including Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi and party MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, held a protest in Parliament House complex against the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls by the Election Commission



(EC) in poll-bound Bihar.

There was a huge banner in front of them which read: 'SIR- loktantar par vaar' (attack on democracy), as they lined up on the steps of the Makar Dwar of Parliament and staged a protest, raising slogans like "Save democracy" and "Stop vote-bandi".

Mocking the opposition parties over the spelling of 'loktantra' (democracy) in

the banner, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said in a post on X in Hindi, "It's loktantra, not loktantar."

Posting a picture of the INDIA bloc's protest, the BJP took a swipe at opposition leaders over the spelling of 'loktantra', saying, "Those who do not know how to write 'loktantra' have come out to give lessons on de-

mocracy." Latching on to the issue, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla aimed at the Congress and said they can spell and save "parivar tantra and Emergency" in which they believe, not "loktantra".

"Can't blame Congress. They can neither spell nor save 'loktantra'. They believe in Parivar Tantra and Emergency! Surely, they can spell and save that," he wrote on X.

The INDIA bloc of the opposition parties has been protesting in both Houses of Parliament against the ongoing SIR, alleging that the exercise, initiated by the Election Commission, is aimed at disenfranchising voters in Bihar ahead of the assembly elections in the state.

'Attack on democracy':
I.N.D.I.A bloc MPs protest at
Parliament against Bihar SIRTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) MPs, for the fourth consecutive day, protested against the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) being conducted by the Election Commission (EC) in poll bound Bihar. The MPs gathered at Parliament Makar Dwar, and called for a stop to the exercise. The opposition parties have repeatedly called for a discussion in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha regarding the revision exercise, moving adjournment motions everyday since the start of the monsoon session and alleging that manipulation of voter rolls is taking place under the guise of the SIR.

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) MP Mahua Maji, Deputy Opposition

leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJ) MP Manoj Jha, among multiple other leaders attended the protest.

Carrying banner which read "SIR-Attack on Democracy," the MPs stood at Makar Dwar, demanding that the voter list revision is halted.

Earlier, Congress MP Manickam Tagore submitted an Adjournment Motion seeking discussion on the revision exercise, calling it an "act of mass disenfranchisement" which was nothing short of "institutional voter cleansing" orchestrated under the Modi Government.

Tagore further highlighted the SIR exercise as an attack on the legacy of Babasaheb BR Ambedkar, who "enshrined" universal adult franchise in the Constitution to empower citizens, irrespective of their caste,

class or wealth. Meanwhile, multiple party MPs in Rajya Sabha have moved adjournment motions in Rajya Sabha to discuss the issue.

Party leaders in the upper house, including Rajani Ashokrao Patil, Jebi Mather, Ranjeet Ranjan, Neeraj Dang, Neeraj Dang, and Akhilesh Prasad Singh have called for the house to suspend Zero Hour and Question Hour on Thursday to discuss the Bihar SIR.

Rajani Ashokrao Patil, while submitting the letter said that the actions of the poll panel has "sparked apprehensions about potential electoral manipulation."

Patil wrote in her letter, "To discuss the concerns arising out of the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise in Bihar ahead of elections, as well as reports of a similar exercise being planned in West Bengal and other states."

Opposition is politically frustrated people,
mocking people's earnings: Dinesh SharmaTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Amidst the continuous disruptions in Parliament proceedings, BJP MP Dinesh Sharma stated today that the opposition are politically frustrated individuals and they are wasting public money.

He said, "They (Opposition) are mocking the earnings of the people by standing here, enjoying a picnic, taking Vitamin D in the sun, and they are taking it because they are politically frustrated people. Their despair does not shine inside the assembly...Come and discuss it in the parlia-



ment. The challenge is for you to come and discuss."

Sharma further stated that the opposition should discuss subjects such as development, foreign policy, education, and India's rapidly growing economy.

TMC slams ECI for 'backdoor
disenfranchisement exercise'SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

Highlighting apparent discrepancies in successive press notes issued by the Election Commission of India on the Special Intensive Review (SIR) of voter lists in Bihar, the Trinamool Congress on Thursday accused the poll body of carrying out a "backdoor disenfranchisement exercise" at the behest of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Trinamool Congress leaders in Bengal and its Parliamentarians in New Delhi carried out coordinated attacks on the poll body highlighting its concerns. The Trinamool Congress shared three press notes released by the EC, with the last two coming back-to-back on July 22 and 23.

The party's official X handle pointed out "ALARMING DISCREPANCIES" and said: "Two glaring red flags

have emerged from the Special Intensive Revision of the voter list in Bihar: On 22nd July, the number of untraceable electors stood at 11,484. By 23rd July, that number suddenly exploded to 1 LAKH.

"At 88.18% voter coverage, the count of electors marked for deletion was 35 lakh. Now, with 98.01% coverage, this figure has skyrocketed to 56 lakh. That means: in the next 77.62 lakh electors surveyed, 21 LAKH have been pushed for deletion."

It asked: "Who are these voters being erased? Why this overnight manipulation in numbers? Is this a backdoor disenfranchisement exercise?" The Trinamool Congress said that the Election Commission owes the people of India an immediate, transparent, and public clarification.

Nadda bids
farewell
to retiring
members of
Rajya SabhaTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha, Jagat Prakash Nadda, bid farewell to the retiring MPs on Thursday, praising their contributions in enriching the house and wishing them well for their future endeavours.

"Today, 6 members are having their farewell. In that Wilson ji is coming back, I welcome him back. On behalf of my party and myself, I extend my congratulations and wish the people well. This house functions with continuity; that is why many new people come into Rajya Sabha, their terms finish, and they leave. In a democracy, discussion is expected," he added.

Govt ensuring land rights for tribal
communities: Union Minister UikeyTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Replying to the un-starred questions of Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, the Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikey informed lok sabha today that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, being the Nodal Ministry for administering the legislative matters of "Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional

Forest Dwellers Recognition of Forest Rights Act 2006" (in short FRA), has been issuing directions and guidelines from time to time on various aspects to ensure proper implementation of the Act. As per FRA and Rules made thereunder, the State Governments are responsible for implementation of various provisions of the Act and is being implemented in 20

States and 1 UT. FRA provides safeguards against forced eviction. Section 4(5) of FRA provides that Save as otherwise provided, no member of a forest dwelling Scheduled Tribe or other traditional forest dwellers shall be evicted or removed from the forest land under his occupation till the recognition and verification procedure is complete.



Congress MPs Manish Tewari, Selja Kumari, Charanjit Singh Channi and others protest, seeking Centre's intervention in email threats to the Golden Temple during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, at Makar Dwar of Parliament in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

GLIMPSES FROM MONSOON SESSION



SP MP Dimple Yadav leaves after the adjournment of the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI



Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) MP Chandrashekhar Azad Ravan holding a placard protest in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI



Congress MP Jairam Ramesh arrives to attend the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI



MDMK MP Vaiko and RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha in Rajya Sabha in New Delhi. ANI



Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh & nominated Rajya Sabha MP Ujjwal Nikam greet each other in Parliament.

Govt ramps up critical mineral
reforms to ensure supplyTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions and Prime minister's office Dr Jitendra Singh said that critical minerals such as lithium, graphite, cobalt, titanium, rare earth elements etc are demand intensive due to their strategic uses in various sectors, viz., electric vehicles, renewable energy and defence.

Responding to the un-starred query of Rajya Sabha member Kartikeya Sharma during the ongoing Monsoon Session, the Union Minister said that the Ministry of Mines has undertaken significant steps including various policy reforms to ensure exploration and mining of these critical sectors: The Mines and Minerals

(Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR) has been amended through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2023 w.e.f. 17.08.2023. Major reforms of Amendment Act, 2023 are:

i. Omission of six minerals from the list of 12 atomic minerals namely Lithium, Titanium, Beryl and beryllium bearing minerals, Niobium, Tantalum and Zirconium bearing minerals.

ii. Created a list of 24 critical & strategic minerals in part D of Schedule-I of the MMDR Act. iii. Section IID of the Act empowered Central Government to exclusively auction mining lease and composite licence for critical & strategic minerals specified in Part D of the Schedule-I of the Act. iv. Introduced exploration license for 29 minerals included in Schedule- VII. In addition, Ministry of Mines

has also been empowered to auction blocks for grant of Exploration Licence through an order under section 20A of MMDR Act 1957.

DEEP OCEAN MISSION Dr Singh is also the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ministry of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences.

While answering to the query of Mr Sharma, Dr Singh said that Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), through the National Institute of Ocean Technology Chennai launched the Samudrayaan project under the Deep Ocean Mission.

Under this project, NIOT is developing a manned submersible, MATSYA 6000, which aims to carry three people to a depth of 6000 meters in the ocean with a suite of scientific sensors for ocean exploration.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BIHAR POLITICS

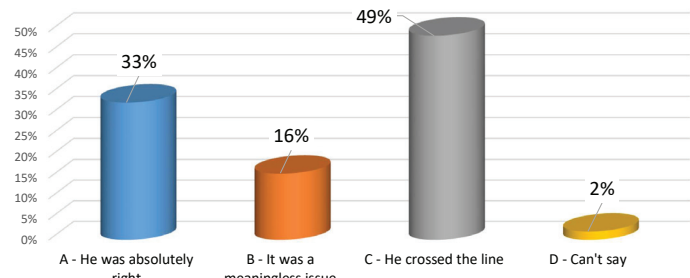
62% people believe that Samrat Chaudhary knowingly call Lalu Yadav a thief

The Bihar Assembly's monsoon session saw chaos after Deputy CM Samrat Chaudhary allegedly called Lalu Yadav a thief. Tejashwi Yadav slammed the ruling party for

lowering House dignity, misleading voters over Nepal-Bangladesh claims, and avoiding debate. He accused Nitish Kumar of confusion and said Bihar is run by Delhi's remote.

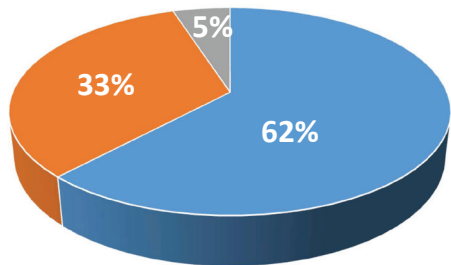
Q1. ▶

In the Bihar Assembly, when Samrat Chaudhary called Lalu Yadav a thief, what is your opinion?



◀ Q2.

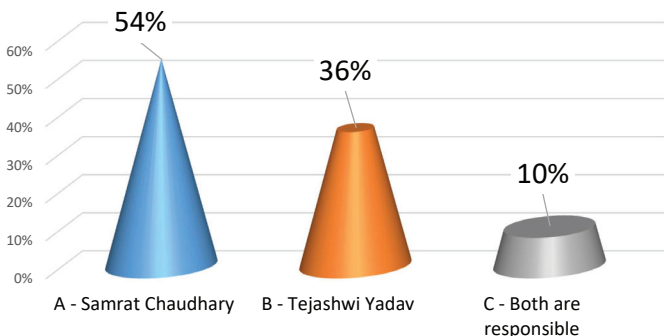
Did Samrat Chaudhary knowingly call Lalu Yadav a thief?



Yes
No
Cannot say

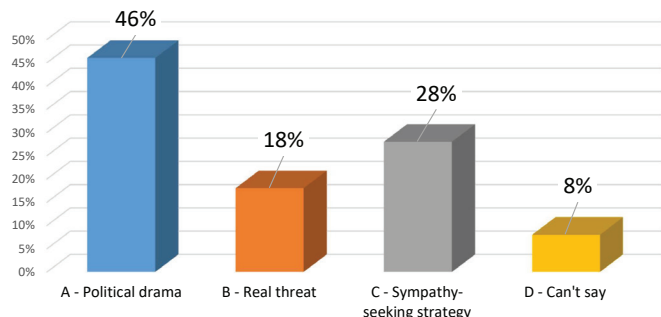
Q3. ▶

Who is responsible for the scuffle in the Bihar Assembly after the "thief" remark?



◀ Q4.

Tejashwi Yadav said his life is in danger. What is your opinion?



Tejashwi plays hardball, says open to boycott

CONTINUED FROM P1

convinced that these are not going to be free and fair", the former deputy CM said.

Yadav seemed upset that during the discussion inside the House, in which alliance partners also took part, "Chief Minister Nitish Kumar did not utter a word" when Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary "sought to mix things up by equating SIR with the annual revision of electoral rolls that takes place to strike off the name of deceased voters and other minor corrections".

The EC has so far claimed to have covered, under SIR, "99 per cent" of the state's 7.9 crore voters, of whom the number of deceased electors has been stated to be "21.6 lakh", in addition to

another "31.5 lakh who have permanently migrated".

However, Yadav contended that "about four crore people" from the state lived in other states to pursue higher education or seek a career and many of them, who might not have been registered at their current places of residence, could like to vote in their home state. "We suspect that many such people may end up having their names struck off the voters' list just because they were not found to be at their registered addresses in Bihar," Yadav said.

He also alleged that "the real game" will begin from August 1 when the EC, done with the collection of enumeration forms filled up and signed by respective voters, would invite "claims

and objections".

The RJD leader also cited media reports claiming enumeration forms are being filled up and signed by booth-level officers who are in a hurry to meet targets set by the EC, and at many places, such forms were found dumped on the streets.

"Despite so many anomalies, the ruling NDA is silent. Even though their leaders are also elected by voters registered in the same electoral roll. The inference is clear. The EC is trying to help the ruling coalition through SIR," alleged Yadav.

The Congress, an ally of the RJD, also said in Delhi that the "Tughlaqi process" of the SIR in Bihar will be opposed at all forums and "all options are open" for the INDIA bloc. However,

leaders of the NDA mocked the opposition parties.

Union ministers Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan, a former JD(U) president, and Nityanand Raji, an ex-state unit chief of BJP, alleged in Delhi that Yadav's statement was proof that "the opposition has conceded defeat".

Nonetheless, on a day when a procession of the Congress against SIR met with water cannons fired by police in Patna, Yadav seemed to be firing on all cylinders, and his fulminations on the issue continued through the day.

Yadav also inveighed against an FIR lodged recently in Begusarai against independent journalist Ajit Anjum, whose YouTube channel has been running a series on SIR.



President Droupadi Murmu witnesses art exhibition of the artists, created during their Artists-in-Residence program at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

Will work together to extradite

CONTINUED FROM P1

tion on the matter.

The prime minister made the remarks after meeting his British counterpart Keir Starmer at Chequers, the countryside residence of the British PM.

"On the matter of extradition of economic offenders as well, our agencies will continue to work together in close coordination and cooperation," Modi said in his media statement.

India has been raising

with the UK the issue of extradition of economic offenders such as Vijay Malviya, Nirav Modi and Lalit Modi.

At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said PM Modi sought the UK's cooperation to bring to justice the economic offenders and fugitives.

Nirav Modi, the fugitive diamond merchant, is wanted in India to stand trial on fraud and money laundering charges in an estimated USD 2 billion Pun-

jab National Bank (PNB) loan scam case.

Mallya, who fled to the United Kingdom in March 2016, is wanted in India over a default of Rs 9,000 crore that was loaned to Kingfisher Airlines (KFA) by several banks.

Lalit Modi is also wanted by Indian probe agencies for his alleged involvement in money laundering and violating the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA).

- Agencies

India inks landmark trade deal with UK

CONTINUED FROM P1

and said the nations were "writing a new chapter" in their history.

He highlighted Indian textiles, footwear, gems and jewellery, seafood and engineering goods will get better market access in the UK, with agricultural products and processed food industry winning new opportunities for growth following the trade deal.

"This agreement will prove especially beneficial for India's youth, farmers, fishermen and MSME sector. On the other hand, people and industries in India will be able to access products made in the UK such as medical devices and aerospace parts at affordable and attractive prices," Modi said.

"Along with this agreement, we have also reached a consensus on the Double Contributions Convention (DCC). This will inject new energy into the services sectors of both countries, especially in technology and finance."

"It will promote ease of doing business, reduce cost of doing business and increase the confidence of doing business," he said.

The prime minister went on to use cricket as a metaphor for the UK-India relationship, saying there may be a "swing and a miss" at times, but they are committed to playing with a "straight bat" and building a "high-scoring, solid partnership".

Hours before the trade pact was inked, Starmer said it will create thousands of British jobs across the UK, unlock new opportunities for businesses and drive growth.

According to the UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT), once the trade pact comes into force, India's average tariff on British products will drop from 15 per cent to 3 per cent. It will mean British companies selling products to India, from soft drinks and cosmetics to cars and medical devices, will find it easier to sell to the Indian market. Whisky producers will benefit from tariffs slashed in half, reduced immediately from 150 per cent to 75 per cent and then dropped even further to 40 per cent over the next 10 years, giving the UK an advantage over international competitors in reaching the Indian market, DBT said.

CONTINUED FROM P1

more competitive in the UK market, potentially leading to higher exports.

TEXTILES:

- Zero-duty market access for the textiles and clothing sector accounts for 1,143 tariff lines (or product categories).
- India is facing a duty disadvantage vis-a-vis Bangladesh, Pakistan and Cambodia, which had duty-free access to the UK market. The FTA eliminates the tariff on textile imports from India, thereby enhancing its competitiveness.
- In textiles and clothing, while the UK's total imports (USD 26.95 billion) are lower than India's global exports (USD 36.71 billion), India still supplies worth only USD 1.79 billion to the UK.

ENGINEERING

- A number of goods to get zero-duty market access.
- The UK is India's 6th largest engineering export market.
- India's global exports are USD 77.79 billion, while the UK imports USD 193.52 billion worth of such products, yet only USD 4.28 billion comes from India, signalling strong potential for expansion.
- With tariff elimination (as high as 18 per cent) under the FTA, engineering exports to the UK could nearly

double in the next five years, reaching over USD 7.5 billion by 2029-30.

PHARMA

- India exports stand at USD 23.31 billion globally, and the UK imports were nearly USD 30 billion, but Indian pharma accounts for under USD 1 billion, indicating significant headroom for growth.
- Generics get the sweet medicine - The FTA's zero tariff provisions are expected to enhance the competitiveness of Indian generics in the UK market.
- Number of medical devices like surgical instruments, diagnostic equipment, ECG machines, X-Ray systems will not attract any duty. To make domestic products more competitive.

CHEMICALS

- The FTA is anticipated to trigger a dramatic 30-40 per cent increase in India's chemical exports to the UK, propelling figures to an estimated USD 650-750 million in 2025-26.
- In chemicals and allied products, India's exports stand at over USD 40.52 billion globally, against the UK's imports of USD 35.11 billion, but captures only USD 843 million of that market, highlighting a potential to scale up, especially with improved market access under the FTA.

Mumbai train blasts: SC stays HC order

CONTINUED FROM P1

accused, was disbelieved on a "hyper-technical ground" that the seized explosives were not sealed with a lac seal.

The state government, in its appeal, raised several serious objections to the high court's order of acquittal.

The plea argued due procedural safeguards under Section 23(2) of Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) were observed, including proper sanctioning by senior officers like prosecution witness 185 Anami Roy.

It said the high court overlooked the validity of these approvals despite no substantial contradiction in the prosecution's evidence.

The plea took exception to the high court's rejection of the recovery of 500 grams of RDX from one of the accused on the ground that it lacked a lac seal.

The state argued RDX, being highly inflammable, was not sealed for safety reasons and the recovery was duly sanctioned and documented.

The high court allowed the appeals filed by the accused against their conviction

and sentences imposed on them by a special court in 2015.

The high court verdict came as a major embarrassment to the Maharashtra ATS which probed the case.

The agency claimed the accused were members of the banned outfit Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and hatched the conspiracy with Pakistani members of the terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The Supreme Court on Thursday issued notice on Maharashtra government's appeal against the Bombay High Court's July 21 order.

Next V-P likely to be someone from RSS

CONTINUED FROM P1

names who are staunch Sangh workers and have been dedicated to the party. BJP is doing this because earlier Satpal Malik, who has a non-RSS background, who was appointed LG of J&K had embarrassed the party. Now comes the Jag-deep Dhankhar saga.

During the farmers' movement and general elections 2024, Malik tried to harm the Modi government by making statements against it. The opposition believes that the way Dhankhar has

resigned, sooner or later he will also say something. The opposition feels that Dhankhar did not resign due to health reasons but his resignation was taken. Based on this, Congress and other parties started farmer and Jat politics.

In fact, leaders like Malik and Dhankhar were never of the Sangh ideology. Satpal Malik started his politics with Lok Dal, then reached BJP via Janata Dal and Congress. Similarly, Jag-deep Dhankhar started his politics with Janata Dal and

joined BJP via Congress. After the BJP government was formed at the Centre in 2014, the Modi government made Malik the Governor of Bihar in 2017.

A year later, he was appointed the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. While being the Lieutenant Governor there, Malik started speaking against the government. Then he was sent to Goa. Malik had created trouble by opening a front against his own government during the farmers' movement.

'Baseless' charges: ECI

CONTINUED FROM P1

"ECI is wondering as to why such baseless and threatening allegations are being made against CEC and that too now?" the spokesperson added.

The remarks came after the former Congress chief on Thursday doubled down on his claims that the party has found voter addition in one of the Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka in last year Lok Sabha polls.

The Lok Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly

also issued a stern warning to the poll panel and said that if you think you can get away with it, you are mistaken and we are going to come for you.

"I want to send a message to the Election Commission: If you think you are going to get away with it, if your officers think they are going to get away with it, you are mistaken. You are not going to get away with it, because we are going to come for you," Rahul Gandhi said in a stern message to the poll panel.

'NO CURRENT PLAN TO RECONSIDER OR REMOVE 'SOCIALISM', 'SECULARISM' FROM PREAMBLE'

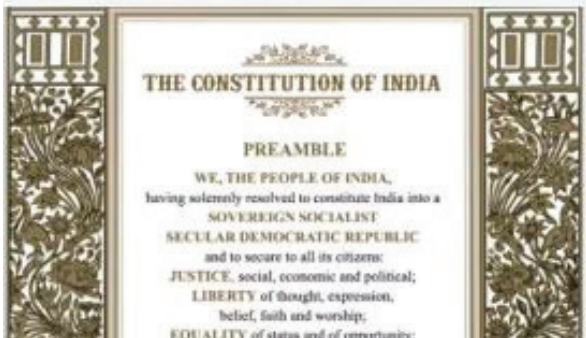
The govt has not formally initiated any legal process to remove the two words.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Union government has “no current plan or intention” to reconsider or remove the words ‘socialism’ and ‘secularism’ from the Preamble of the Constitution inserted during the Emergency period, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday.

The House was also told that the government has not “formally” initiated any legal or constitutional process to remove the two words from the Preamble of the Constitution.

In a written reply, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said while there may be discussions or debates in certain public or political circles, “no formal deci-



sion or proposal has been announced by the government” regarding amendments to these terms.

“The government’s official stand is that there is no current plan or intention to reconsider or remove the words ‘socialism’ and ‘secularism’ from the Preamble of the Constitution. Any discussions regarding amendments to the Preamble would require thorough

deliberation and broad consensus, but as of now, the government has not initiated any formal process to change these provisions,” the minister asserted.

He pointed out that in November 2024, the Supreme Court had also dismissed petitions challenging the 1976 amendment (42nd Constitutional Amendment), which affirmed that Parliament’s power to

amend the Constitution extends to the Preamble.

The court clarified that “socialism” in the Indian context signifies a welfare state and does not impede private sector growth, while “secularism” is integral to the Constitution’s basic structure.

Regarding the atmosphere created by the office-bearers of some social organisations, Meghwal said certain groups may be expressing opinions or advocating for reconsideration of these words.

“Such activities can create a public discourse or atmosphere around the issue, but this does not necessarily reflect the official stance or actions of the government,” he said.

Last month, then

vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar had asserted that the words inserted in the Preamble of the Constitution through an amendment during the Emergency era were a “festering wound”, lending weight to the call by a top RSS leader for a review of the added terms ‘secular’ and ‘socialist’.

Wading into the political row sparked by RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale’s call for a national debate on whether the terms ‘secular’ and ‘socialist’ to define India’s foundational values should remain in the Preamble, Dhankhar had said the Preamble is sacrosanct and “not changeable”. He further said the added words were a “sacrilege to the spirit of Sanatan”.

Haryana Cong to soon get district presidents

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The list of district presidents of Haryana Congress can be released by the high command soon. If sources are to be believed, then organization general secretary KC Venugopal, after holding several rounds of meetings with senior leaders of the state, has finalized the names of the district presidents and sent the list to the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. The list will be released as soon as he gives the green signal. Rahul Gandhi is not showing any laxity in the selection of district presidents under the organization creation. He is also asking for names from his team and matching them, then taking a decision. After the list of district presidents is released, the name of the new state president

will be announced. As per indications, the next president of Haryana Congress will be from OBC. After this, the decision on the post of leader of the legislative party will be taken. It is more likely that this post will be given to a non-Jat. The Congress high command is trying to prepare a completely new Congress in Haryana. Therefore, many old leaders are likely to get less importance. In the matter of selection of district presidents, discussions were definitely held with all the veterans of the state, former Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, MP Shailaja and Randeep Singh Surjewala, Udaybhan and some prominent leaders, but the names given by them were also thoroughly brainstormed. A separate exercise has been done by the state in-charge VK Hariprasad. Actually, Congress is going

to give great power to its district presidents. They will have an important role even in the selection of candidates. The party is currently focusing on those states where Congress is continuously losing elections. Under the organization creation campaign, a new team has been announced for Gujarat. Now it is Haryana’s turn. Rahul Gandhi himself has held a meeting with the leaders of Haryana once and is himself keeping an eye on the whole matter. There is no organization in Haryana for more than two decades. Due to internal conflicts, the high command was unable to take a decision. But after losing three consecutive elections, Rahul himself took over the charge. Apart from Gujarat and Haryana, organisation creation drive is being run in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh as well.

Kanda’s statement that BJP aided Chautala’s son in Assembly polls sparks political controversy

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Former Sirsa MLA Gopal Kanda has set off a fresh controversy in Haryana by making a statement that the BJP helped Indian National Lok Dal candidates in 2024 assembly elections.

In a video being circulated on social media Kanda could be heard saying that the INLD’s Arjun Chautala was losing from Rania assembly constituency and a senior BJP leader said that the INLD set to lose this seat to Congress if they will not help.

The statement has evoked a sharp reaction from the opposition as the Congress party has alleged that Kanda’s statement has exposed a “secret understanding” between the BJP and the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) during the last Assembly elections.

However, the explosive admission has provided fresh ammunition to the opposition with the Congress, which claims it confirms long-suspected col-



lusion between BJP and INLD aimed at undermining the democratic process.

Congress MP Deepender Singh Hooda alleged that Kanda’s statement has torn the mask off a dirty political conspiracy.

“It’s now clear that BJP and INLD were working hand in glove during the elections. Gopal Kanda has openly admitted that Abhay Chautala’s son was made MLA from Rania

with help from BJP and a prominent BJP leader. This is not politics, this is betrayal of the people of Haryana,” Hooda alleged.

Accompanied by three other MPs of the Congress party, Hooda further claimed that the BJP had a covert arrangement with INLD for three seats — Rania, Dabwali, and Ellenabad, and in return, INLD supported BJP across the rest of the state. “These parties pretended to be in opposition, but behind the scenes they were united against one target: the Congress. This is the reason INLD, JJP, and HLP have been reduced to political footnotes — they were never real alternatives, only BJP’s B-teams,” he said.

The Congress leader also accused BJP and INLD of colluding in the recent Rajya Sabha elections, stating that some members voted against the Congress candidate to aid BJP’s victory — an episode that, according to him, now fits into a larger pattern of manipulation and electoral sabotage.

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

India’s flagship crop insurance scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), is under scrutiny with pending claims rising to the insurance companies reaching to Rs 6604 crore as of June 30.

As per the figures Andhra Pradesh tops the list with Rs 2,565.8 crore in pending claims, followed by Rajasthan at Rs 1,531.8 crore and Madhya Pradesh at Rs 1,469.8 crore.

Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh also face delays, with Rs 334.4 crore and Rs 121.1 crore still unpaid, respectively. Meanwhile, states like Goa, Sikkim, and Telangana have cleared all claims, showing uneven



performance across the country. This was revealed in a written reply by the Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the Lok Sabha pointing to delays as the farmers were waiting for the claims after crop losses from floods, droughts, and unseasonal rains.

As per the reply the delay behind the disbursement of claims was that the governments are slow to submit

The National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP) and Digiclim Module, linked with the Public Finance Management System, aim to speed up claim processing. Starting with the Kharif 2024 season, insurance companies face a 12% penalty for delays in settling claims.

The government is also using advanced technology like YES-TECH, which uses satellite imagery for accurate yield estimates, and WINDS, which tracks local weather patterns to assess losses better. Despite these efforts, farmer groups are frustrated.

They say timely payments are crucial for their survival after crop failures, and delays defeat the purpose of the insurance scheme.

IT raids on former minister Malla Reddy’s son’s residence in Kompally

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA
HYDERABAD

In a major development, the Income Tax (IT) department on Thursday conducted raids at the plush residence of Ch Bhadra Reddy, son of former minister Ch Malla Reddy, located in Kompally under Medchal constituency. The action comes close on the heels of earlier inspections at Malla Reddy Hospitals and Malla Reddy Medical College in Suraram.

Sources in the IT department revealed that the raids were initiated following a specific tip-off regarding suspicious high-value cash transactions. Bhadra Reddy, who serves as the chairman of Malla Reddy Hospital, and his family members were reportedly questioned extensively about recent financial dealings—both digital and cash-based.

These raids are not the first time the Malla Reddy family has come under scrutiny.

During the operation, IT officials confiscated mobile phones of the domestic staff and reportedly directed them to remain indoors while searches were underway. The department is said to be closely scrutinizing documents and digital evidence related to financial flows into and out of the institution.

These raids are not the first time the Malla Reddy family has come under scrutiny. Earlier, both the Income Tax department and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had carried out searches at multiple properties linked to the family, during which they

reportedly uncovered significant amounts of unaccounted cash.

The timing of the latest raid has raised political eyebrows. Just two days prior, Preeti Reddy—wife of Bhadra Reddy—met with several BJP leaders in Hyderabad. Adding to the speculation, her associates had put up banners featuring BJP leaders during the recent Bonalu celebrations. Soon after these political developments, IT teams swooped in on her residence, intensifying the political buzz around the raids.

While official details on the exact amount of cash or assets seized are yet to be disclosed, political circles are abuzz with the implications of these enforcement actions, especially given the recent proximity of the family to BJP leaders ahead of possible political realignments in Telangana.

Srinagar: Lord Shiva’s holy mace reaches Shankaracharya temple

ASHIQ MIR
SRINAGAR

As part of the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, the revered ‘Chhari Mubarak’ the holy mace of Lord Shiva reached the historic Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar.

The ceremonial procession began from Dashnami Akhara under the supervision of Mahant Dipendra Giri, the traditional custodian of the holy mace. A special ‘Chhari Pujan’ was held at the temple, with a large number of devotees in attendance, offering prayers and seeking blessings.

The Shankaracharya Temple, a significant spiritual landmark in Kashmir, witnessed heavy footfall of pilgrims during the special event, as chants of

State/UT	Total Pending Claims (Rs. in Crore)
Andhra Pradesh	2565.8
Rajasthan	1531.8
Madhya Pradesh	1469.8
Tamil Nadu	126.3
Uttar Pradesh	121.1

devotion echoed across the premises.

So far, nearly 3.5 lakh yatrīs have paid obeisance at the Holy Cave Shrine of Amarnath and performed darshan of the naturally formed ice Shivlingam. The yatra continues to see enthusiastic participation from across the country.

The annual pilgrimage not only symbolizes deep spiritual devotion but also showcases Kashmir’s rich religious heritage and cultural unity.

Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland on high alert over illegal influx

NIBIR DEKA
DISPUR

As Assam intensifies its crackdown on encroachers and illegal settlers, the ripple effects are being felt far beyond its borders. The recent eviction drives, particularly in Dhubri and Goalpara, have prompted neighbouring states — Nagaland, Manipur, and Meghalaya — to issue high-level alerts to prevent the influx of displaced individuals.

Three states in the northeast have issued an alert cautioning against the entry of illegal migrants from Assam, where the Himanta Biswa Sarma government has been carrying out massive eviction drives.

SC reserves order on K’taka govt’s plea challenging bail to actor Darshan

SAMBHAV SHARMA
NEW DELHI

In a latest development in Renukaswamy murder case, the Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its order on the Karnataka government’s appeal against the bail granted to Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan reserved the order after hearing arguments from both sides.

During the hearing, the apex court expressed sharp concern about the manner in which the Karnataka High Court had granted bail.

Justice Pardiwala re-



marked that the bail order read more like an acquittal. The bench also questioned the High Court’s decision to delve deep into the merits of the case.

Justice Pardiwala said: ‘Is this how you grant bail? We will not repeat the High Court’s mistake.’

The Court also noted its concern over the High Court’s comment that no reason was shown for arrest, despite the case involving serious charges under IPC Section 302.

Development of gram panchayats to acquire new dimension

AMAN AGNIHOTRI
KANPUR

A one-day workshop on Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) was organized on Tuesday in the new auditorium located at Sarasaiya Ghat. In this workshop organized under the chairmanship of District Officer Jitendra Pratap Singh, district level officers were informed about the purpose, utility and practical aspects of PAI.



In the workshop, the DM gave clear instructions that the concept of Panchayat Advancement Index should be effectively implemented in all 590 gram panchay-

ats of the district to ensure monitoring, evaluation and transparency of the schemes operated at the panchayat level. He also directed all the departments

to take concrete action in this direction and inform their subordinate officers and employees in this regard. The DPO discussed the topic in detail, outlining the difference between PAI-1 and PAI-2. In the workshop, the concerned departments were also trained on various questions related to gram panchayats, so that the quality of implementation of schemes can be improved.

DM Jitendra Pratap Singh

said that “This workshop has been organized to speed up development work at the Panchayat level. The facilities required in the 590 gram panchayats of the district will be identified and developed in a time-bound manner.”

Senior officials of other departments including Chief Development Officer (CDO), District Forest Officer (DFO), Chief Medical Officer (CMO) were also present in the workshop.

Anti-terror operation: residential property attached in Sopore

ASHIQ MIR
SRINAGAR

In a significant crackdown under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Sopore Police have attached a residential property for its alleged role in providing shelter and logistical support to terrorists involved in anti-national activities.

The property includes a single-storey residential house and land measuring 3 kanals and 3 marlas, falling under Survey Nos. 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2018, located at Reban Ramham. The property is

owned by Javid Ahmad Dar, son of Ghulam Rasool Dar, a resident of Reban Sopore.

The action is linked to FIR No. 133/2024, registered at Police Station Sopore under sections 13, 18, 19, 20, 23, 38, and 39 of the UAPA, along with section 7/25 of the Arms Act.

During the investigation, it was established that the property was deliberately used to shelter terrorists and facilitate their movement and operations in the Sopore region. Following the collection of substantial evidence and

approval from the competent authority, police proceeded with the formal attachment as per legal provisions.

Sopore Police reaffirm their commitment to dismantling the terror ecosystem in the region not just by neutralizing operatives, but also by targeting those who support or shelter them.

The public is strongly advised to avoid providing any form of support—direct or indirect to terrorists or their affiliates. Strict legal action will be taken against anyone found involved.

SECURITY LAPSES AT OVER 100 SPOTS DETECTED IN CHECKS AHEAD OF I-DAY

Cops in Delhi are working and planning foolproof, robust security in view of high alert ahead of Independence Day

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Ahead of Independence Day, Delhi Police conducted comprehensive checks at key places in the city, including hotels, railway stations and bus terminals, and identified security lapses at over 100 spots, sources said on Thursday.

The Special Cell, North-east Delhi, reported lapses at 16 locations, followed by 13 in East, 12 each in Shahdara and North, 11 in Central, 10 in Southeast, nine in South, eight in Metro, seven in Rohini, and six in Dwarka, they said.

“Multiple teams of the Special Cell undertook a five-day security inspection drive across various parts of Delhi in view of the high alert surrounding the



upcoming national event,” said a source.

During the inspection, non-functional CCTV cameras in hotels, parkings, locations near metro stations, eateries at metro stations, several premises near railway stations, bus stands and many other installations were flagged.

“The teams also inspected non-functional door frame metal detectors (DFMDs),

security personnel deployment and improper maintenance of visitor records,” a source said.

Another officer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the Special Cell will write letters to the DCPs of the concerned districts to improve security in their respective areas.

The inspection, conducted discreetly by trained teams of the Special Cell, was

The officer said the Special Cell has submitted a detailed report of its findings to senior officers and has recommended immediate corrective action.

aimed at assessing the capital’s preparedness to tackle any terror threats. It covered public places known to attract large crowds.

“Teams noticed a lack of functional DFMDs at various entry points. Several public places had either switched off their metal detectors, or they did not have power supply, or were not in working condition,” said the officer.

At some places, CCTV cameras were poorly positioned. Several public places did not have adequate lighting during night hours.

The officer said the Spe-

cial Cell has submitted a detailed report of its findings to senior officers and has recommended immediate corrective action.

“We cannot afford to ignore these gaps. The DCPs are already working and planning foolproof and robust security in their areas.

“They are also holding meetings of ACPs and SHOs of their districts. Local station house officers have been directed to re-inspect all sensitive spots in their respective jurisdictions and submit compliance reports at the earliest,” the officer said.

Delhi CM says she welcomes ‘constructive criticism’

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday welcomed “constructive criticism” over waterlogging and civic issues in Delhi and lashed out at the AAP saying her government is “fixing the mess” left behind by the previous regime.

Gupta’s reaction comes a day after, AAP leaders, including Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Atishi, shared multiple videos on social media showing waterlogging in residential and industrial areas, and targeted the government for failing to address the issue.

Speaking at the launch of Ayushman Arogya Mandir health facilities, the CM said, “The same people who now post videos saying ‘look at this road, look at this water’, were in power five months ago. Why didn’t they fix it then?”

No immediate reaction was available from the Aam Aadmi Party over the Delhi chief minister’s charges and



The Delhi government will now develop seven super speciality hospitals in place of the incomplete ones and strengthen the healthcare system by digitising it, CM Gupta said.

claims. Gupta called the opposition AAP “better half” of the BJP government saying the party point out things it could not do while in power in Delhi for over a decade. “We welcome con-

structive criticism, but the truth is that we are now fixing the mess they left behind,” she said.

Gupta took a dig at AAP saying she was still looking for the health model which it touted as world level.

“They spent thousands of crores of rupees on hospitals but could not complete even one. Four ICU hospitals were to be started by the previous AAP government but only pillars were erected. Even appointments were stuck and hospitals were clubbed to be headed by just one medical superintendent,” the chief minister said.

The Delhi government will now develop seven super speciality hospitals in place of the incomplete ones and strengthen the healthcare system by digitising it, CM Gupta said.

The BJP government will rectify every shortcoming pointed by the AAP leaders because their party could not do so while ruling Delhi, she added.

SC to hear plea to allow BS-VI end-of-life vehicles

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear an application seeking to allow vehicles meeting the BS-VI emission standards to operate in the Delhi-NCR instead of a blanket age-based ban on vehicles.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran agreed to examine whether BS-VI compliant vehicles should have an end-of-life period of 15 years for petrol vehicles and 10 years for diesel vehicles in the NCR.

The bench posted the matter for hearing next Monday, after an advocate mentioned the application for urgent listing. The advocate stated that a direction from the Supreme Court is nec-



essary to permit such vehicles to continue operating even after their life term has expired, as these periods were established by the court itself. He said the government can’t alter it, given the apex court orders relating to curbing pollution.

In 2015, the National Green Tribunal directed that diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years should no longer be allowed to operate in Delhi NCR to combat pollution. The apex court in 2018 had upheld the directions of the NGT.

Delhi HC strengthens bench with appointment of three new judges

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Three newly appointed judges--Shail Jain, Madhu Jain, and Vinod Kumar were formally sworn in at the Delhi High Court on Thursday, raising the court’s working strength to 43 judges, against a sanctioned total of 60.

The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya following the central government’s clearance of their appointments. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by sitting judges of the Delhi High Court, family members of the appointees, senior members of the Delhi High Court Bar Association, and other distinguished legal professionals.



The appointments were officially notified by the Ministry of Law and Justice on Tuesday.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal announced the selections via his account on X (formerly Twitter), stating that they were made under the authority of the Constitution of India, in consultation with the Chief Justice of India. These appointments are expected to ease the pressure on Delhi’s judicial sys-

tem, which has long been hampered by a shortage of judges and a growing backlog of cases.

The Supreme Court Collegium approved the appointments of Shail Jain and Madhu Jain during its meeting on July 1, 2025. Vinod Kumar’s elevation was subsequently cleared in the Collegium’s July 2 meeting, following a thorough evaluation of each officer’s judicial track record and tenure.

'Houses, shops of Bihari are being demolished in Purvanchal'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh hit out against the BJP and alleged that houses and shops of people from Purvanchal and Bihar living in Delhi are being demolished.

He said that those who were removing people from Bihar to Delhi would be removed by the people of Bihar during the upcoming polls in the state. Sanjay Singh said, “Houses and shops of Purvanchali and Bihari people living in Delhi are being demolished.

We have protested against that. Samajwadi Party MPs from Purvanchal have also supported our protest. We stand with the people of Delhi who are suffering. We stand with people of



Purvanchal. Those who are removing people of Bihar in Delhi, people of Bihar will remove such people during the Bihar polls, this is why we are protesting.”

Earlier, Sanjay Singh submitted an Adjournment motion on Wednesday to draw attention to and hold a discussion on the humanitarian crisis arising from the forceful eviction in the national capital, New Delhi. In his letter, the AAP MP claimed that the eviction of a large number of

women, children, disabled and elderly after the Lok Sabha elections, and before the formation of the newly elected central government, highlighted the contradiction between the promises made by the government and its actions. Singh in his letter further stated that the demolition of the homes of the people not only violated Articles 21 and 14 of the Constitution but also reflected the “insensitivity and brutality” of the government.

PwC India expands in NCR with state-of-the-art facility

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

New facility will accommodate over 1,200 employees, in line with the region’s growing strategic importance in serving domestic and international clients Tuesday, 22 July 2025 – PwC India today announced the opening of its new office in DLF Downtown 4, Gurugram - its sixth facility in the NCR.

Spread across 125,000 sq. ft., the new office will be home to the firm’s growing workforce in the region. This expansion brings PwC India’s total capacity in the NCR to nearly 8,000 people – nationally PwC India employs

Spread across 125,000 sq. ft., the new office will be home to the firm’s growing workforce in the region.

close to 30,000 people across 20 locations. The office will feature innovation hubs, client experience zones, and collaborative spaces designed to foster creativity, enhance service delivery and support the firm’s multidisciplinary approach to solving complex problems and creating disruptive value for its clients. At the opening, Sanjeev Krishan, Chairperson, PwC in In-

dia, said, “The opening of our sixth office in the NCR region represents the continued demand of our services and trust of our clients. As a people business, our offices are always centered around our clients and employees. Our new office has been designed as an open, flexible, Gen Z friendly workspace created to challenge the conventions of traditional workplaces.

The contemporary workplace design and bold interiors that are aligned with our refreshed brand identity, will support balance, collaboration, and innovation—giving our people what they need to thrive and bring their best every day, and our clients the experience they expect.”

88% seats filled in first round of DU UG admissions

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

As many as 62,565 undergraduate seats have been filled at Delhi University at the end of the first round of admissions, which is nearly 88 per cent of the total available UG capacity.

The upgrade window for the next round has now been opened and will remain live till 4:59 pm on July 25. Of the confirmed admissions, 34,014 are female and 28,551 are male candidates. A total of 143 orphan students (77 females and 66 males) and 949 single girl children have secured seats.

While 16,126 candidates have frozen their admission, 43,741 have opted for an upgrade. DU had allocated over



93,000 seats in the first round, significantly exceeding its actual undergraduate seat capacity of just over 71,000, to account for withdrawals and rejections. “Round 1 has concluded with 62,565 confirmed admissions, including 34,014 females and 28,551 males,” a Delhi University official said. “A total of 143 orphans and 949 single girl child

candidates have been admitted. While 16,126 candidates have frozen their admission, 43,741 have opted for an upgrade.”

The admissions process began on June 17, 2025, under the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS). After the CUET results were declared, candidates were allowed to fill in college and program preferences.

Attempt to disrupt functioning of Parl serious threat: HC on security breach case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

During a hearing on the bail application of Manoranjan D, an accused in the 2023 Parliament security breach case, the Delhi High Court orally observed that any attempt to interrupt the functioning of Parliament could be seen as a deeply alarming act, with serious implications for national security.

A division bench of Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Shalinder Kaur made the observation in response to

Manoranjan’s lawyer arguing that his client’s use of non-toxic smoke canisters and slogans was a peaceful protest aimed at highlighting issues like unemployment.

The bench countered, “The best way to create terror in India is to disrupt the Parliament. You disrupted the Parliament.” The breach happened on December 13, 2023, when Manoranjan and Sagar Sharma leapt into the Lok Sabha chamber during a live session, while



Neelam Azad and Amol Shinde protested outside. All four were arrested for coordinating the act using coloured smoke devices.

More recently, the High Court granted bail to Neelam Azad and Mahesh Kumawat, requiring a Rs 50,000 personal

bond and two sureties. Conditions include a ban on media engagement, compulsory police station visits thrice a week, and re-

The bench countered, “The best way to create terror in India is to disrupt the Parliament. You disrupted the Parliament.”

strictions on leaving Delhi. Delhi Police opposed bail, presenting evidence under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA),

1967. They argued that the accused posed a risk of absconding, influencing witnesses, and obstructing investigations due to their influence. The defense criticized the use of UAPA, calling it excessive and an attempt to suppress dissent. Allegations also surfaced regarding the assault of the accused inside Parliament. On June 7, 2024, Delhi Police filed a 1,000-page charge sheet against six individuals, detailing their role in the breach, which oc-

curred on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament attack. Prosecution sanction under Sections 16 and 18 of the UAPA was granted by the Lieutenant Governor, based on findings by the Tis Hazari Review Committee. The original FIR, lodged on December 14, 2023, included charges under IPC Sections 186, 353, 452, 153, 34, 120B, and sections of the UAPA.

The investigation was subsequently transferred to the Special Cell’s Counter-Intelligence Unit.

DGCA ISSUES SHOW CAUSE NOTICES TO AIR INDIA FOR MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS

The notices pertain to breaches related to Flight Duty Period and weekly rest requirements, cabin crew rest and duty norms, crew training, operational procedures.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday issued four show cause notices to Air India over a range of regulatory violations, sources told ANI.

The notices pertain to breaches related to Flight Duty Period (FDP) and Weekly Rest requirements, cabin crew rest and duty norms, crew training, and operational procedures.

According to sources, the show cause notices were issued on July 23 following voluntary disclosures made by Air India to the DGCA on June 20 and 21.

Each notice seeks a response from the airline within 14 to 15 days of receipt, asking why appropriate enforcement action should not be taken under applicable provisions of the Aircraft Rules and Civil Aviation Requirements.



Following the accident, the DGCA intensified its checks and inspections of critical safety components to identify and rectify immediate systemic issues.

In the event of non-compliance, the matter may be decided ex parte based on the evidence on record, says the show cause notice

accessed by ANI. Air India, while responding to the development in a statement, said, "We acknowledge receipt

of these notices from the regulator related to certain voluntary disclosures that were made over the last one year by Air India. We will respond to the said notices within the stipulated period. We remain committed to the safety of our crew and passengers."

Following the accident, the DGCA intensified its checks and inspections of

critical safety components to identify and rectify immediate systemic issues.

DGCA continuously reviews and updates its surveillance methodology based on risk assessment, operator performance, fleet performance and global best practices such as the guidelines issued by European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and Federal Aviation Agency (FAA), the statement added.

In 2021, the total number of technical defects reported was 514. In the years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, the technical defects reported were 528, 448, 421, and 183, respectively, by the Indian airlines included: Alliance Air, Indigo, SpiceJet, Tata Asia Airlines Ltd (Vistara), Air India, Air India Express, and Akasa Air.

Additionally, 3925 complaints by passengers have been received by the DGCA as of July 14, 2025.

95.1% rural households have access to toilets, says Jal Shakti Minister

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

According to a government survey, about 95.1 per cent of rural households have access to toilets, 92.7 per cent have arrangements to dispose of organic waste and 78.7 per cent have systems in place for greywater disposal, Minister of State for Jal Shakti V Somanna said on Thursday.

In a written reply in Lok Sabha, the minister quoted findings from the Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2023-24 conducted by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, which covered 17,304 villages across 729 districts in the country.

The survey included feedback from 2,60,059 households and 85,901 public places such as schools, anganwadis, health centres and markets.

In terms of waste segregation, only 39.9 per cent households reported segregating waste into biodegradable and non-biodegradable



The survey included feedback from 2,60,059 households and 85,901 public places such as schools, anganwadis, health centres and markets.

categories, it said.

At the village level, 45 per cent have exclusive or shared vehicles to collect and transport solid waste, and 29.4 per cent have designated sheds for storage and segregation.

For plastic waste management, 62.1 per cent villages reported having forward linkages in place. Among the public places surveyed, 91.1 per cent have minimal

stagnant water, and 76.7 per cent have access to toilets, the survey showed.

Out of the 437 faecal sludge treatment plants with urban linkages, 83.8 per cent were functional. Of the 1,029 plastic waste management units surveyed, 61.4 per cent were operational, while 58.5 per cent of the 451 GOBARdhan and biogas plants were found functional, the minister said, quoting the survey.

Govt to notify new vegetable oil regulation order next week: Food secretary Chopra

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The government will notify a new order next week to regulate vegetable oil products in India with modern, transparent and technologically advanced provisions, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Thursday.

The 2025 Vegetable Oil Products, Production and Availability (VOPPA) Regulation Order will replace the existing 2011 order and emphasise enhanced monitoring of edible oil imports, production, stocks and sales through digital tools.

"The associations have been consulted. It's in the final stages now, probably by next week it will be notified," Chopra told reporters on the sidelines of the fourth edition of Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) Global Roundtable.



The new regulation makes it mandatory for the industry to report production, sales and pricing figures. "Right now we are groping in the dark because we are dependent on the association for the data," he said.

Addressing the event, the secretary said the VOPPA framework will track production, pricing and availability in real-time, providing critical data to industry stakeholders while improving compliance, market monitoring, and

product integrity.

On import duty cuts in crude edible oils, Chopra said the government has implemented calibrated customs duty reductions to cushion the impact of global fluctuations and ensure affordability.

The government is monitoring market dynamics, conducting nationwide inspections and working with industry associations to ensure duty cuts are "swiftly passed on" to customers for fair price discovery across the supply chain.

While overall food inflation remains at its lowest since 2021, edible oil has seen 20-30 per cent annual inflation except groundnut oil, which remains a concern for the government.

Mustard oil prices remain firm, though government agencies like Nafed have a stock of 7 lakh tonnes of mustard seed, which should help ease pressure on rates.

Court grants pre-arrest bail to Pharmacy Council of India chief in corruption case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has granted anticipatory bail to Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) president Montu M Patel in an alleged multi-crore-rupee scam, prima facie finding the allegations against him not backed by "any cogent material".

In an order on July 23, special judge Sushant Changotra said, "The courts are under a bounden duty to strike a fair balance vis-a-vis the protection of personal liberty of an individual and the right of the investigating agency for fair investigation."

The court observed given

the facts of the case, where the allegations were "prima facie not supported by any cogent material", it would fail in its duty if Patel's liberty was not protected.

The CBI conducted searches at Patel's premises after he was booked for alleged corruption and systemic irregularities in the inspection and approval processes for pharmacy colleges.

The action against Patel was taken based on the findings of a preliminary enquiry, indicating instances of alleged corruption, control and potential manipulation in granting approvals to colleges, besides initial allegations against him of

pre-election inducements and post-election nepotism.

Judge Changotra, however, said the accused had already joined the investigation and he was not at flight risk besides no recovery was to be effected from him and no facts necessitated his custodial interrogation.

The alleged offences, the court said, were punishable with a maximum punishment of seven years.

Despite the court's queries, it was observed the investigating officer (IO) failed to specify how he had quoted the bribe amount of Rs 5,000 crore and instead said it was arrived at via "secret information" and "media reports".

The judge said the ownership of the properties worth Rs 118 crore, allegedly purchased by Patel, was not specified, nor were the dates of purchase mentioned.

"Further, perusal of the case diary of the IO vis-à-vis the interrogation of the accused shows that he was not confronted with the aforementioned facts. The said facts on the face of it make the allegations quack the above stated quantum highly doubtful," the order read.

The court wondered if the allegations were true, how was the agency unable to find any material to support the case despite investigating it for over two years.

Gole Market restoration: Traffic curbs in area for 6 mths

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In view of the conservation and restoration of the Gole Market building as a museum, vehicular movement around the area will be affected for the next six months starting July 25, according to an advisory issued on Thursday.

The extensive project which will be handled by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), includes the restoration of the iconic Gole Market building into a museum and the redevelopment of surrounding infrastructure, including the construction of a subway and a service block.

In a detailed advisory, the Delhi Traffic Police said movement between the Gole Market and Bhai Veer Singh Marg roundabout will be restricted in both directions.

However, access to Bhai

Authorities have warned that additional regulations and diversions may be imposed depending on ground conditions and the progress of work.

Veer Singh Marg will remain available via Kali Bari Marg, GPO roundabout, and certain service lanes.

The traffic restrictions will come into effect from July 25, it said.

Authorities have warned that additional regulations and diversions may be imposed depending on ground conditions and the progress of work.

Motorists approaching from Shaheed Bhagat Singh Marg (Outer Connaught Circle) are advised to take a right at Gole Market roundabout and proceed via Peshwa Road or RK Ashram Marg to reach their destinations, according to the advisory.

cording to the advisory.

Vehicles coming from Mandir Marg towards GPO roundabout via Gole Market are directed to use Kali Bari Marg. Heavy vehicles have been advised to take Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Road via Talkatora roundabout and vice versa, it said.

Similarly, vehicles heading from RK Ashram Marg towards GPO roundabout via Gole Market roundabout should use Panchkuian Marg, Bangla Lane, or Peshwa Road, the advisory added.

In addition to the traffic curbs, a strict parking advisory has also been issued

and no vehicles will be allowed to be parked on the service lanes near Gole Market roundabout and Udyan Marg.

Improperly parked vehicles will be towed and prosecuted as per the law, it said.

Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus route modifications are also under consideration to ensure smoother public mobility during the construction period, it said.

The traffic police has also urged commuters to use public transport to reduce congestion and to avoid the affected stretch wherever possible.

Travellers heading to critical transit points such as Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi Railway Station, and ISBT terminals have been advised to plan their journeys in advance to avoid delays.

Police busts interstate gang of carjackers, burglars; 3 arrested, 15 cases solved

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has busted a gang of carjackers and burglars with the arrest of three people, officials said on Thursday.

The police said they have recovered stolen vehicles, gold and silver ornaments and tools used in robberies from their possession.

Rajvir Singh (24) and Gurdeep Singh (21), both residents of MP's Indore, and Karan Singh (21) from Maharashtra were nabbed near Chitragupt Road in the Paharganj area on July 20, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Nidhin Valsan said.

With their arrest, the police claim to have worked out 15 cases of vehicle theft and burglary reported from various parts of the national capital.

"Acting on inputs and surveillance of CCTV footage, a trap was laid and the three suspects were apprehended," the DCP said.

Four stolen motorcycles, around 41



grams of gold or gold-plated metal, 19 grams of silver or silver-plated metal, four silver bracelets and a large cache of tools used in vehicle thefts and house break-ins were recovered, he said.

"During the search, several of these items were found to be linked to a case registered at Sarai Rohilla police station. On interrogation, the accused confessed to their involvement in multiple thefts," said the DCP.

The gang primarily targeted residential areas and parked two-wheelers, using special tools to break into houses and steal vehicles, the police said.

and fled the scene.

Alam was taken to the Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital, where the police were informed about the incident. Based on his statement, an FIR was registered at the Sarai Rohilla Police Station, and an investigation was initiated. A team was formed to pursue the case.

Despite the absence of CCTV footage from the park, the team managed to trace the escape route of the

accused by scanning surveillance cameras from the nearby streets and the surrounding factory areas.

"The footage revealed five suspects fleeing towards the Zakhira Railway Line. Through local informants, two boys were identified and apprehended near the Railway Line Daya Basti on July 21. A sharp-edged knife used in the offence was also recovered from their possession," the officer said.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Five minors were apprehended in connection with a dacoity case in the Inderlok area of north Delhi, officials said on Thursday.

The accused, aged between 14 and 17 years, are school dropouts and struggle with drug addiction, the police claimed.

"The incident occurred on July 19, when the victim,

Shohrab Alam (23), a factory worker residing in JJ Colony in Wazirpur, was on his way home through the Kachra Park near Inderlok. At around 10 pm, he was allegedly intercepted by a group of five boys, one of whom grabbed him from behind while two others restrained him," a police officer stated. The officer further said that when Alam resisted, one of the juveniles allegedly assaulted him with a



The accused, aged between 14 and 17 years, are school dropouts and struggle with drug addiction, the police claimed.

knife, injuring his forearm and knee. The group then robbed his mobile phone

INDIA-UK FTA EXCLUDES DAIRY, OILS, APPLES; ZERO DUTY ON 95% AGRI EXPORTS

FTA removes duties up to 70% on processed foods, benefiting 99.7% of tariff lines

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India has protected the interest of domestic farmers by excluding dairy products, edible oils and apples in the free trade agreement (FTA) with the UK while securing zero duties on 95 per cent of agri-culture and processed food items.

No tariff concession has been allowed on oats as well in the FTA, which was signed on Thursday.

On the other hand, Indian staples like turmeric, pepper, cardamom; processed goods like mango pulp, pickles, and pulses; and marine products such as shrimp and tuna will enjoy duty-free access in the UK market, boosting India's agri exports by 20 per cent over the next three years.

A commerce ministry official said there has been a major gain in the food processing sector as products that earlier faced duties up to 70 per cent will now enjoy zero duty on 99.7 per cent of tariff lines.

In marine and animal products, the duties will come down to zero from up to 20 per cent.



"India's farmers are poised to be the biggest winners of the FTA, which unlocks premium UK markets for their produce, matching or exceeding the benefits already enjoyed by exporters from Germany, the Netherlands, and other EU nations," a commerce ministry official said.

More than 95 per cent of agricultural and processed food tariff lines will attract zero duties on fruits, vegetables, cereals; pickles, spice mixes, fruit pulps; and ready-to-eat meals and processed foods.

This will lead to reduction in landed cost of these Indian products in the UK market, boosting India's export and enhancing income of domestic farmers.

"Duty-free access is ex-

pected to increase agri exports by over 20 per cent in the next three years, contributing to India's goal of USD 100 billion agri-exports by 2030," the official said.

The FTA would also give a boost to exports of emerging products such as jack-fruits, millets, and organic herbs.

In agriculture, the UK imports USD 37.52 billion worth products, but imports from India are just USD 811 million.

With regard to the benefits for the blue economy, the FTA provides for zero-duty access for 99 per cent of exports, including shrimp, tuna, fishmeal, and feeds. These are currently taxed in the range of 4.2-8.5 per cent.

Tariffs on UK products in India to drop from 15% to 3%

London: India's average tariff on UK products will drop from 15 per cent to 3 per cent under the to-be-signed India-UK FTA, a British government statement said just ahead of the scheduled signing ceremony in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Keir Starmer.

The UK statement asserted that British companies selling products to India -- from soft drinks and cosmetics to cars and medical devices -- will find it easier to sell to the Indian market.

Further, British whisky producers will benefit from tariffs slashed in half, reduced immediately from 150 per cent to 75 per cent and then dropped even further to 40 per cent over the next ten years - giving the UK an advantage over international competitors in reaching the Indian market, the UK statement noted.

"Our landmark trade deal with India is a major win for Britain. It will create thousands of British jobs across the UK, unlock new opportunities for businesses and drive growth in every corner of the country, delivering on our Plan for Change," Starmer said in the statement.

The statement added that the British Prime Minister will welcome nearly £6 billion in new investment and export wins, which will create over 2,200 British jobs across the country as Indian firms expand their operations in the UK and British companies secure new business opportunities in India.

The UK statement further added that these deals will drive jobs in high-growth sectors like aerospace, technology and advanced manufacturing - supporting engineers, technicians and supply chain workers, in every corner of the UK.

It also asserted that British workers will enjoy a collective uplift in wages of £2.2 billion each year and could also see cheaper prices and more choice on clothes, shoes, and food products.

Sensex tanks 542 points on blue-chip sell-offs

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Equity markets fell on Thursday, with the benchmark Sensex tumbling 542.47 points, amid profit-taking in blue-chip stocks and foreign fund outflows.

Despite a positive start, the 30-share BSE Sensex failed to carry forward the momentum and fell later in the trade. The benchmark tanked 542.47 points, or 0.66 per cent, to settle at 82,184.17. During the day, it tumbled 679.42 points, or 0.82 per cent, to 82,047.22.

As many as 2,410 stocks declined, while 1,645 advanced and 166 remained unchanged on the BSE.

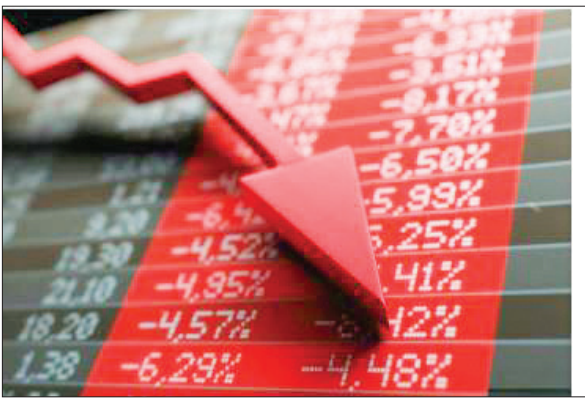
The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 157.80 points, or 0.63 per cent, to 25,062.10.

From the Sensex firms, Trent, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries, Infosys, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HCL Technologies, and NTPC were among the biggest laggards.

However, Eternal, Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, Tata Steel, and Titan were the gainers.

Infosys declined over 1 per cent amid profit-taking after its June quarter earnings announcement.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled in positive territory.



European markets were quoting in the green. The US markets ended higher on Wednesday.

"Indian equities fell sharply today (Thursday), reversing previous gains despite positive global cues. Initial optimism around the India-UK free trade agreement gave way to caution as attention shifted firmly to earnings. The IT and FMCG sectors dragged down large-cap stocks due to subdued Q1 performance. Though the Q1 earnings are broadly in line, it does not justify the premium valuation..." Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

India and the UK on Thursday inked a landmark free trade agreement (FTA) that will cut tariffs on British whisky, cars, and an array of items, besides boosting bilateral trade by about USD 34 billion annually.

The deal was signed by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and his British coun-

terpart Jonathan Reynolds in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Keir Starmer.

The FTA is expected to benefit 99 per cent Indian exports from tariff and will make it easier for British firms to export whisky, cars, and other products to India, besides boosting the overall trade basket, according to Indian officials.

"Markets traded under pressure on the weekly expiry day, reversing Wednesday's gains and continuing the prevailing downtrend. After a flat start, the Nifty gradually moved lower, primarily weighed down by persistent weakness in IT majors following Infosys' results and profit booking in private banking stocks after their recent rally. As a result, the index declined by over half a per cent to close at 25,062.10," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

ED raids in Rs 3,000-cr bank loan 'fraud' against Anil Ambani group companies

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday conducted simultaneous raids as part of an alleged Rs 3,000 crore worth bank loan fraud linked money laundering case against the companies of Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani, official sources said.

More than 35 premises in Mumbai belonging to 50 companies and 25 persons are being searched under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said. The investigation is being carried out by a Delhi-based investigation unit of the ED. The Reliance Anil Ambani group did not offer an immediate comment.

ED sources said they are probing allegations of illegal loan diversion of around Rs 3,000 crore, given by the Yes Bank, to the group companies of Ambani between 2017 and 2019. The ED has found that just before the loan was granted,



Yes Bank promoters "received" money in their concerns, the sources claimed.

The federal probe agency is investigating this nexus of "bribe" and the loan. The agency, according to the sources, is also probing allegations of "gross violations" in Yes Bank loan approvals to Anil Ambani Group companies, including charges like backdated credit approval memorandums (CAMs), investments proposed without any due diligence/credit analysis

in violation of banks credit policy, the sources said.

The loans are alleged to have been "diverted" to many group companies and shell companies by the entities involved. The agency is also looking at some instances of loans given to entities with weak financials, lack of proper documentation of loans and due diligence, borrowers having common addresses and common directors in their companies etc., the sources said.

The money laundering case stems from at least two CBI FIRs and reports shared by the National Housing Bank, SEBI, National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) and Bank of Baroda, they said.

These reports indicate, the sources said, that there was a "well-planned and thought after scheme" to divert or siphon off public money by cheating banks, shareholders, investors and other public institutions.

Govt appoints former Finance Secretary Ajay Seth as IRDAI chief

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday appointed former Finance and Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth as chairman of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Seth's appointment as chairperson of the insurance regulator for a period of three years or till the incumbent attains the age of 65 years or until further orders, whichever is the earliest, a government notification said.

Seth, a 1987-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre,



retired as Economic Affairs Secretary in June this year after a four-year stint.

The appointment of IRDAI chairman comes nearly four months after the vacancy was created following Debashish Panda completing his term in March this year.

As per the procedure for the appointment of regulators, the name is suggested

The appointment of IRDAI chairman comes nearly four months after the vacancy was created following Debashish Panda completing his term in March this year.

by the Financial Sector Regulatory Appointments Search Committee (FSRASC) headed by the Cabinet Secretary.

Based on interaction with eligible candidates, FSRASC recommends the name to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for its final approval.

IRDAI is entrusted with the task of protecting the interest of insurance policyholders and bringing about speedy and orderly growth of the in-

surance industry (including annuity and superannuation payments), for the benefit of the common man and to provide long term funds for accelerating growth of the economy.

It also helps promote fairness, transparency and orderly conduct in financial markets dealing with insurance and build a reliable management information system to enforce high standards of financial soundness among market players.

Telecom policy draft aims Rs 1L cr yearly investment, 10 lakh jobs

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The National Telecom Policy aims to attract Rs 1 lakh crore annual investments and create 10 lakh new jobs in the sector by 2030, according to the draft document released by the Department of Telecom.

The draft policy aims to position India among the top 10 global hubs for innovation and research in emerging technologies, such as 5G and 6G, AI, IoT, and Quantum Communications.

"The NTP-25 aims to accomplish the following strategic objectives in the Telecom Sector by 2030...universal and meaningful connectivity for all, double the contribution of the sector to India's GDP, ...achieve an annual investment of Rs 1,00,000 crore," the draft policy document issued on July 24 said.

The telecom department has invited public comments on the proposed policy within 21 days from the date the circular was issued.

The policy will aim to make India not only a leading consumer of digital technologies,



but also a trusted global provider of telecom products, services, and solutions.

"The National Telecom Policy 2025 (NTP-25) would position India to become the manufacturer of choice of telecom products for the world. It outlines a comprehensive roadmap for investment in research, upskilling of the workforce, infrastructure modernisation, and effective spectrum management to support in a sustainable manner for emerging use cases across smart cities, industry 4.0, rural broadband, emergency response, and digital governance," the draft said.

The policy aims to double the export of telecom prod-

The telecom department has invited public comments on the proposed policy within 21 days from the date the circular was issued.

ucts and services, the number of telecommunications startups and the sectoral R&D spending on emerging telecom technologies.

It has set a target to create an innovation-centric non-profit company and attain 10 per cent global share in 6G-related intellectual property rights by 2030.

Under the NTP-25, the government will explore the establishment of a sovereign patent fund with an objective of creating a Standard Essential Patent (SEP) pool for widely used telecom technologies and supporting the development of Standard Essential Patents (SEPs) in emerging tech.

NSDL to launch IPO, eyes Rs 4K cr; issue opens on July 30

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) is set to launch its Initial Public Offering (IPO) on July 30, with the issue size pegged at around Rs 4,000 crore.

The depository's maiden public issue will conclude on August 1. The one-day bidding for anchor investors is scheduled to open on July 29, according to the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP).

The IPO only consists of Offer For Sale (OFS) component of 5.01 crore shares and those selling shares under this are -- the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE), State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank, IDBI Bank, Union Bank of India and Administrator of Specified Undertaking of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI).

Since the public issue is entirely an OFS, NSDL will not receive any proceeds from the IPO.

This upcoming listing will make NSDL the country's second publicly traded depository after Central Depository Services (CDSL), which was listed on the NSE in 2017.

The listing of NSDL is crucial in order to comply with Sebi's ownership norms. These regulations require that no entity can hold more than 15 per cent of the shareholding in a depository company.

NSDL's principal shareholders, IDBI Bank and the NSE, are required to reduce their stake in the company to comply with Sebi's rule. Currently, IDBI holds 26.10 per cent and NSE owns 24 per cent stake in NSDL, which exceeds the permissible limit.

It is a Sebi-registered market infrastructure institution offering a wide range of products and services to the financial and securities markets in India. Following the introduction of the Depositories Act in 1996, NSDL pioneered the dematerialisation of securities in India in November 1996.

'India's concert economy to create 1.2 cr temporary jobs by 2032'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

India's live event and concert economy is expected to generate nearly 12 million (1.2 crore) temporary jobs by 2030-2032, with over 100 large-format concerts expected annually across the country, says global technology and digital talent solutions provider NLB Services.

"Live event and concert economy in India is witnessing a transformative phase, which is emerging not only as a thriving cultural phenomenon but also as an employment and economic driver, poised to generate nearly 12 million temporary jobs by 2030-2032," NLB Services CEO Sachin Alug said.

This evolving landscape is fueling demand for skilled professionals in production, logistics, security, hospitality, and digital media, he stated.

While metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad continue to host major international and national acts,



the next wave of growth is clearly shifting toward tier II and III cities, he said.

"Cities like Shillong, Guwahati, Pune, Jaipur, Kochi, Lucknow, Indore, and Chandigarh are fast becoming hotspots for high-energy live events," Alug said.

He said, each concert generates 15,000 to 20,000 short-term roles across venue operations, crowd management, Food and Beverage (F&B) services, stage rigging, digital marketing, content creation, artist management, and more.

Further, he said, the concert economy is acting as a multiplier for allied sectors like travel, tourism, hospitality, and F&B as well.

For instance, he said, Coldplay's 2024 concert in

Ahmedabad (Gujarat) added Rs 641 crore to the local economy, including Rs 72 crore in GST revenue.

The ripple effects included a 300-350 per cent surge in flight demand, an 8 per cent spike in train bookings, record-high hotel tariffs (some rooms hitting Rs 90,000 a night), and huge business for local eateries and delivery platforms, he added.

This concert boom is not just about short-term engagement, he said, adding that around 10-15 per cent of temporary roles are transitioning into full-time employment, particularly in domains like audio engineering, digital strategy, event tech, and production management.

INDIA'S EVACUATION MISSIONS FROM CONFLICT AREAS IN FOREIGN SOIL: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

OPINION

DR. S.KRISHNAN AND
AVNEET SANDHU



India's Evacuation Missions have become increasingly vital for safeguarding its citizens during global crises, as exemplified by the recent Sudan conflict in 2023. In this mission, India demonstrated its unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of thousands of its nationals trapped in the African nation. However, these missions also present a myriad of challenges, including geopolitical complexities, operational difficulties, and resource constraints.

RIISING COMPLEXITY IN INDIA'S EVACUATION MISSIONS

India's evacuation missions often involve unstable regions where the security situation can change rapidly, making it difficult to plan and execute safe evacuations. The recent rescue of Indians from Sudan highlights this complexity, as the IAF faced intelligence challenges and a rough landing environment.

Global crises like the CO-VID-19 pandemic and the

conflict in Afghanistan have led to an increased need for evacuation missions in challenging circumstances. In the Kabul mission of August 2021, the pilots faced chaotic and uncontrolled airspace, emphasizing the complexity of such operations.

India's evacuation missions often involve not only Indian citizens but also foreign nationals, adding to the logistical challenges of coordinating with other governments and international organizations. During "Operation Raahat" in 2015, India evacuated over 4,600 Indians and 950 nationals from 41 countries amid the Yemen crisis.

India's evacuation missions are becoming more complex due to evolving

security threats, such as terrorism and cyberattacks. These threats can directly impact the safety and security of evacuees and the personnel involved in the missions, requiring robust planning and countermeasures to mitigate risks.

Natural disasters caused by climate change, such as cyclones and floods, can hamper evacuation missions.

With an increasing number of Indians living, working, and studying abroad, the potential for India's evacuation missions to involve a more diverse group of people is growing. This can create additional complexities in terms of communication, cultural understanding, and logistical coordination during evacuation operations.

POLICY SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR INDIA'S EVACUATION MISSIONS

India's Prime Minister's directive to prepare evacuation plans for Indian citizens in Israel, Sudan and Ukraine and his emphasis on regular monitoring and assessment of their safety demonstrate the government's unwavering dedication to protect its nationals abroad.

The high-level meeting chaired by India's PM to discuss the situation of Indians trapped, this was attended by officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, the Indian ambassador to Sudan, the Foreign Secretary, and high-level officials from the air force and navy, highlighting the importance of interagency coordination in evacuation missions.

India's External Affairs Minister meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to discuss the situ-



Union MoS L Murugan receives 165 Indian evacuees from Israel on their arrival at AFS Palam under Operation Sindhu from Amman, Jordan

ation, emphasizing the role of diplomacy in facilitating evacuation missions.

The Indian government's allocation of resources, such as the deployment of Indian Air Force C-130J Super Hercules aircraft for evacuation missions like the one in Sudan in 2023, demonstrates support for the missions.

The Ministry of External Affairs' cautionary statement to Indians in countries like Iran, Ukraine, Sudan etc about active fighting near conflicted areas, emphasizing the role of effective public communication in ensuring the safety of citizens during evacuation missions.

The specialized training provided to the IAF's special operations crew, like the C-130J squadrons, which helped in successful evacuation missions such as the ones in Afghanistan and Sudan.

During the Vande Bharat Mission in 2020, India worked closely with host countries to ensure the safe repatriation of Indian citizens from various nations, emphasizing the importance of coordination with

host countries for successful evacuation missions.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES FACED IN INDIA'S EVACUATION MISSIONS

Evacuation missions can face challenges due to insufficient information about local conditions, hindering effective planning and execution. Coordinating transportation, navigating difficult terrain, and providing basic necessities like food and water can be challenging during evacuation missions. For instance, Indian citizens trapped in Sudan in 2023 faced difficulties due to a lack of electricity, food, and water, highlighting the logistical challenges in evacuation missions. Language differences, poor communication infrastructure, and limited access to local authorities can complicate coordination and rescue efforts. In many evacuation scenarios, the situation on the ground can change rapidly, requiring flexibility and adaptability from the mission planners and the personnel involved.

This adds another layer of complexity to India's evacuation missions, as decision-makers must quickly respond to new information and adjust their plans accordingly. Estimating the exact number of citizens who require evacuation can be difficult, leading to challenges in planning and executing evacuation missions. Evacuation missions may involve coordinating with foreign governments or navigating complex political situations, such as India maintaining contact with the U.S., Saudi Arabia, the U.K., and the UAE during the Sudan evacuation in 2023.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

New Delhi should continue to build on its rich experience. However, it must also realize that there is significant scope for improvement. A larger and increasingly mobile and diverse diaspora poses new communication, coordination, and operational challenges for the Indian government

to conduct such future operations efficiently. To ensure the protection and safe homecoming of its migrants, address recurrent shortcomings, and overcome such challenges, the Indian government must strive to collaborate with regional and global partners to improve intelligence collection and sharing for better situational awareness, like during the Yemen evacuation mission, which involved coordination with several countries. There is a need to establish joint task forces with friendly countries to streamline coordination between different government agencies, foreign governments, and international organizations, similar to the collaboration during the Nepal earthquake relief operations.

The Indian Government need to continue investing in cutting-edge technology, such as the C-130J Super Hercules and C-17 Globemaster aircraft, to enhance evacuation capabilities and ensure mission success, as seen in the Sudan evacuation.

Further, focus also needs to be on strengthening the training and capabilities of special forces like the Garud commandos, who participated in the Herat embassy evacuation mission, to guarantee the safety of Indian citizens abroad. The Indian Government should conduct regular simulations and exercises with regional partners to prepare comprehensive contingency plans for different scenarios, ensuring timely and effective responses in real-life situations. And finally, to actively participate in regional forums and establish joint mechanisms with countries in the region, as well as those with significant citizens in crisis zones. This will ensure smooth

cooperation during evacuation missions.

Despite varying local conditions that require flexibility and adaptation, all evacuations include core operations that call for standard operating procedures. The Indian mantra of jugaad (muddling through with quick-fix solutions) must therefore be the exception and not the norm.

WAY AHEAD

India is not a newcomer to diaspora evacuation operations, having conducted more than thirty missions across Asia and Africa since 1947. However, given the lack of any formal doctrine or emergency plan, the past success of Indian evacuation missions has mostly been due to the individual sacrifices of officials in its diplomatic corps, flagship carrier Air India, and armed forces. New Delhi will not be able to continue relying on heroic and ad hoc efforts. Given that the diaspora is expanding and becoming more mobile and assertive, evacuation operations are likely to become more frequent, complex, and distant, which poses challenges to capacity and coordination. As the Indian Armed Forces, in particular the navy and air force, develop new capabilities and interests to operate out-of-area and in support of such contingency operations, there is also a need for a new civil-military balance in decision-making, coordination, and operational matters.

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Prioritising passenger safety

OPINION

INDIRA VASHISHTA
CARENA



Enhancing air travel safety is a critical concern for passengers, airlines, and regulatory bodies alike. The fear of flying and concerns about air safety and aircraft maintenance have intensified, particularly following incidents like the Air India crash in Ahmedabad. This tragic event has underscored the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to ensure that air travel remains one of the safest modes of transportation. A detailed plan to address these issues should include phasing out older aeroplanes and empowering

pilots to reject aircraft they deem unsafe without facing pressure or repercussions. Below is a detailed plan outlining various measures to achieve these goals, which can collectively transform the aviation industry.

1. MANDATORY AIRCRAFT AGE LIMITS

Establishing mandatory age limits for commercial aircraft is foundational for ensuring safety and reliability. Many airlines operate older aircraft that may not meet modern safety standards or technological advancements. By introducing regulations that set a maximum age for aircraft, airlines would be compelled to retire older models. This would enhance safety by ensuring aircraft are equipped with the latest safety features and technologies. Encouraging airlines to invest in newer, more efficient models will promote

environmental sustainability by reducing emissions and fuel consumption.

2. RIGOROUS SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Implementing strict and regular safety inspections is crucial, especially for older aircraft. The aviation industry should adopt standardised inspection protocols to ensure compliance with the latest safety standards, regardless of the aircraft's age. These inspections should cover every aspect of the aircraft, including engines, navigation systems, and emergency equipment. It is vital that if an aircraft fails to meet safety standards during these inspections, it should be grounded until necessary repairs or upgrades are made. This proactive approach can prevent accidents and enhance passenger confidence in air travel, as it demonstrates a commitment to maintaining high safety standards.

3. PILOT AUTHORITY AND PROTECTION

Empowering pilots with the authority to refuse to fly an aircraft they believe is unsafe is essential for maintaining safety

in aviation. Policies that protect pilots when they exercise this right must be established, ensuring they cannot be penalised for prioritising safety over operational demands. Pilots should feel supported in their decision-making processes, with comprehensive training focused on effectively communicating concerns and the formal rejection process. This empowerment fosters a safety culture within airlines, where the welfare of passengers is prioritised over schedules and profits.

4. TRANSPARENT REPORTING SYSTEMS

Developing anonymous reporting systems for pilots and crew members is vital for promoting safety and accountability within the aviation industry. These systems would allow individuals to report safety concerns about specific aircraft without fear of retaliation or negative consequences. By fostering a culture of safety and transparency, airlines can identify and address issues before they escalate into serious problems. Anonymous reporting encourages frontline employees to voice their concerns, lead-

ing to timely interventions and enhanced safety protocols, ultimately benefiting the industry.

5. STRICTER REGULATIONS REGARDING WEATHER TOLERANCE

Establishing stricter regulations concerning weather tolerance is essential for ensuring safe flight operations. Mandatory criteria for visibility, wind speed, and severe weather conditions should be clearly defined. Airlines must adhere to these guidelines to prevent flights during adverse weather situations, which can pose significant risks to safety. Enhanced training for pilots to recognise and respond effectively to weather-related challenges should also be mandated, equipping them with the skills to make informed decisions in unpredictable conditions.

6. PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY

Public transparency regarding airline fleets' ages and safety records is vital for passengers' informed decision-making. Regulations requiring airlines to disclose this information could be established, al-

lowing travellers to make choices based on aircraft safety. Passengers would appreciate knowing the age and maintenance history of the aircraft they are flying in, which can influence their travel decisions. This transparency can lead to increased competition among airlines to maintain safer fleets and improve their reputations in the market, as consumers increasingly prioritise safety when selecting their carriers.

7. FLIGHT DUTY TIME LIMITATIONS

Adequate flight duty time limitations and restrictions on the number of takeoffs and landings pilots can perform daily are essential for preventing fatigue. Pilot fatigue is a significant risk factor in aviation safety, and regulations should mandate minimum rest periods between shifts to ensure pilots have adequate recovery time. Pilots should feel safe reporting fatigue without facing repercussions, ensuring their well-being is prioritised. Additionally, airlines should implement rostering practices that maintain a healthy work-life balance for pilots, contributing to

overall operational safety and efficiency.

8. PILOT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Establishing support systems for pilots who choose to reject an aircraft based on safety concerns is essential. These systems should provide access to resources, counselling, and peer support to help pilots manage any pressure or stress associated with their decisions. The aviation industry must recognise the emotional and psychological toll of making safety-related decisions. By offering support, airlines can ensure that pilots feel empowered to prioritise safety without fear of negative consequences, fostering a healthier work environment.

9. INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY LANDING GUIDELINES

Implementing strict international guidelines for allowing emergency landings of passenger aeroplanes, even in countries with unfriendly relations, is crucial for ensuring safety. Such guidelines should include clear protocols for communication and cooperation between nations to facilitate emergency

landings. This framework will ensure that the safety of passengers and crew is prioritised above political concerns, ultimately enhancing trust in the global aviation system.

CONCLUSION

Implementing these measures can significantly enhance air travel safety by phasing out older aeroplanes and empowering pilots. By establishing mandatory aircraft age limits, enforcing rigorous safety inspections, and allowing pilots to reject unsafe aircraft, the aviation industry can create a safer environment for passengers and crew alike. Fostering transparency, collaboration, and support systems will contribute to a safety culture prioritising everyone involved in air travel. As the aviation industry evolves, a commitment to safety and modernisation will be paramount in building trust and confidence among passengers. By taking these steps, we can ensure that air travel remains a safe and reliable mode of transportation for generations.

Author is a Former Airline Pilot, Airbus 340.



Adani-operated Mundra port highlights key modern infrastructure facilitating India–UK trade flows in goods like machinery, textiles, and petroleum products. Adaniports.com

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

TDG
EXPLAINER

The economic ties between India and the UK stretch back to the colonial era. The British East India Company, chartered in 1600, was instrumental in early trade. It traded heavily in spices, cotton textiles, silk, indigo dye, saltpeter, tea, and even opium, among other goods. By the mid-18th century, the East India Company had gained political control over large parts of India, and trade became a tool of imperial policy. Under Company rule and later the British Raj (1858–1947), India's role in the relationship was primarily as a supplier of raw materials and a market for British manufactured goods. British policies led to Indian commodities (cotton, jute, tea, etc.) being exported in massive quantities to Britain, while finished British industrial goods flooded Indian markets. This pattern enriched Britain's industrial economy but deindustrialized India – for example, by 1875 over half of Indian cloth consumption was met by imports of cheap British textiles. India's famed textile industries and artisans suffered due to high tariffs and restrictions that favored British products, transforming India from an exporter of textiles into an exporter of cotton and other raw materials. The colonial railways and canals were built largely to extract and transport these

global trade had plummeted. (In 1950 India accounted for only around 1.8% of world exports, a figure that would fall to just 0.5% by 1991.) This legacy of colonial trade would shape India's post-independence approach to foreign trade.

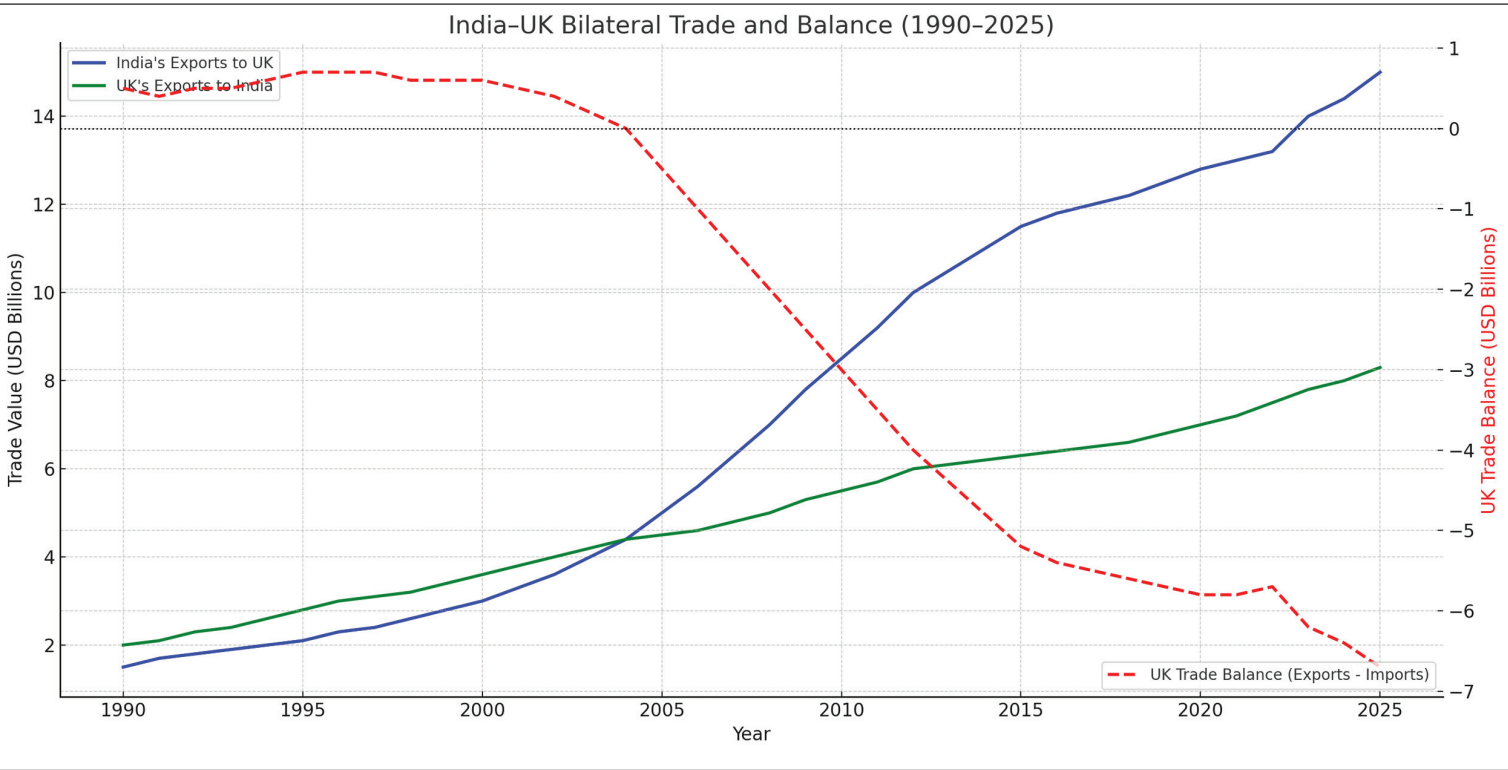
POST-INDEPENDENCE
TRADE TRENDS
(1947–1990)

After independence, India's trade relationship with the UK shifted onto a new footing. No longer bound by imperial preferences, India initially pursued a strategy of economic self-sufficiency and protectionism, focusing on building domestic industries. From the 1950s to the 1980s, India had a mixed economy with socialist-inspired five-year plans, import substitution policies, and stringent controls on foreign trade. In this period, overall trade volumes remained relatively low, and the UK, while still an important partner, saw its dominance reduced as India diversified its trading partners. In the early post-1947 years, historical ties meant the UK still took a significant share of India's exports (and supplied a substantial share of imports), but this diminished over time. India forged trade links with the Soviet Union, Europe, and other

(mostly primary products and a few manufactured goods), and high tariffs kept imports (like British capital goods or consumer products) in check. India's share of global trade remained minuscule, and the UK's relative importance to India also declined. By 1990, the UK was no longer a top 2 or 3 trading partner for India as it once had been; other partners (the USSR, US, Middle East etc.) had grown in significance. Nevertheless, historical and cultural ties (such as the English language and the Indian diaspora in Britain) kept economic channels open, even if volumes were modest. This would lay a foundation for re-engagement once India opened up its economy.

LIBERALIZATION AND
TRADE EXPANSION
(1991–2020)

India's economic landscape changed dramatically after the 1991 liberalization. Facing a balance-of-payments crisis, India undertook sweeping reforms to open up its economy – cutting import tariffs, dismantling licensing controls, and encouraging foreign investment. This liberalization unleashed India's growth and trade volumes exploded in the following decades, including with



India–UK bilateral trade in goods and services, 1990–2025. The blue and green lines show India's exports to the UK and the UK's exports to India (left axis, USD billions), both rising steeply after 2000. The red dashed line (right axis) shows the UK's trade balance (exports minus imports), which turned negative as India consistently exported more to the UK than it imported by the 2010s. Trade growth accelerated after India's 1991 reforms, with total trade exceeding \$50 billion by 2024–25. [globleconomicnews.au](#)

FROM COLONIAL ERA TO TRADE DEAL: JOURNEY OF HISTORIC INDIA–UK PACT

India–UK FTA slashes tariffs on 90% of UK goods and 99% of Indian exports, making most trade duty-free. Key gains: cheaper Scotch and UK cars in India; duty-free Indian textiles, rice, tea, and jewelry in the UK—marking India's boldest trade liberalization with a Western economy.

global markets, as well as the UK's continued interest in India as a trade and investment destination.

Several factors drove this growth. India's economic reforms and high growth rates created demand for British goods and services (from machinery to financial services), while India's own exports became more competitive globally. The large Indian diaspora in the UK (over 1.5 million people) also facilitated business links, investment, and knowledge transfer, supporting trade expansion. Meanwhile, two-way investment flourished: the UK became a major investor in India (with £17.4 billion UK FDI stock in India by 2023), and Indian companies invested in the UK (Indian FDI stock £13.1 billion, including high-profile acquisitions like Tata's ownership of Jaguar Land Rover). These investment ties deepened economic integration and often paved the way for greater trade (for example, Indian-owned brands manufacturing in Britain, or British financial firms operating in India).

However, even as abso-

Key features of the India–UK FTA
The 2025 India–UK FTA is a landmark deal aimed at boosting bilateral trade by eliminating barriers across goods, services, investment, and digital trade.
Tariff reductions: India will reduce or eliminate tariffs on 90% of British goods, while the UK will remove tariffs on 99% of Indian exports. This is especially significant for sectors like textiles, automobiles, and spirits. For example, Scotch whisky tariffs in India will be slashed from 150% to 75% initially, then down to 40%. Indian apparel, rice, tea, and jewellery will enter the UK duty-free, enhancing competitiveness. Sensitive Indian sectors like dairy and apples are excluded from tariff cuts to protect domestic interests.
Services and investment: The FTA eases market access in telecommunications, banking, and insurance. India confirmed a 74% FDI cap in insurance and assured equal treatment for UK firms. Mutual recognition of qualifications in professions like accountancy and architecture will also improve mobility. Legal services remain outside the agreement.
Business mobility: The deal streamlines visa processing for short-term assignments and intra-company transfers. A Social Security totalisation agreement prevents double contributions, easing costs for Indian IT and consulting firms. However, it does not include new long-term visa quotas or major immigration changes.
Government procurement: For the first time, India has opened part of its public procurement market to foreign bidders. UK firms meeting a 20% local content rule can bid for Indian contracts. Indian companies will also gain access to UK government tenders in sectors like infrastructure and IT.
Digital and IP rules: The FTA promotes free data flows and bars forced data localisation, supporting e-commerce growth. It includes protections for source code and non-discrimination of digital products. However, critics argue this may limit India's regulatory autonomy over Big Tech.
Values-based provisions: The agreement includes India's first commitments on anti-corruption, labour rights, gender equity, and environmental standards in any FTA—marking a shift towards values-based trade partnerships.

lute trade volumes grew, the relative importance of the UK in India's trade fell due to diversification. In the late 1990s the UK was India's ranked as two trading partners, but by 2019 it had dropped to around 18th among India's export destinations as India's trade with the US, EU (as a whole), China, Middle Eastern and Asian neighbors expanded faster. (For instance, by 2001 the UK accounted for about 6% of India's goods exports; two decades later, that share was smallerresearch-briefings.files.parliament.ukresearchbriefings.files.parliament.uk.) Conversely, India's importance for

UK trade actually rose in recent years – by 2024 India was the UK's 11th largest trading partner (comprising about 2.4% of total UK trade). This reflects India's emerging role as a major economy and the UK's interest in stronger ties with fast-growing markets.

Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, India and the UK made efforts to facilitate trade. They established a Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) in 2005 to address barriers and encourage business co-operation. They also launched a “Strategic Partnership” (2004) and

later an “Enhanced Partnership” (2015) aiming (ambitiously) to double bilateral trade. Many of these dialogues, however, were limited in impact without a formal trade agreement. Until 2020, the UK's trade policy was constrained by EU membership – indeed, India had engaged in protracted free trade negotiations with the EU from 2007 to 2013 (the proposed Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement), which stalled over market access issues. As a result, no comprehensive deal materialized in that period. But once the UK left the EU (Brexit),

it gained the freedom to negotiate its own trade agreements. This opened the door to a direct India–UK Free Trade Agreement – a prospect long discussed but now feasible in a post-Brexit world.

After nearly two years of talks and 15 rounds of negotiation, India and the UK concluded a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in May 2025. This deal – described by both governments as “historic” – is India's first comprehensive trade pact with a major Western economy in decades, and the UK's most significant bilateral trade deal since Brexit. *What is an FTA?* In general, a Free Trade Agreement is a treaty between countries to reduce or eliminate tariffs, quotas, and other barriers on trade in goods and services, and to enhance economic cooperation. The India–UK FTA aims to do exactly that – liberalize trade flows between the two nations, while also setting rules on investment, services, and other economic activities. It is a “comprehensive economic partnership” covering not just tariff cuts but also chapters on services, intellectual property, digital trade, government procurement, labor standards, and more.

raw materials to ports for export. In essence, the pre-independence trade was one of unequal exchange: India was a source of agricultural produce and minerals for Britain and a captive market for British industrial goods, leading to a significant drain of wealth from India. By the time India gained independence in 1947, the country was impoverished and its share of

regions, and by the 1970s–80s the UK was just one of many partners. Notably, in 1973 the UK joined the European Economic Community, meaning India–UK trade thereafter was partly governed by EU trade policies rather than a bilateral colonial framework. India's cautious approach to globalization meant that through the 1980s, its export basket was limited

the UK. Bilateral trade was only a few billion USD in the early 1990s but grew steadily thereafter. By the mid-2010s, goods trade between India and the UK had reached around \$15 billion annually, and including services, total bilateral trade was on the order of \$50 billion per year by the mid-2020s. This surge reflected India's rapid GDP growth and integration into

FTA implications for India – Opportunities and challenges	
Category	Implications
Textiles and Apparel	UK to eliminate tariffs on →50% of Indian exports including garments; boosts competitiveness and employment.
Agriculture and Food Products	95% of agri exports to UK duty-free; boosts rice, tea, seafood; protections for dairy and apples retained.
Gems and Jewelry	Tariff-free access for jewelry; benefits diamond and gold ornament exporters and job creation.
Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare	Faster regulatory clearance; cheaper medical device imports; pharma inputs duty-free.
Auto Parts and Industrial Goods	Duty-free access for engineering goods; boosts exports of bicycles, auto parts.
Services and Skilled Professionals	Easier short-term staff movement; mutual qualification recognition; boost for IT, fintech, and tourism.
Investment and Economic Growth	Greater UK FDI into India expected; growth in infra, renewables, and jobs; adds to \$5 trillion GDP goal.
Competition for Domestic Industries	Cheaper UK goods could challenge domestic liquor, auto, and machinery sectors; pressures ‘Make in India’.
Utilization of the FTA	SMEs need awareness on using FTA; navigating rules of origin and UK standards is crucial.
Digital Sovereignty and Regulations	Digital trade rules may restrict India's regulatory power; risks to data localization and digital sovereignty.
Limited Gains in Mode 4	No new visa quotas; limited gains for nurses, engineers; only admin improvements in mobility.
Trade Balance and Revenue	Imports to rise; surplus may shrink; loss of tariff revenue offset by expected growth and investment.



Ships in Bombay Harbour, c. 1731. Wikimedia Commons

THE MARBLE OF RAJASTHAN: A LEGACY CARVED IN STONE

TDG NETWORK

Rajasthan, the land of kings, is renowned for its grand palaces, majestic forts, and vibrant culture. Among the many treasures the state boasts, one of its most celebrated and enduring legacies is its marble heritage. Rajasthan is home to some of the finest marble quarries in the world and has played a pivotal role in shaping India's architectural and artistic landscape through this prized natural resource.

A GEOLOGICAL GIFT

Marble is a metamorphic rock formed when limestone is subjected to high pressure and temperature. The Aravalli Range, one of the oldest mountain systems in the world, is where this transformation took place millions of years ago. Within this geological marvel lies the Makrana region, the most prominent source of marble in Rajasthan and perhaps the most iconic in all of India.

Makrana marble is world-renowned for its pure white hue, fine texture, and high resistance to water and weathering. It is this very marble that was used in constructing the Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The fact that the Taj Mahal has retained its pristine white brilliance even after centuries is a testament to the quality of Makrana marble.

Besides Makrana, other important marble-producing regions in Rajasthan include Rajasamand, Kishangarh, Udaipur, and Banswara. Each region yields marble of distinct color,



texture, and quality—from milky whites to greens and pinks—making Rajasthan a mosaic of marble varieties.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The use of marble in Rajasthan dates back to ancient times. Temples, palaces,

and cenotaphs (chhatris) across the state stand as monuments to this stone's enduring appeal and versatility. The Dilwara Temples in Mount Abu, built between the 11th and 13th centuries, are perhaps the most exquisite example of marble craftsmanship. These Jain

temples, with their intricate carvings, delicate jaalis (lattice screens), and detailed ceilings, reflect a level of artistry that remains unmatched to this day.

In the royal courts of Rajasthan, marble was not just a building material but a symbol of power, opulence,

and divine connection. Palaces like the City Palace in Udaipur, Jai Mahal in Jaipur, and Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur incorporate marble elements extensively. The cenotaphs of Jaisalmer, with their delicate marble work, serve as ethereal memorials to royal lineage and valor.

THE ART OF MARBLE CRAFTSMANSHIP

The strength of Rajasthan's marble legacy lies not just in its quarries but also in its generations of skilled artisans. Known locally as "moortikars" or marble sculptors, these craftsmen have handed down their skills through centuries, blending traditional knowledge with evolving aesthetics.

From intricately carved statues of deities to elegant fountains, tabletops, and flooring tiles, Rajasthan's marble artisans have contributed both to sacred and secular spaces. Cities like Kishangarh and Jaipur have emerged as hubs for marble sculptures, furniture, and

home décor, attracting buyers from across India and the world.

Kishangarh, often dubbed the "Marble City of India," is particularly notable for its expansive marble market and export-oriented industries. The blending of modern cutting and polishing technology with hand-carving techniques has enabled Rajasthan to compete globally while preserving its rich artisanal traditions.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

The marble industry is a major contributor to Rajasthan's economy. It provides employment to lakhs of people, directly and indirectly—from quarry workers and transporters to sculptors, polishers, traders, and exporters. It has also fostered supporting industries, including diamond-tool manufacturing, polishing powder units, and heavy machinery repair.

However, the economic benefits have come with challenges. Marble quarrying is an environmentally taxing activity. Deforestation, dust pollution, water table depletion, and occupational hazards are serious concerns. Additionally, unregulated mining practices in the past have led to ecological degradation in several areas.

The Rajasthan government, in collaboration with environmental bodies and mining associations, has been taking steps toward sustainable quarrying practices. These include introducing scientific mining, enforcing reclamation of abandoned mines, and encouraging the recycling

of marble slurry.

A GLOBAL PRESENCE

Rajasthan's marble is not confined to the boundaries of the state or even the country. It is a significant export commodity, with markets in Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and North America. Global architects and interior designers increasingly seek out Rajasthan marble for its elegance and timeless quality.

Makrana marble, owing to its historical prestige and physical properties, enjoys a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, ensuring its authenticity and helping local producers safeguard their heritage from imitation.

MARBLE IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

In today's modern world, marble continues to be a popular choice for luxury interiors and heritage restorations. High-end hotels, airports, museums, and luxury residences use Rajasthan marble to evoke a sense of grandeur and permanence.

Notably, the Lotus Temple in New Delhi, the Birla Temples across various Indian cities, and the Akshardham

Temple in Delhi are contemporary examples where Rajasthan marble plays a central aesthetic and structural role.

Additionally, Rajasthan has become a preferred destination for destination weddings and heritage tourism, where the marble-adorned palaces and havelis serve as fairy-tale venues, drawing attention back to this regal stone. A Legacy Etched in Time

The marble heritage of Rajasthan is more than a geological accident—it is a living tradition, a cultural identity, and a symbol of Indian artistry and resilience. From the cool corridors of ancient temples to the polished floors of modern hotels, Rajasthan's marble continues to shape spaces and captivate hearts.

As sustainability becomes the new mantra of development, balancing economic prosperity with environmental stewardship will be key to preserving this legacy for generations to come. For now, each sculpture, pillar, and floor panel stands as a silent yet eloquent witness to Rajasthan's unbroken romance with marble—a romance carved in stone and polished by time.



Architectural Heritage of Rajasthan: A Living Legacy of Colour & Culture

TDG NETWORK

Rajasthan, the land of kings, is a vibrant canvas of majestic forts, palaces, spiritual temples, rich traditions, and grand festivities. Nestled in the northwestern part of India, Rajasthan is more than just a geographical entity; it is a timeless cultural treasure. Every street, stone, and celebration here echoes tales of valor, devotion, artistry, and community. The heritage and festivals of Rajasthan not only reflect its glorious past but also breathe life into the present, creating a unique blend of history and modern vibrance.

ECHOES OF A REGAL PAST

Rajasthan's architectural grandeur is perhaps its most visually striking feature. The state is dotted with awe-inspiring forts and palaces that stand as proud symbols of its royal legacy. The Amber Fort in Jaipur, with its intricate mirror work and sweeping courtyards, offers a glimpse into the life of Rajput royalty. Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur, perched high above the Blue City, tells tales of war, honor, and strategy. The City Palace in Udaipur, surrounded by the shimmering waters of Lake Pichola, is a fine example of Mughal-Rajput architectural fusion.

The Jaisalmer Fort, made of golden sandstone, rises like a mirage in the heart of the Thar Desert and remains one of the few "living forts" in the world, with people still residing within its walls. Each fort and palace is a living museum that narrates stories through its design, paintings, murals, and artifacts.

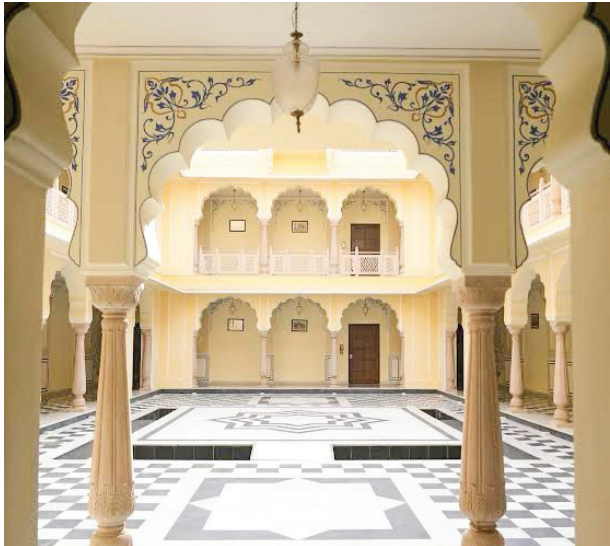
CULTURAL HERITAGE:

A LIVING TRADITION

The true richness of Rajasthan lies in its living traditions. Folk music and dance are integral to the cultural landscape. Ghoomar, a traditional dance performed by women in swirling ghagras, and Kalbeliya, the sensuous dance of the snake charmer community, mesmerize with their rhythm and grace. Folk instruments like the Ravanhatta, Morchang, and Sarangi evoke deep emotion and ancestral memory.

Artisans of Rajasthan continue to keep ancient crafts alive. From the blue pottery of Jaipur and block printing of Sanganer to the miniature paintings of Kishangarh and the puppetry of Nagaur, every region contributes uniquely to the cultural fabric. Jewellery making, mojari crafting, and carpet weaving are not just trades but legacies passed down generations.

Traditional attire, characterized by vibrant colors and elaborate embroidery, reflects the Rajasthani spirit of celebration. The bandhani turbans and odhnis, along with silver jewellery and mirror work, showcase the local communities' love for aesthetics and symbolism.



SPIRITUAL AND HISTORICAL SITES

Rajasthan is also a land of spiritual significance. The Dilwara Temples at Mount Abu, known for their exquisite marble carvings, are a Jain architectural marvel. Pushkar, home to the only Brahma temple in the world, draws devotees and seekers from across the globe. The Ajmer Sharif Dargah, the resting place of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, welcomes pilgrims

of all faiths. The temples of Ranakpur, Eklingji, and Karni Mata (famous for its revered rats) reflect a spiritual devotion deeply rooted in nature and community. These sacred places are not just sites of worship but also of cultural convergence.

FESTIVALS: THE SOUL OF RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan's calendar is packed with vibrant festivals that celebrate life, seasons, deities, and folklore. These festivals go beyond rituals;

they are immersive cultural experiences that invite participation from locals and tourists alike.

DESERT FESTIVAL (JAISALMER)

Held in the heart of the Thar Desert, this festival showcases camel races, folk music, turban-tying competitions, and fire dances. The golden sands come alive with the rhythm of drums and the colors of traditional attire.

PUSHKAR CAMEL

FAIR

One of the world's largest livestock fairs, the Pushkar Camel Fair is a spectacle of animal trading, rural games, music, and spirituality. It coincides with Kartik Purnima, a significant religious day for pilgrims bathing in Pushkar Lake.

TEEJ AND GANGAUR

Celebrated primarily by women, these festivals honor Goddess Parvati and the arrival of the monsoon. Women dress in green, sing

traditional songs, swing in courtyards, and carry decorated idols in processions. They reflect devotion, marital bliss, and feminine grace.

MEWAR FESTIVAL (UDAIPUR)

Coinciding with Gangaaur, the Mewar Festival includes cultural performances, boat processions on Lake Pichola, and a lively display of regional attire and rituals. It's a tribute to Udaipur's royal legacy and devotion to springtime renewal.

MARWAR FESTIVAL (JODHPUR)

Dedicated to the music and dance of the Marwar region, this festival revives tales of heroism and romance through performances, puppet shows, and competitions, set against the imposing Mehrangarh Fort.

DIWALI AND HOLI

Like the rest of India, Diwali and Holi are major festivals in Rajasthan. But here, they carry a distinctive charm—palaces are lit with thousands of lamps, and the desert towns erupt in color, music, and joy. Brij Holi in Bharatpur is especially famous for its devotional fervor and flower-laden celebrations.

CAMEL FESTIVAL (BIKANER)

Bikaner's Camel Festival celebrates the ship of the desert. Decorated camels parade, race, and dance, while spectators enjoy folk music, fire performances, and local delicacies.

MODERN CELEBRATIONS, TIMELESS ROOTS

What makes Rajasthan remarkable is how seamlessly it blends the old with

the new. Events like the Jaipur Literature Festival, Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF), and World Sacred Spirit Festival attract global audiences while rooted deeply in regional culture.

In today's age of globalization, these festivals and heritage sites are not just tourist attractions but embodiments of a resilient identity. They empower local communities, support sustainable tourism, and reinforce pride in indigenous traditions.

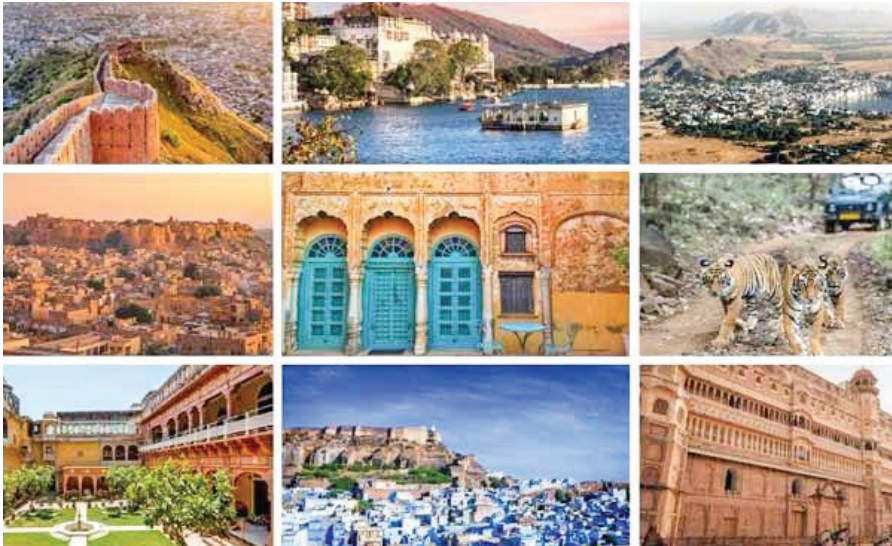
PRESERVING THE LEGACY

While Rajasthan's heritage is grand, it also faces challenges from modernization, environmental pressures, and cultural dilution. There is a growing movement towards preserving both tangible heritage—like forts and temples—and intangible heritage, such as oral traditions, folk performances, and crafts.

Government initiatives, UNESCO recognitions, community participation, and responsible tourism have become crucial tools in protecting this vibrant legacy. Encouragingly, the youth of Rajasthan are increasingly engaging with their roots, taking pride in their culture, and contributing to its revival and promotion.

CONCLUSION

Rajasthan is not merely a destination—it is a journey into the soul of India. Its heritage and festivals are windows to a civilization that values bravery, beauty, and balance. With each festival celebrated and each monument preserved, Rajasthan continues to remind the world that history is not just to be remembered—it is to be lived, danced, sung, and passed on.



THAILAND-CAMBODIA BORDER CLASH KILLS 12

Clashes occurred in at least six areas, involving small arms, artillery, rockets, Thai air strikes in major escalation of conflict

AGENCIES
BANGKOK

Thailand and Cambodian soldiers clashed in several areas along their border Thursday in a major escalation of their conflict that left at least 12 people dead, mostly civilians. The two sides fired small arms, artillery and rockets, and Thailand also called in air strikes.

Thai villagers could be seen on video fleeing their homes to seek shelter as the clashes began in the morning.

Fighting was ongoing in at least six areas along the border, Thai Defense Ministry spokesperson Surasant Kongsiri said. The trigger for the clashes was a mine explosion along the border on Wednesday that wounded five Thai soldiers and led Bangkok to withdraw its ambassador to Cambodia and expelled Cambodia's.

Thailand has also sealed all land border crossings while urging its citizens to leave Cambodia.

The Southeast Asian



neighbors have longstanding border disputes that periodically flare along their 800-kilometer (500-mile) frontier and usually result in brief confrontations that sometimes involves exchanges of gunfire.

But relations have deteriorated sharply since a confrontation in May that killed a Cambodian soldier, and Thursday's clashes were far bigger in scale and intensity than usual.

The first clash Thursday

morning happened in an area near the ancient Ta Muen Thom temple along the border of Thailand's Surin province and Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey province.

A video from the Thai side showed people running from their homes and hiding in a concrete bunker as explosions sounded.

The Thai army said its forces heard a drone before seeing six armed Cambodian soldiers moving closer

to Thai military positions at the border. It said Thai soldiers tried to shout at them to defuse the situation, but the Cambodian side started to open fire.

Cambodia's Defense Ministry, however, said Thailand deployed a drone first before opening fire, and that Cambodia "acted strictly within the bounds of self-defense, responding to an unprovoked incursion by Thai troops that violated our territorial integrity."

' Hamas is hijacking aid and holding Gaza civilians hostage': Israel

AGENCIES
TEL [AVIV]

Israeli President Isaac Herzog has launched a scathing attack on Hamas during his visit to the Gaza Strip, accusing the group of hijacking humanitarian aid, blocking a ceasefire, and holding both hostages and Gaza's civilian population in captivity.

"It is the terrorists of Hamas hijacking aid, and refusing to agree to a hostage release and ceasefire, who are kidnapping the civilian Gaza population and subjecting them to their tragic suffering," Herzog said on Wednesday after meeting Israeli commanders and soldiers stationed at the frontlines.

Herzog said he received a detailed update on the situation inside Gaza and claimed that large volumes of aid were entering the



Strip through efforts coordinated by Israel, the UN, and the EU, but alleged that Hamas was preventing proper distribution.

"Huge quantities of aid are flowing in - in conjunction with UN and EU efforts agreed by Israel. Hamas loots the aid and prevents its proper distribution," Herzog said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

He insisted that Israel remains committed to international humanitarian law.

"Even in the midst of war, we are doing everything possible to help civilians in need - in keeping with international law, and our Israeli and Jewish values," he added.

The President urged global leaders to stop echoing what he described as "Hamas propaganda and lies" and to demand the immediate release of hostages.

"I urge leaders from around the world to look at the facts, to see the reality...

Six university students drown at Zhongjin gold mine in China

TDG NETWORK
BEIJING

Six university students drowned on Wednesday while on a field visit to a copper molybdenum mine in northern China owned by Shanghai-listed Zhongjin Gold Corp, according to a stock exchange filing on Thursday.

The students from Northeastern University in Shenyang fell into a flotation cell - a piece of mining equipment that uses a liquid solution to extract copper from crushed ore - after protective grates collapsed.

A teacher was also hurt in the accident at the mine located in China's Inner Mongolia region, according to the filing from Zhongjin

Gold, a subsidiary of state-owned China National Gold Group Co.

The company said it activated an emergency plan and reported the incident to the relevant departments of the local government.

The operator of the mine, a subsidiary of Zhongjin Gold, halted production, the company said in another stock exchange filing later on Thursday.

Shares of Zhongjin Gold closed down 4.4% on Thursday.

Such field visits have been organised for years and the incident was unexpected, said a teacher from Northeastern University, according to a social media account belonging to Henan Radio and Television.

Aid groups say Gaza starvation spreading

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

Scores of aid groups say the humanitarian situation in Gaza is worse than ever and that starvation is spreading, with Israel blaming the situation on Hamas.

The crisis is spiraling as Israel and Hamas mull a truce and comes two weeks after the European Union announced an agreement with Israel to increase the flow of food to Gaza.

A major dispute in the ceasefire negotiations, officials from both sides say, is over a Hamas demand for the restoration of a United Nations-administered relief network that Israel sidelined, arguing the Palestinian militant group was stealing food and medicine.

World anger toward Israel's government is growing amid increasing reports of emaciated babies, children crammed into soup queues and men tussling over bags of flour. Foreign doctors volunteering in Gaza say they too are going hungry. International news agencies are withdrawing staff for fear of famine.

"There is no real change on the ground," Médecins Sans Frontières said in a statement, referring to the July 10 accord between Israel and the EU. MSF and many other humanitarian groups accused Israel of failing to make good on the arrangement.

"Every day without a sustained flow means more people dying of preventable illnesses," MSF said. "Children starve while waiting for promises that never arrive."

The World Health Organization added its voice to the alarm. "The 2.1 million people trapped in the war zone that is Gaza are facing yet another killer on top of bombs and bullets: starvation," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Wednesday. "We are now witnessing a deadly surge in malnutrition-related deaths." These accusations are a "coordinated, scripted campaign," according to Israel's ambassador to the UN, Danny



Israeli military says eight soldiers wounded in car-ramming attack

KFAR YONA: The Israeli military said eight soldiers were wounded on Thursday when a driver deliberately rammed his car into a bus stop in what police called a "terror attack."

The army said two soldiers were "moderately injured" and six "lightly injured" in the attack at the Beit Lid junction near Kfar Yona in central Israel.

"The soldiers were evacuated to a hospital to receive medical treatment and their families have been notified," it said in a statement.

There has been a spate of violence in Israel and the occupied West Bank since the start of the war against Hamas in Gaza, triggered by the Palestinian militants' attack on October 7, 2023.

A teenager died in March this year when police said a car driven by a Palestinian man deliberately plowed into civilians at a bus stop in northern Israel.

One witness to Thursday's ramming said the driver cut her off the road near Kfar Yona, then "turned his wheel to the right, full gas, as fast as he could,

and hit as many people as he could."

Kineret Hanuka, 45, told AFP: "I saw only blood and heard them screaming: 'It hurts!' ... It was so hard for me to see this."

Israel's Magen David Adom (MDA) first responders said they received a report at 9:25 am [0625 GMT] that a vehicle had crashed into a bus stop near Kfar Yona.

They said that the wounded had chest, limb and head injuries.

Israeli police spokesman Dedan Elsdunne described the incident as a "terror attack, where a terrorist rammed his vehicle into individuals who were standing here waiting to catch the bus."

"He [the attacker] then attempted to flee. He abandoned his vehicle and fled from that location. We had large police forces who immediately arrived here, set up a perimeter so that we can locate this individual."

The car was later recovered and the driver is being hunted using helicopters, motorbikes and a specialist dog unit, police added.

Ex-B'desh's CJ Khairul Haque detained for sedition

AGENCIES
DHAKA

Bangladesh's former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque was detained here on Thursday in connection with three criminal cases, including a sedition charge, officials said.

Haque, who served as the country's 19th chief justice from 2010 to 2011, was known for presiding over landmark verdicts, including the 2011 ruling that declared Bangladesh's nonpartisan caretaker government system unconstitutional.

Detective branch officers picked up the 81-year-old former judge from his residence in Dhanmondi area

of the capital, Dhaka Metropolitan Police deputy commissioner Talebur Rahman told reporters.

"Haque is accused in three cases. Legal procedures are underway," Rahman said, adding that the former chief justice is likely to be shown arrested in at least one of the cases before being produced in court.

The cases against him were filed by different lawyers in August 2024, shortly after the then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government was ousted in a violent street movement led by the Students Against Discrimination (SAD) on August 5.



At the time, Haque was serving as the chairman of the Law Commission, a post he resigned from on August 13.

The first case, filed in Dhaka, accused him of fraud and forgery in allegedly altering the judgment annulling the 13th constitutional

amendment related to the caretaker system.

A week later an identical case was filed against him in river port town of Narayanganj, on the outskirts of the capital, over the same issue and in the same month, another case was filed in Dhaka by another lawyer over his alleged corrupt practices, illegal and fraudulent judgments.

Haque had authored the lead judgment that declared the caretaker government system in 2011 as "illegal," calling the system contrary to the spirit of the constitution.

The initial verdict, however, suggested the next two

subsequent elections could be held under caretaker governments while a number of leading Bangladeshi jurists strongly argued for retaining the system for the sake of the country's nascent democracy.

The verdict passed narrowly, with three of the seven apex court judges dissenting and three concurring, leaving Haque with the casting vote.

Legal experts and political commentators later criticised the ruling, arguing that it undermined democratic safeguards and paved the way for Hasina to retain power without a neutral electoral mechanism.



Residents waded through a flooded street after heavy rains in Pangasinan province. The Philippines shut down schools and cancelled flights on Thursday as torrential rains, driven by a typhoon and a separate tropical storm, pounded the country's northern island of Luzon, Dagupan City, Philippines. Agencies

EU and China agree to take action on climate change

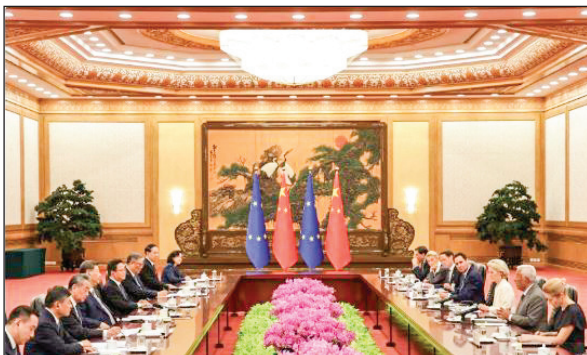
AGENCIES
BEIJING

China and the European Union have issued a joint call to action on climate change during an otherwise tense bilateral summit in Beijing on Thursday riven with major disagreements over trade and the war in Ukraine.

The two economic juggernauts issued a joint statement on climate change, urging more emission cuts

and greater use of green technology and affirming their support for the Paris Climate Agreement as well as calling for strong action at the upcoming COP30 climate summit in Brazil.

"In the fluid and turbulent international situation today, it is crucial that all countries, notably the major economies, maintain policy continuity and stability and step up efforts to address climate change," the joint statement said.



Their climate agreement was a silver lining on a stormy day where European leaders demanded a

more balanced relationship with China in talks with President Xi Jinping.

They highlighted trade in

their opening remarks, calling for concrete progress to address Europe's yawning trade deficit with China.

"As our cooperation has deepened, so have the imbalances," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. "We have reached an inflection point. Rebalancing our bilateral relation is essential. Because to be sustainable, relations need to be mutually beneficial."

Expectations were low

ahead of the talks, initially supposed to last two days but scaled back to one. They come amid financial uncertainty around the world, wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, and the threat of U.S. tariffs. Neither the EU nor China is likely to budge on key issues.

European Council President António Costa called on China to use its influence over Russia to bring an end to the war in Ukraine — a long-running plea from Eu-

ropean leaders that is likely to fall again on deaf ears.

Xi called for deeper cooperation between China and Europe to provide stability in an increasingly complex world.

Both sides should set aside differences and seek common ground, he said, a phrase he often uses in relationships like the one with the EU.

China is willing to strengthen coordination on climate and make greater

contributions to addressing climate change, he said, but he pushed back against EU restrictions on Chinese exports.

"We hope the EU will keep its trade and investment markets open, refrain from using restrictive economic and trade tools and provide a good business environment for Chinese companies to invest and develop in Europe," he said, according to a readout posted online by state broadcaster CCTV.

RUSSIAN PLANE CRASHES IN COUNTRY'S FAR EAST, KILLS ALL 48 PEOPLE ON BOARD

The authorities launched a probe on the charge of flight safety violations that resulted in multiple deaths, a standard procedure in aviation accidents.

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

A passenger plane crashed Thursday in Russia's Far East, killing all 48 passengers and crew on board, officials said.

The Angara Airlines flight disappeared from radar, and searchers later found the burning wreckage of the plane on a hillside south of its planned destination in Tynda, more than 7,000 kilometers (4,350 miles) east of Moscow, Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said.

Regional Gov. Vasily Orlov said in a statement that all 48 people aboard were dead, and announced three days of mourning in the Amur region over what he called a "terrible tragedy." It wasn't immediately



clear what caused the crash. Russia's Interfax news agency said there were adverse weather conditions at the time of the crash, citing unnamed sources in the emergency services. Several Russian news outlets also reported that the aircraft was almost 50 years old,

citing data taken from the plane's tail number. The Soviet-designed twin turbo prop plane had initially departed from Khabarovsk before making its way to Blagoveshchensk on the Russian-Chinese border and onwards to Tynda.

Images of the reported crash site circulated by Russian state media show debris scattered among dense forest, surrounded by plumes of smoke. Orlov said rescuers had struggled to reach the site due to its remote location, 15 kilometers (9 miles) south

of Tynda. An earlier statement from the governor said that 49 people had been onboard the flight, but that number later was updated to 48. The reason for the discrepancy was not immediately clear. The transport prosecutor's office in the Far East said in an online statement that the plane was attempting to land for a second time when it lost contact with air traffic control and disappeared from radars. The authorities launched a probe on the charge of flight safety violations that resulted in multiple deaths, a standard procedure in aviation accidents. Aviation incidents have been frequent in Russia, especially in recent years as international sanctions have squeezed the country's aviation sector.

Hindu temple defaced in Australia

AGENCIES
MELBOURNE

A Hindu temple was defaced with racist graffiti along with two Asian-run restaurants in Melbourne, raising concerns among the community members in Australia, a media report said on Thursday.

Shree Swaminarayan Temple on Wadhurst Drive, Melbourne's eastern suburb of Boronia, was defaced with red-painted racist slurs on Monday morning, the Australia Today web portal reported.

Two restaurants located further on Boronia Road were painted with the same slurs on the same day, it added.

Victoria Police confirmed the incident, saying that "There is absolutely no place at all in our society for hate-based and racist behaviour", the report said.

Shocked with the incident, President of the Hin-

du Council of Australia, Victoria chapter, Makrand Bhagwat, said it "feels like an attack on our identity, our right to worship and freedom of religion," the web portal reported. Victoria's Premier Jacinta Allan, in a private message to temple management, called the attack "hateful" and "racist", the report said. "What happened this week was hateful, racist and deeply disturbing. It wasn't just vandalism – it was a deliberate act of hate, designed to intimidate, isolate, and spread fear," the report quoted from Jacinta's message.

Meanwhile, the Hindu Community urged support from interfaith groups following the incident. The attack hints at the worrying rise in targeted hate incidents across Melbourne, the report said.

The report further claimed that Victoria's Premier Jacinta Allan had sent a pri-

vate letter to the temple authorities condemning the attack. "What happened this week was hateful, racist and deeply disturbing. It wasn't just vandalism – it was a deliberate act of hate, designed to intimidate, isolate, and spread fear. It was an attack on your right to feel safe and to belong, and on the values that bind us together. There's no place for it anywhere in Victoria. And it must be called out for what it is," she said in the letter. "Jackson Taylor raised this with me directly. He is a strong voice for your community, and I want you to know that we both stand with you. I'm advised that Victoria Police are taking this matter seriously, as they should. Soon, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs will visit the Shree Swaminarayan Temple to offer the support of our Government, and to listen to you and your community directly," the letter added.

Democratic freedoms must not be misused: PM Modi

AGENCIES
LONDON

India on Thursday flagged its concerns to the UK over increasing activities of pro-Khalistani elements from British soil, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that forces with "extremist ideologies" must not be allowed to misuse democratic freedoms.

Modi made the remarks after meeting his British counterpart Keir Starmer at Chequers, the countryside residence of the UK prime minister that is located 50 kms northwest of London.

With Starmer by his side, Modi also said that both India and the UK are "united in our view that there can be no place for double standards in the fight against terrorism" as he thanked the British government for its "strong" condemnation of the Pahalgam terror attack.

"We agree that forces with extremist ideologies must not be allowed to misuse



democratic freedoms. Those who misuse democratic freedoms to undermine democracy itself must be held to account," Modi said.

There have been increasing concerns in India about activities of pro-Khalistani elements in the UK, especially after an attack on the Indian High Commission in London in March 2023.

India has been flagging its concerns to the UK over the activities of pro-Khalistan elements.

At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said India shared its views

with the UK on the activities of the "extremist elements".

We have noted the fact that they are increasingly active and have in the past and continue to threaten the safety and security of our diplomatic missions and personnel, inciting violence against our leaders and our diplomats, he said.

At the same time, Misri noted that India received cooperation from the UK on the issue.

PM Modi also underlined the need to confront the challenge of terrorism with a firm approach.

PM Modi condoles British casualties in Ahmedabad crash

AGENCIES
LONDON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday condoled the deaths of several British citizens in last month's Ahmedabad plane crash.

"Last month, in the tragic accident that took place in Ahmedabad, several of those who lost their lives were our brothers and sisters from the UK. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families," Modi said with British counterpart Keir Starmer by his side after their talks.

Air India flight AI 171, operated with the Boeing 787-8, enroute to London Gatwick, crashed soon after takeoff from Ahmedabad on June 12, killing 260 people, including 241 passengers and crew.

Of the 53 British nationals on board, only one

Of the 53 British nationals on board, only one passenger miraculously survived the tragedy.

passenger miraculously survived the tragedy.

Modi also said that the people of Indian origin living in the UK serve as a living bridge in our relationship.

"They did not just bring curry from India, but also creativity, commitment, and character. Their contribution is not limited to the UK's thriving economy — it is equally visible in the country's culture, sports, and public service," he said in his media statement.

India-UK defence industrial roadmap

AGENCIES
LONDON

India and the UK on Thursday firmed up a defence industrial roadmap for co-development and co-production of key defence products and platforms in sync with their overall strategic ties.

The roadmap was finalised following wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Keir Starmer.

The two leaders welcomed the finalisation of a defence industrial roadmap to promote collaboration in co-design, co-development and co-production of defence products to meet the growing demand in both countries as well as for the world market, an Indian readout said.

Modi and Starmer also expressed satisfaction at the deepening defence and security partnership between two countries.

There has been an upswing in India-UK defence

The roadmap was finalised following wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Keir Starmer.

ties in the last few years.

In October 2021, the UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) visited India and held India-UK tri-service exercise Exercise Konkani Shakti.

The UK Carrier Strike Group will do a port call in Mumbai in October as well.

In November last, both sides firmed up a statement of intent (SoI) indicating resolve to strengthen cooperation in electric propulsion. The two sides are also looking at the possible cooperation in production of jet engines.

In their talks, Modi and Starmer also deliberated on the overall situation in the Indo-Pacific.

"We have continued to share our perspectives on peace and stability in the

Indo-Pacific, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and the situation in West Asia," Modi said.

"We support early restoration of peace and stability. Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries is essential. Today's era demands development, not expansionism," he said.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the growing collaboration in new and emerging technologies and called for accelerated implementation of the Technology and Security Initiative (TSI).

The TSI, firmed up last year, focuses on telecom, critical minerals, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and health technology, semiconductors, advanced materials and quantum.

Days of US tech companies building factories in China, hiring workers in India 'over': Trump

AGENCIES
NEW YORK/WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has criticised American tech companies for building factories in China and hiring workers in India, warning that under his presidency, "those days are over".

Trump made the remarks on Wednesday at the AI Summit where he signed three executive orders related to Artificial Intelligence, including a White House action plan to utilise AI.

He said that for too long, much of America's tech industry pursued a "radical globalism" that left millions of Americans feeling "dis-trustful and betrayed."

"Many of our largest tech companies have reaped the blessings



of American freedom while building their factories in China, hiring workers in India and slashing profits in Ireland, you know that. All the while dismissing and even

censoring their fellow citizens right here at home. Under President Trump, those days are over," he said.

"Winning the AI race will demand a new spirit of patriotism and national loyalty in Silicon Valley and long beyond Silicon Valley," Trump said.

"We need US technology companies to be all in for America. We want you to put America first. You have to do that. That's all we ask," he added.

Trump signed three executive orders related to AI, including a White House action plan, an order that establishes a coordinated national effort to support the American AI industry by promoting the export of full-stack American AI technology packages.

State department approves \$322 million in proposed weapons sales to Ukraine



AGENCIES
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

The State Department said Wednesday that it has approved \$322 million in proposed weapons sales to Ukraine to enhance its air defense capabilities

and provide armored combat vehicles, coming as the country works to fend off escalating Russian attacks.

The potential sales, which the department said were notified to Congress, include \$150 million for the supply, maintenance,

RUSSIAN DRONES HIT ODESA, DAMAGE HISTORIC MARKET, UNESCO SITES

KYIV: Russian forces launched a drone attack on the Ukrainian city of Odesa in the early hours of Thursday, damaging residential buildings and historic sites, according to Governor Oleh Kiper.

Ukraine's State Emergency Service said a nine-story apartment building was destroyed in the strike. "Residents of apartments on the fifth through eighth floors have been left without homes," the agency said, adding that parts of the structure are now at risk of collapse. Firefighters evacuated 33 people and rescued five others from blocked apartments.

repair and overhaul of U.S. armored vehicles, and \$172 million for surface-to-air missile systems.

The approvals come weeks after Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth di-

rected a pause on other weapons shipments to Ukraine to allow the Pentagon to assess its weapons stockpiles, in a move that caught the White House by surprise.

Columbia University to pay \$220M in Trump deal to regain federal funding

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

Columbia University announced Wednesday it has reached a deal with the Trump administration to pay more than \$220 million to the federal government to restore federal research money that was canceled in the name of combating antisemitism on campus.

Under the agreement, the

Ivy League school will pay a \$200 million settlement over three years, the university said. It will also pay \$21 million to resolve alleged civil rights violations against Jewish employees that occurred following the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, the White House said.

"This agreement marks an important step forward after a period of sustained federal scrutiny and institutional



uncertainty," acting University President Claire Shipman said.

The school had been threatened with the potential loss of billions of dollars in gov-

ernment support, including more than \$400 million in grants canceled earlier this year. The administration pulled the funding because of what it described as the university's failure to squelch antisemitism on campus during the Israel-Hamas war.

Columbia has since agreed to a series of demands laid out by the Republican administration, including

overhauling the university's student disciplinary process and applying a contentious, federally endorsed definition of antisemitism not only to teaching but to a disciplinary committee that has been investigating students critical of Israel.

Wednesday's agreement — which does not include an admission of wrongdoing — codifies those reforms while preserving the university's

autonomy, Shipman said.

Education Secretary Linda McMahon called the deal "a seismic shift in our nation's fight to hold institutions that accept American taxpayer dollars accountable for antisemitic discrimination and harassment."

"Columbia's reforms are a roadmap for elite universities that wish to regain the confidence of the American public by renewing their commit-

ment to truth-seeking, merit, and civil debate," McMahon said in a statement.

As part of the agreement, Columbia agreed to a series of changes previously announced in March, including reviewing its Middle East curriculum to make sure it was "comprehensive and balanced" and appointing new faculty to its Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies.

'SAIYAARA' COLLECTS RS 155 CRORE IN SIX DAYS

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

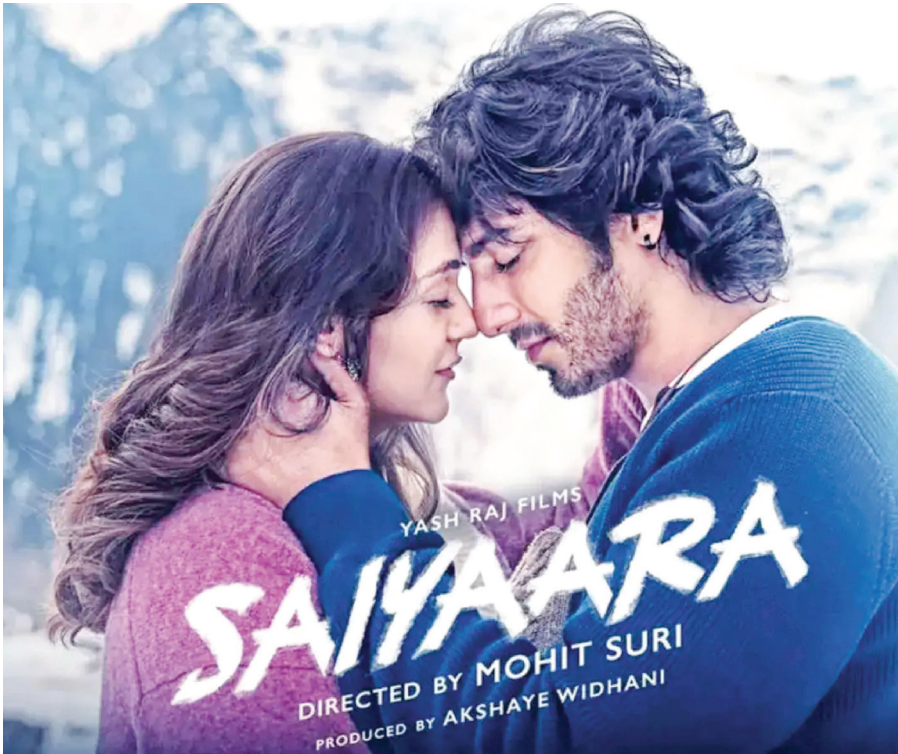
Filmmaker Mohit Suri's romance drama "Saiyaara", featuring newcomers Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda, has breached Rs 150 crore mark at the domestic box office, the makers said on Thursday.

The movie, produced by Yash Raj Films (YRF), was released in theatres last week and has emerged as a runaway blockbuster.

In a press note, the makers said the film earned Rs 22 crore on Wednesday, which took its box office score to Rs 155.75 crore.

"Saiyaara" follows Krish, played by Pandey, an ambitious musician, and Vaani, played by Padda, a shy lyricist recovering from heart-break.

The music of "Saiyaara", which features seven songs composed by Mit-



hoon, Sachet-Parampara, Tanishk Bagchi, Rishabh Kant, Vishal Mishra, Faheem Abdullah and Arslan

Nisami, is already a chart-buster. Alongside Pandey and Padda, the romance also

stars Geeta Agarwal, Rajesh Kumar, Varun Badola and Shaad Randhawa in key roles.

'Fire in my belly to do the next': Randeep Hooda

AGENCIES
GURUGRAM

Bollywood actor Randeep Hooda wishes to do films that can spark a "fire" in himself, something to drive his urge for more work.

The 'Jaat' star recently opened up about his upcoming projects, giving subtle hints about the films in the pipeline.

"I am currently in the stage where I have to choose. And that is what gives me the fire in my belly to do the next," he told ANI, in reference to



his next releases.

Randeep Hooda has been on a busy slate lately, including 'Operation Khukri', which is based on the real-life events of 2000, when 233 Indian Army soldiers were taken hostage by rebel forces in

Sierra Leone, West Africa.

It was followed by a subsequent high-risk mission.

Hooda will be seen in the role of Major General Pal Punia, then Company Commander of the 14th Mechanised Infantry, who played a key role in navi-

gating the tense standoff and the rescue operation of the soldiers.

Earlier this year, Ran-deep Hooda Films and Ra-hul Mittra Films acquired the exclusive film rights to the operation.

The actor will also re-unite with his 'Extraction' director Sam Hargrave for the upcoming action-thriller 'Matchbox' along-side John Cena.

Based on the iconic Matchbox car line, the film will show the story of a group of childhood friends who come together to stop a global disaster.

Ali, Richa board as producers on 'Secrets of a Mountain Serpent'

AGENCIES
VENICE

Bollywood couple Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal have come aboard as producers on 'Secrets of a Mountain Serpent' through their production banner 'Pushing Button Studios'. The movie is set to make its world premiere at the 2025 Venice Film Festival, according to Variety.

The film is directed by Nidhi Saxxena, who won Venice's Biennale College Fund grant for the project. Saxena previously helmed 'Sad Letters of an Imaginary Woman,' which premiered at the 2024 Busan International Film Festival.

'Secrets of a Mountain Serpent' is co-produced with Forest Flower Films, the banner of Cannes Camera d'Or winner Vimukthi Jayasundara, reported Variety. According to the outlet, the movie is set in a remote Himalayan town during the 1990s. The intimate drama follows Barkha (Trimala Adhikari), a school teacher whose husband is stationed at the border.

In an environment where



'Secrets of a Mountain Serpent' is co-produced with Forest Flower Films, the banner of Cannes Camera d'Or winner Vimukthi Jayasundara, reported Variety.

most men are absent and silence permeates daily life, Barkha becomes drawn to Manik Guho (Adil Hussain), a mysterious outsider who disrupts the delicate equilibrium of waiting, restraint and local mythology.

"We were immediately drawn to Nidhi's lyrical vision. This is a story rooted in myth and yet is startlingly relevant today. At PBS,

we believe in backing storytellers who take creative risks, and Nidhi has crafted something singular, poetic, and soulful," Chadha and Fazal said as quoted by Variety.

According to Variety, the production has completed filming the movie and is currently in post-production ahead of its premiere at the Venice Film Festival.

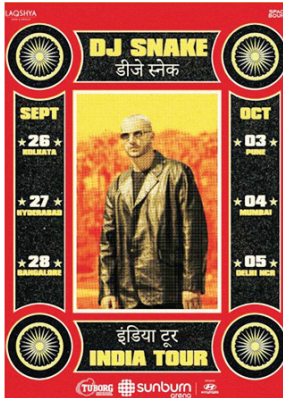
French DJ Snake to perform in six cities in India

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Popular French DJ and producer DJ Snake is set to arrive in India for a massive six-city Sunburn Arena tour across the nation this year.

As per the press note, the tour will kick off in Kolkata on September 26, followed by Hyderabad on September 27, Bengaluru on September 28, Pune on October 3, Mumbai on October 4 and wrapping up in Delhi-NCR on October 5.

Fans can expect Sunburn to unveil an even bigger show-



case and a more electrifying production this time around, underscoring DJ Snake's continued recognition of India's major fanbase with

undying demand.

Tickets for the tour will go live starting July 26th at 12 PM (Noon) IST, exclusively on BookMyShow.

The decade-long partnership between DJ Snake and Sunburn stands at its strongest, bringing back the EDM artist for a third time, after his last performance in India in 2022. From sold-out shows and roaring crowd chants to fans belting out every lyric at full volume, the French hitmaker has created magic every time he has hit the stage in India, and he is now back to bring that

energy to a whole new level. Speaking about his return to India, DJ Snake recalled the love he received from his Indian fans on his last tour.

"The passion and the love in India - it all hits different. I still remember the energy during my last visit with thousands of voices singing every word back to me; It was pure madness! It's the way the crowd gives everything they've got. Every time I come back, that connection feels so deep. See you soon India!" as quoted in a press note.

Karan Singh, CEO, Sun-



Bollywood actress Tamanna Bhatia poses for a photo during Hyundai India Couture Week 2025, at Taj Palace in New Delhi on Wednesday. (ANI)

BRAIN PICKING



Never give up on your dreams, no matter how hard things get

—MRUNAL THAKUR
(Indian actress)

'Songs of Forgotten Trees', set to premiere at Venice Film Festival 2025

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

Director Anurag Kashyap is all set to present Anuparna Roy's feature directorial debut 'Songs of Forgotten Trees', which will world premiere at the 82nd Venice Film Festival, reported Variety.

The human drama marks India's only selection in Venice's Horizons strand, joining the ranks of previous films including Chaitanya Tamhane's 'Court' and Karan Tejpal's 'Stolen,' the latter of which recently bowed on Prime Video.

Starring Naaz Shaikh and Sumi Baghel, the Mumbai-set feature is produced by

Bibhanshu Rai, Romil Modi, and Ranjan Singh, with co-production from Navin Shetty and Roy herself, reported Variety.

According to the outlet, the film follows Thooya, a migrant and aspiring actress who navigates Mumbai by leveraging beauty and

wit, occasionally trading intimacy for opportunity. When she sublets her sugar daddy's upscale apartment to Swetha, a fellow migrant working a corporate job, the two women from seemingly different worlds begin sharing more than just living space.



'Bayaan' to premiere at Toronto International Film Festival 2025

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Huma Qureshi starrer 'Bayaan' has been selected for the world premiere in the prestigious Discovery Section of the Toronto International Film Festival 2025, to be held in September.

Helmed by writer-director Bikas Ranjan Mishra, best known for his acclaimed



feature film 'Chauranga', 'Bayaan' is the only Indian film in the Discovery section.

The movie was developed at Film Independent, Los Angeles and is produced by Shiladitya Bora of Platoon One Films, India's film studio known for multiple Filmfare award-winning Ghaath (Berlinale 2023), National Award winner Picasso (Amazon Prime's first direct-to-digi-

tal Marathi film). Bayaan is a co-production of Platoon One Films with Madhu Sharma (Summit Studios), Kunal Kumar, Anuj Gupta as producers with Switzerland-based Sadik Keshwani (Guidant Films) as co-producer. Huma Qureshi also serves as an Executive Producer on the film.

The ensemble cast of the film includes Chandrachur Singh, Sachin Khedekar, Sand, Avijit Dutt, Vibhore Mayank, Sampa Mandal, Swati Das, Aditi Kanchan Singh and Perry Chhabra.

Filmmaker Bikas Ranjan Mishra describes 'Bayaan' as a poignant reflection of contemporary India, where "power and gender intersect in volatile and often invisible ways," as quoted in a press release shared by the film's makers.

Haasan reviews Fahadh Faasil's 'Maareesan'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Superstar Kamal Haasan was all praise for Fahadh Faasil's latest release 'Maareesan'. The actor congratulated the team for producing a socially apt film.

Taking to his X handle, actor Haasan wrote a meticulous review of 'Maareesan', highlighting the maker's motive to use humour as a camouflage to showcase "human emotions" and "dark shadows" of our society.

Haasan wrote, "Watched



Maareesan - a film that dances effortlessly between wit and depth, leaving me laughing, thinking, and admiring its craft. Had a wonderful conversation with the team

to congratulate them on this delightful creation. Beneath its humour lies a socially conscious lens on human emotion and a keen gaze at the darker shadows of our society.

Metallic Waves in Bollywood Fashion: How Actresses Are Embracing the Futuristic Glam



TDG NETWORK

Metallic fashion is having a serious moment in Bollywood, and it's not just about sparkle anymore. The new wave is all about **metallic waves**—flowing, sculpted, and futuristic silhouettes that shimmer with every move. This high-shine trend has graced red carpets, fashion magazines, and promotional events, with leading Bollywood actresses championing the look in their own unique ways. Let's dive into how the trend is evolving and who's making it shine.

DEEPIKA PADUKONE
When it comes to iconic red carpet appearances, **Deepika**

ika Padukone is always ahead of the curve. At the Cannes Film Festival, she turned heads in a stunning metallic saree designed by Sabyasachi. The saree featured fluid gold textures and wave-like draping that gave the illusion of molten metal. Paired with statement jewellery and her signature bold eyes, **Deepika** proved how traditional wear can embrace futuristic elements and still look rooted in Indian aesthetics.

SONAM KAPOOR AHUJA
Known for pushing the boundaries of fashion, **Sonam Kapoor Ahuja** has often embraced the metallic trend with her characteristic flair. From structured gowns that look like moving

sculptures to silver pleated skirts with dramatic flair, **Sonam** plays with textures and silhouettes that reflect light and draw attention. At a fashion awards event, she wore a metallic bronze gown with exaggerated wave-like shoulder details, proving that fashion is as much about drama as it is about design.

JANHVI KAPOOR
Janhvi Kapoor, one of the younger fashion icons in Bollywood, has been spotted in several metallic ensembles that perfectly blend youthfulness with sophistication. A photoshoot featuring her in a silver metallic bodycon dress with ripple detailing became an instant trendsetter. She kept the makeup minimal

and the hair sleek, allowing the outfit to do all the talking. Her choices show how metallic waves can be youthful, edgy, and fashion-forward.

KIARA ADVANI
At a recent film promotion, **Kiara Advani** wowed in a gold metallic gown with flowing ruffles that mimicked water waves. The outfit, designed by a leading international label, combined glam with grace. **Kiara's** styling—soft curls and dewy makeup—balanced the boldness of the outfit, proving that metallics can be both fierce and feminine.

WHY METALLIC WAVES WORK
The beauty of metallic wave

fashion lies in its versatility. It works across outfit types—from sarees and lehengas to dresses and jumpsuits. The shimmering textures and undulating cuts offer movement, light play, and a bold presence that photographs beautifully. Since you can apply it yourself at home, you don't need to visit a salon as frequently. Another issue that many young people deal with is also addressed by henna cream. They love to be fashionable, and love coloring their hair crazy. With a result of an orangish tint, it wasn't preferred by many. However, henna cream can be combined with several Brazilian herbs like jaborandi, guaraná, açai, cumaru, and babassu oil to result in different colours, including Natural Black, Natural

Transform your grey hair to gorgeous and shiny locks with Henna Cream

CLELIA CECILIA ANGELON

While ageing is the primary cause of greying hair, environmental factors including pollution and UV rays, heredity, stress, smoking, and nutritional deficiencies also play a significant impact. We often see that premature greying of the hair is impacting people as young as 20 years old. And this number is growing every day. However, every problem has a solution. There are numerous options for covering grey hair. A few years ago, chemical hair dyes were very common. Resorcinol, heavy metals, EDTA, PPD, ammonia, and its byproducts, ethanolamine, diethanolamine, and triethanolamine, are frequently found in them. Over time, they damage the hair, and the byproducts of ammonia are more damaging than ammonia itself. These strong hair colours made of harsh chemicals are frequently the cause of cancer and respiratory disorders too. Thus the consumers started looking for better alternatives.

Although henna was commonly used to cover grey hair, the younger generation disliked the orangish tint it created. Henna cream, a pre mixed henna paste, is now available in the market. It comes with an easy to apply applicator, making the entire process mess free. This premixed henna cream eliminates the need to soak henna for hours and blend it with additional herbs, just to make it more effective. Since you can apply it yourself at home, you don't need to visit a salon as frequently. Another issue that many young people deal with is also addressed by henna cream. They love to be fashionable, and love coloring their hair crazy. With a result of an orangish tint, it wasn't preferred by many. However, henna cream can be combined with several Brazilian herbs like jaborandi, guaraná, açai, cumaru, and babassu oil to result in different colours, including Natural Black, Natural



Even during the height of the rainy season, when the humidity is at its worst, the henna cream, which is blended with Indian herbs like amla, produces magnificent, glossy hair that is frizz-free.

Brown, Burgundy, Red, Copper, and even Blonde, due to the presence of different herbs. But the greatest benefit of henna cream is that it naturally dyes hair, and even fashionistas adore it for the variety of colours it provides. Even during the height of the rainy season, when the humidity is at its worst, the henna cream, which is blended with Indian herbs like amla, produces magnificent, glossy hair that is frizz-free. Applying henna cream as a hair mask allows the user to absorb more nutrients. Because of the strength they possess internally, it results in hair that is silky and lustrous and appears healthy from the outside.

Henna cream can be simply washed away with tap water after application. Post-coloration shampoos and conditioners are used for aftercare to prolong the life of the hair color. It may endure up to ten washings with proper maintenance. Depending on the growth rate of the hair, the roots may require a touch-up. Additionally, because henna contains no harsh ingredients, it can be reapplied as frequently as desired. With the use of henna cream, you may naturally transform your grey hair into a stunning, flowing masterpiece, giving you confidence to flaunt your hair everyday.

By: Clelia Cecilia Angelon, Founder & CEO, Surya Brasil

Next-Gen Smart Fabrics: Weaving Innovation Into Everyday Wear

PAWAN GUPTA

In a world where technology is seamlessly integrated into every aspect of modern lives, the textile industry remains no exception. As the wave of innovation continues to sweep through the ecosystem, the advent of smart fabrics represents a remarkable revolution. At a pivotal juncture of technology and fashion, these fabrics carry the potential to reshape the clothes we wear, along with the way we interact with the environment.

Building upon tech-backed innovations, smart fabrics leverage materials that are incorporated with electronic components to deliver added functionality. Unlike traditional fabrics, smart fabrics can sense, react, and adapt to diverse external stimuli. With the integration of conductive materials, sensors, and microelectronics, smart fabrics boast endless possibilities. That said, the significant uptick in customer demands and technological advancements are bound to drive the growth of smart fabrics.

Smart Fabric Technology poised to Influence the Future of Fashion

This rapidly evolving field is more than just about innovative fabrics but serves as a glimpse into advanced technologies that can be applied to the fashion industry.



plied to the fashion industry. In tandem, the influence of smart fabrics is becoming more evident with the launch of smart clothing that makes garments fashionable and functional. With in-built sensors these clothes are designed to monitor the wearer's health, track movements, and communicate with other devices.

In addition, smart fabrics are being used to produce clothing that adapts to the wearer's needs. This essentially means that a shirt could be designed with sensors that detect the temperature and maintain the insulation, which would keep the wearer comfortable in different climatic conditions. The widespread demand of smart fabrics can be attributed to their ability to change colour or patterns in response to external stimuli, namely heat, touch, and light.

uli, namely heat, touch, and light.

Significance in Transforming Key Aspects of Daily Life
Smart Fabrics are more than just a fashion statement, but an opportunity to reshape health monitoring. The same is actively being achieved with shirts that have in-built sensors that can effectively track the wearer's heart rate, breathing, and other vitals, allowing them to gain real-time feedback about their body at all times. In fact, smart fabrics are also being applied to design socks that are capable of detecting foot ulcers in diabetic patients, leading to the delivery of improved preventive healthcare.

Against growing environmental consciousness, smart fabrics also present the chance to create clothes

that are eco-friendly. They can contribute to sustainable fashion by using ecologically safe materials like temperature-regulating fabrics that are adept at reducing the need for excessive heating or cooling. This in turn will promote efficient energy use and a smaller environmental footprint. Furthermore, clothes made with smart fabrics could be constructed to break down easily after use, mitigating the amount of waste produced by the fashion industry.

Enhancing Potential Across Diverse Industries

The convergence of technology and textiles has caused diverse industries to shift towards smart fabrics, especially fashion, fitness, and military sectors. While for the fashion industry, smart fabrics are a testa-

ment to limitless creativity that emerges out of the blend between fashion and innovation and produces aesthetically pleasing yet tech-driven garments.

For the sports and fitness industry, smart fabrics empower athletes with robust monitoring which enhances training programs, reduces the risk of injuries, and provides crucial insights to both athletes and coaches. In addition, smart fabrics are poised to play a fundamental role in the defence sector by producing advanced uniforms that feature sensors for detecting chemical and biological threats and an adaptive camouflage for improved stealth.

Final Thoughts

Smart Fabrics symbolise a masterful blend between technology and textiles, designed to offer a multitude of possibilities across multiple industries. As smart fabrics continue to push the boundaries of innovation, the business ecosystem as a whole can expect new and inventive garments with each launch. Within the coming years, smart fabrics are estimated to become an integral component that will drive the development of a more connected and intelligent fashion world.

On behalf of Pawan Gupta, Co-founder at Fasbinza

Radiant Skin and a Signature Scent: All About Latest Beauty Discoveries

SANJANA CHAWLA

In my daily conquest of finding everyday radiance, glow and luxury, I tried six new products that brought a difference in how I look and, more importantly, how I feel. Here's a deep dive into the standout products that have earned a permanent spot on my vanity - at least for this rainy season!

My struggle with oily, acne-prone skin has been a long-standing battle, especially in monsoons. The Re'equil Oil Control Anti-Acne Face Wash came as a revelation. This soap-free, sulfate-free gel cleanser has become my morning and evening ritual. It gently purifies, removing excess oil and dirt without over-drying. My skin now feels balanced, less prone to breakouts, and remarkably refreshed.

Late long nights and screen time has left my under-eye area looking dull and tired, with fine lines starting to make an unwelcome appearance. The Ginseng Cica Eye Cream I from ClayCo has been a true savior. This cream, packed with potent ingredients targets dullness, strength-



ens the delicate skin barrier, and smooths fine lines. The intense hydration it provides lasts all day, and it blends seamlessly under makeup.

Dealing with hair fall and thinning has been a source of immense frustration and due credits to work stress. The Bounce Beauty Raise Fall Fighter Starter Kit with an exfoliator, shampoo, and treatment was my must-try hope, and it delivered! This kit promised to tackle hair loss and improve hair density. Within weeks, I observed noticeably less hair in my brush and a healthier scalp. My hair feels smoother, has more volume at the roots, and boasts a new, glossy shine.

It truly felt like I was giving my hair a new lease on life!

Continuing my hair care journey, I also discovered the And Done Hair Take Control Combo this month. This dynamic duo—a gentle shampoo and a lightweight conditioner—deeply hydrates and strengthens my strands from the inside out. The shampoo, with its SLS-free blend of cleansing and mild surfactants effectively removes buildup without stripping moisture. A must-mention is how the color-protection polymers ensure my hair color stays vibrant for longer!

And now to my favourite category - I sought a fragrance that truly resonated with my evolving self. The Rose Oud Eau De Parfum from House of Moksha is pure enchantment. With top notes of Cardamom, middle notes of Rose, Lily, and Jasmine, and a luxurious base of Agarwood (Oud), Amber, Velvet, Musk, and Sandalwood, this unisex scent is a masterful blend of classic charm and modern opulence. It's sophisticated, bold yet elegant, and its longevity (12+ hours!) means I feel enveloped in its intoxicating aroma all day.

A GOOD STORY DOESN'T LECTURE—NIHIT MOHAN

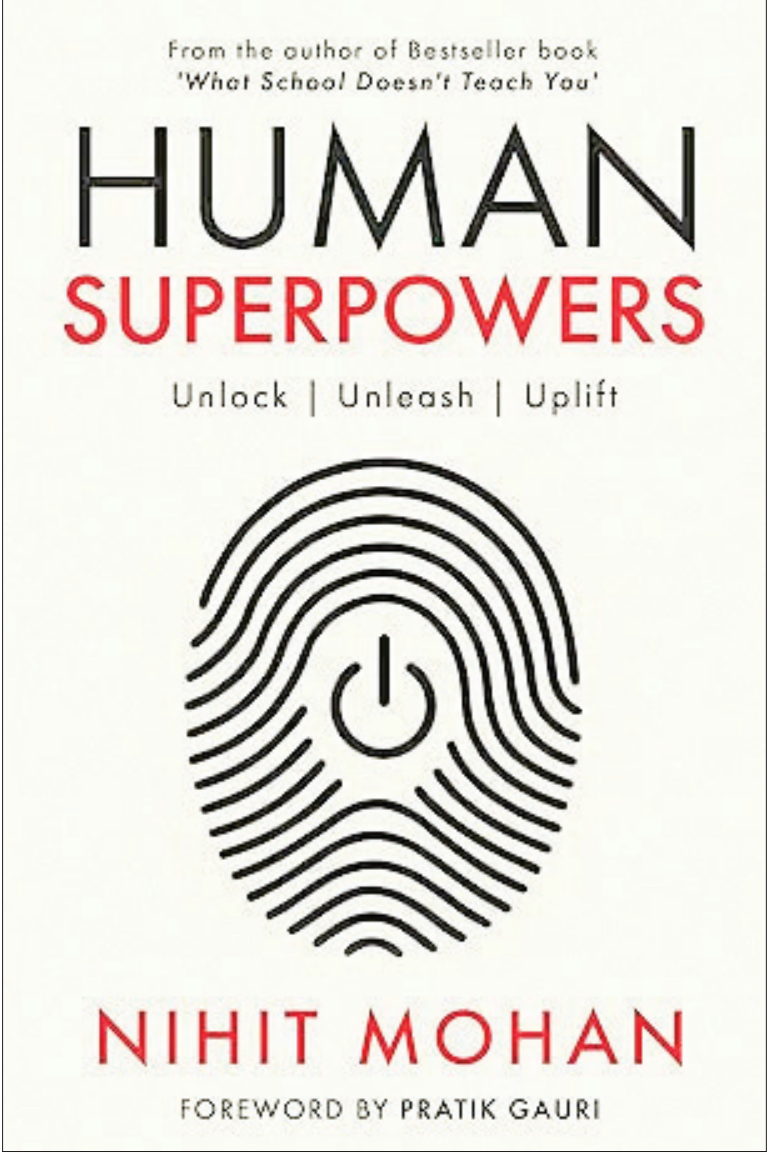


PROF SHIV SETHI

Nihit Mohan is a purpose-driven author, mentor, and thought leader whose writing invites readers to rediscover the brilliance that quietly lives within them. With a successful career in financial services and a soul rooted in reflection and travel, Nihit has journeyed across 27 countries, learning not just from books, but from people, cultures, and everyday life. His first book, *What School Doesn't Teach You*, addressed the gaps between academic success and life wisdom. His second project, a trilogy titled *Human Superpowers* – *Unlock | Unleash | Uplift*, dives deeper—offering readers powerful frameworks to master their inner world and live with clarity, resilience, and purpose. TDG recently caught up with the author. Here are the excerpts from that conversation.

1. What inspired you to write *Human Superpowers*, and how did the idea evolve?

It started not with a bang, but a whisper—“What if the extraordinary is already within us?” That quiet ques-



Years ago, I struggled with maths until I began visualising success and affirming belief daily. That mindset shift—from low faith, low vision to high faith, high vision—transformed my results. Scoring 97/100 wasn't luck; it was alignment.

tion surfaced during one of my morning introspection and wouldn't let go. Over time, it evolved into a deeper

exploration of what it truly means to awaken to our own power—not by learning something new, but by unlearning what holds us back.

2. What makes a good story—and how did you use storytelling in this book?

A good story doesn't lecture—it listens with you. It reflects your struggles, not

someone else's perfection. In *Human Superpowers*, I wove together global icons like Satya Nadella with intimate personal stories—my child's first words, my move to Singapore—so that readers can see themselves in those reflections and ask, “Where is my hidden strength?”

3. How do you hope the book will impact readers?

I hope it becomes more than a book—it becomes a mirror. A pause. A compass. In a world full of deadlines and distractions, *Human Superpowers* offers a way back to self—through gratitude, resilience, vision, and more. It

helps readers not become someone new, but remember who they already are.

4. How do you apply these superpowers in your own life?

They're not theories to me—they're my survival kit. When I moved to a new country, I leaned on faith and vision. As a parent, I



practise daily gratitude. And during personal or professional setbacks, I call upon resilience—not for perfection, but to keep inching forward with grace.

5. Who is this book for?

For the seeker. The quiet dreamer. The overworked professional. The parent rediscovering joy. The student drowning in expectations. It's for anyone ready to stop surviving and start living intentionally. This book offers not just inspiration, but structure—through frameworks like the Faith-Vision Quadrant and Quiver Paradigm etc.

6. What's next? Is there more to come?

Yes—*Human Superpowers* is a trilogy. This first book, *Unlock | Unleash | Uplift*, is about personal mastery. The second explores interpersonal powers—empathy, influence, collaboration. And the final part unites them all to build a life of conscious, collective impact. This isn't just a book journey—it's a human revolution in the making.

7. Can you share an instance where real life inspired one of the chapters or frameworks?

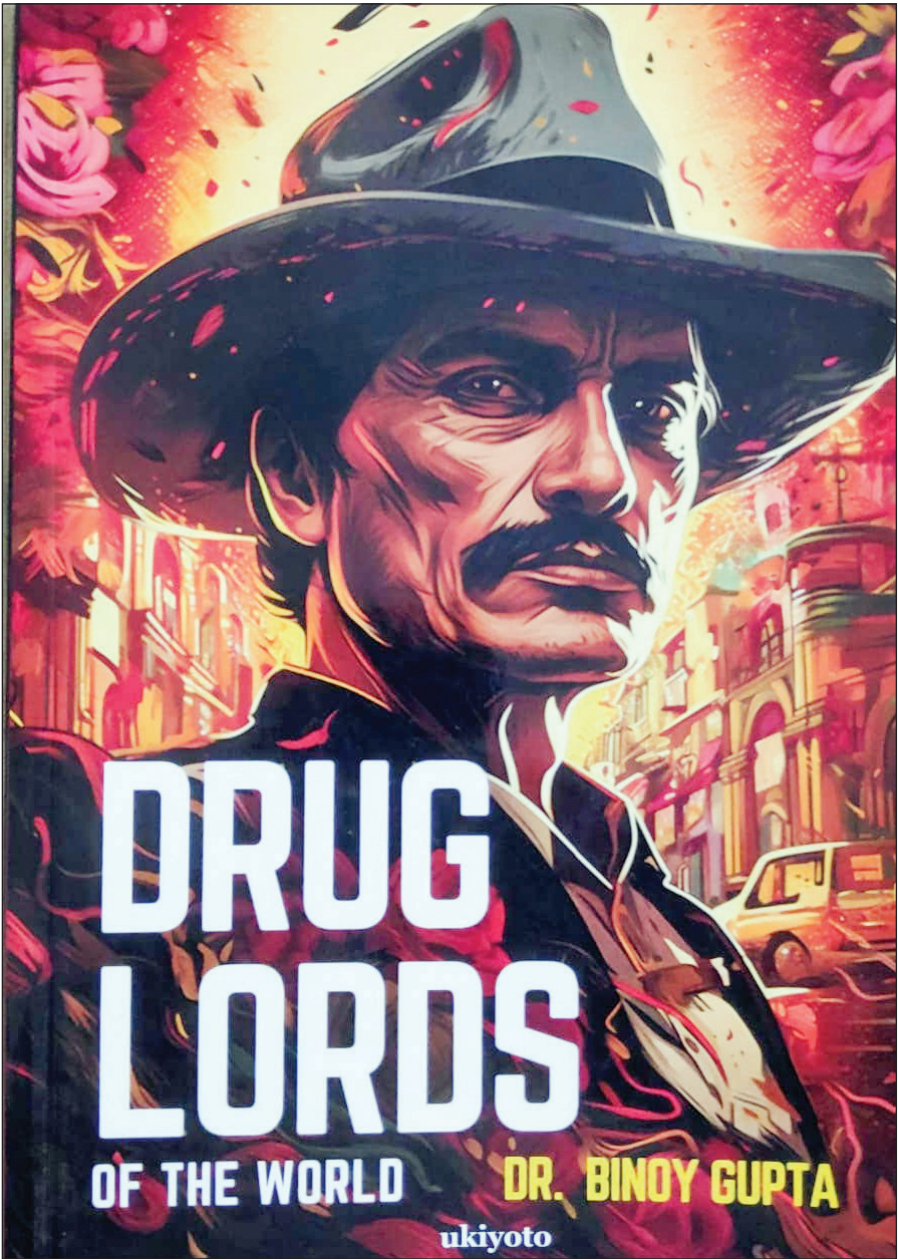
Years ago, I struggled with maths until I began visualising success and affirming belief daily. That mindset shift—from low faith, low vision to high faith, high vision—transformed my results. Scoring 97/100 wasn't luck; it was alignment. That realisation became the seed for the Quadrant of Faith & Vision model.

Nefarious World of Narcotics

RUPALI SETHI

“Drug Lords of the World” by Dr. Binoy Gupta is a compelling dive into the dark and demonic world of drug trafficking which is a global menace now. This engaging book presents a highly captivating depiction of the world's multibillion-dollar drugs trade, diabolical influence, oppressive authority, furtive operations and the bewitching backstage stories of their infamous kingpins. In his magnum opus work “Poetic” Aristotle gives credence to the belief that Art and Literature have cathartic and therapeutic purposes. When the intellectuals dwell on the purpose of art and literature, two divergent schools with their thoroughly dichotomous standpoint emerge on the literary canvas. Acknowledging the social accountability of the authors, one school asserts that Art is for the sake of Life whereas the proponents of the other school are of the opinion that Art is primarily for the sake of Art only. Certainly, the writers have an absolute autonomy to tread upon the paths of their own choice and follow or negate the set canons laid down by the eminent thinkers and erudite philosophers of the bygone era. Like Friedrich Nietzsche, who remarks that there is no art for art's sake, Dr Binoy Gupta has produced his art and literature for the sake of society. Not wallowing in his personal pains and sorrows, he lays bare the cadaverous underbelly of our drug-afflicted sordid society and makes us see its festering wounds.

By means of his meticulous research, Dr. Gupta offers his readers a comprehensive and complete understanding of the complexities surround-



Every story becomes profoundly spell-binding when it begins to shed light on the rise and the ultimate fall of drug lords of great notoriety.

ing the global drug trade. One of the most gripping facets of “Drug Lords” is its author's subtle knack to unfold the layers of this dark and deeply dangerous industry. He throws a flood of light on the most abomi-

nable origins of the drug cartels, their nasty operations, and the illegitimate socio-economic factors which help them thrive and perpetuate their existence. From the rise of the most ignominious king-

pins to the multilayered workings of the smuggling networks, every aspect of the drug trade has been deftly dwelled upon in this book.

Every story becomes profoundly spell-binding when it begins to shed light on the rise and the ultimate fall of drug lords of great notoriety. Indubitably, It comes out as nemesis and final retribution which hammers the fact that evil-doer may climb up the summit of phenomenal power and amass mind-blowing pelf but as the time flies, their mighty illegal

empires, which they had once erected on the fiendish foundation of sin, are destined to crumble down and fall apart. Here we are informed that Chicago's Al Capone was as famous as a celebrity through news media and movies, and the author relates his story in the most breathtaking manner which resonates deeply with the readers. Quite in a similar fashion, there are many more whose nefarious deeds will send cold shivers deep down the spines of the sensitive readers.

Owing to his remarkable writing acumen, the author embarks upon the journey of his writing unfolding the personal story and then lays bare the smutty underbelly of their gory and gruesome world of narcotics and when they are gone, stories about their descendants begin to shape up. The fact can not be refuted that Drug Lords and drug Cartels have always fascinated us. They are almost like parallel Governments – run professionally, but far more ruthlessly. The illegal traffic in narcotic drugs generates huge amounts of money. This money is used to bribe, corrupt, threaten and even kill politicians and government officials. This illicit money has to be laundered through complex money laundering techniques which leave the readers with furrows and frowns on their foreheads. Many of the Drug Lords have cultivated a Robin Hood type of image often helping the poor and needy. Their stories have been converted into block buster movies and TV serials. Best seller books have been written about them. All these ghastly and macabre details are conveyed to readers as they flip through the pages of this masterpiece.

POEM

Mask of Terror



P.V. LAXMIPRASAD

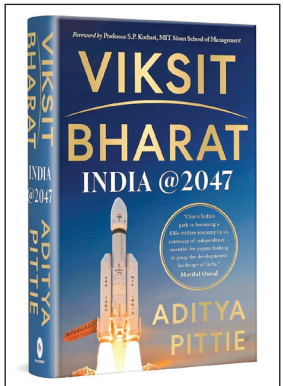
They are enemies of religion, humanity, co-existence
They are Perpetrators of diabolic plots
Fueling dreaded networks on assorted routes
They are hardcore hardliners harbored
On principles of grudges, enmities and emotions
They have sweet tooth for killings
On measured scales of hatred and animosities
Masterminding and engineering tentacles on of timorous lots
Panic of times maneuvered
To script histories of blood baths and dark shadows
Gruesome pictures of faces and bodies
How villainy playing upon barbaric tunes
Bomb-plants become blood of revenges
Human lives become revenges of blood
Upon moments disguised
They run wild with glee
Under masks of terror
With long trails of destruction
To catch lingering minds ever.

What will India look like when it turns 100?

TDG NETWORK

Aditya Pittie's Viksit Bharat: India @2047 answers this bold question with a rare mix of clarity, strategic insight, and national optimism. Published in the lead-up to India's centenary of independence, this timely book provides a visionary roadmap for transforming the country into a fully developed, globally influential nation by 2047.

Providing a thorough, evidence-based plan for turning the country into a fully developed country by 2047 with an economy worth over \$30 trillion each chapter of *Viksit Bharat* is anchored in evidence-based analysis, laying out clear strategies for economic growth, digital transformation, fiscal reform, sustainable infrastructure, educa-



manifesto for India's next quarter-century.

Whether you're a policymaker or a UPSC aspirant, an entrepreneur or educator, the book resonates with anyone invested in India's future. It empowers citizens with knowledge and ownership of the national vision, making it more than just a book—it's a participatory manifesto.

The language is simple and conversational, mak-

Whether you're a policymaker or a UPSC aspirant, an entrepreneur or educator, the book resonates with anyone invested in India's future. It empowers citizens with knowledge and ownership of the national vision, making it more than just a book—it's a participatory manifesto.

tion and skill development, innovation, healthcare and well-being, agricultural and rural transformation, national security, tourism, heritage revival and social equity.

The book manages to be both encyclopaedic in its scope and remarkably accessible—balancing academic rigour with public-friendly language.

Pittie combines economic foresight with policy clarity and strategic depth to lay out the pathway to a \$30+ trillion economy. This book is an expansive, optimistic, and data-intensive

ing the book completely accessible to general readers despite its encyclopedic content.

Viksit Bharat: India @2047 (Fingerprint) stands as one of the most lucid and ambitious visions for India's future—a must-read for anyone invested in the country's next chapter. By combining data, ambition, and realism, Aditya Pittie presents a future that feels both within reach and worth striving for. For anyone invested in India's developmental trajectory, Pittie's work is not just informative—it's inspirational.

DUCKETT, CRAWLEY GIVE ENGLAND SOLID START AFTER INDIA BUNDLE OUT FOR 358

AGENCIES
MANCHESTER

England openers Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley provide a solid start to the hosts after bundling out India for 358 in the second session of Day 2 of the fourth Test at Old Trafford in Manchester on Thursday.

At the stroke of Tea, the Ben Stokes-led side was 77/0 with Duckett (43*) and Crawley (33*) unbeaten on the crease. The England side still trails India's total of 358 by 281 runs.

The second session of Day 2 resumed from 321/6 with Rishabh Pant (39*) and Washington Sundar (20*) unbeaten on the crease.

In the 110th over, Team India lost two wickets as Sundar (27) and debutant Anshul Kamboj (0) were sent back to the pavilion by England skipper Ben Stokes when the side's score was 337. Pant completed his half-century on the first



India's KL Rahul plays a shot during day 1 of the 4th test match against England, at Old Trafford stadium in Manchester on Wednesday. (iBCCI X/ANI Photo)

ball of the 112th over as he slammed a boundary on the bowling of Stokes.

At the score of 349, India lost the wicket of Pant (54 runs off 75 balls) as he was cleaned up by right-arm seamer Jofra Archer. In the same over, the Shubman Gill-led side touched the 350-run mark.

After Pant's dismissal, right-hand batter Mohammed Siraj (5*) came out to bat in the middle.

On the first ball of the 115th over, India were bowled out at the score of 358 as right-hand batter Jasprit Bumrah (4) was dismissed by Archer.

For the hosts, the pick of

the bowlers was Stokes, who bagged a fiver in his spell of 24 overs, where he conceded 72 runs in his spell. Three wickets were snapped by Archer (3/73 in 26.1 overs), and one wicket each was grabbed by right-arm seamer Chris Woakes (1/66 in 23 overs) & left-arm spinner Liam Dawson (1/45

BRIEF SCORE

India 358 all out (Sai Sudarshan 61, Yashasvi Jaiswal 58; Ben Stokes 5/72) vs England 77/0 (Ben Duckett 43*, Zak Crawley 33*; Jasprit Bumrah 0/22).

in 15 overs) in their respective spells. In reply to India's 358, openers Duckett and Crawley came out to bat on the crease. Both players started off the innings carefully, but later attacked the Indian bowlers, especially right-arm pacer Siraj (0/26 in 4 overs) and Kamboj (0/29 in 5 overs). Bumrah was also a little bit expensive as he gave away 22 runs in his first five overs.

Earlier in the first session, the visitors managed to add just 57 runs in 22 overs, losing two important wickets along the way. Jofra Archer, who looked sharp from the start, gave England the perfect start by dismissing Ravindra Jadeja for 20.



India Compound team of Kushal Dalal, Sahil Jadhav & Hritik Sharma beat Chinese Taipei in the semis to advance to the final at the #WorldUniversityGames.

Team India to tour England in 2026 for white-ball series

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

In what promises to be a packed summer of cricket in England next year, both the Indian men's and women's teams are set to tour the country in 2026 for a series of white-ball fixtures, according to the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) website.

The Indian men's team will kick off their tour with a five-match T20I series starting July 1, with Durham playing host to the opening game. The action then shifts to Manchester (July 4), Nottingham (July 7), Bristol (July 9), and concludes with the final T20I in Southampton on July 11.

Following the T20Is, Rohit Sharma's men will take on England in a three-match ODI series beginning July 14 in Birmingham. The second ODI is slated for July 16 in Cardiff, before the marquee clash at the iconic Lord's on July 19 wraps up the tour.

Meanwhile, the Indian women's team will also be heading to English shores for a multi-format series. The tour will begin with three



ODIs, the first on May 28 in Chelmsford, followed by Bristol on May 30, and the final ODI game in Taunton on June 2. A one-off Test match to be played at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground, a venue steeped in history and significance.

Before India's arrival, England women will start their home season with a six-match limited-overs series against New Zealand, comprising three ODIs and three T20Is, beginning May 10 in Durham.

Following the India series, England Women will host Ireland for three ODIs in September. In between, they'll

have their biggest assignment of the year, the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, which England is set to host from June 12 to July 15.

As for the men's side, England will begin their home summer in June with three Test matches against New Zealand.

Post the India series in July, the focus will shift to Pakistan, who will tour England for a three-match Test series starting August 19. England will conclude their home calendar with a limited-overs series against Sri Lanka, comprising three T20Is and three ODIs, starting on September 15.

India ready to host Asia Cup 2025 on neutral venues: Sources

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday agreed to host the upcoming Asia Cup 2025 at a neutral venue. The venues of the tournament can be Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as per the sources.

The Asia Cup 2025, a six-team tournament, will be played in T20 format this time around. The sources further revealed that it is likely that both India and Pakistan will be in the same group for the tournament.

"India is ready to host the Asia Cup 2025, but at a neutral venue (Abu Dhabi and UAE), India and Pakistan will likely be in the same group," sources said.

India is the defending champion of the Asia Cup. In 2023, India refused to travel to Pakistan for the Asia Cup, and Sri



Lanka was picked as the neutral venue for India's fixtures. Earlier this year, Pakistan hosted the Champions Trophy, but India declined to cross the border and played all its matches at a neutral venue in Dubai.

In May, various reports and speculations stormed social media, suggesting that India had declined to participate in this year's Asia Cup and the Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup due to cross-border tensions between India and Pakistan. The reports claimed

that the BCCI had informed the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) of its decision to withdraw from both events--the Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup, scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka next month, and the Men's Asia Cup, slated for September. BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia categorically denied the claims, stating that the BCCI hasn't engaged in such conversations or taken any steps regarding the ACC events. The BCCI secretary labelled the reports as "speculative and imaginary."

Wrestling Legend Hulk Hogan dies at 71

AGENCIES
FOLRIDA

The wrestling world is grieving the loss of one of its greatest icons, as legendary wrestler Hulk Hogan has passed away at the age of 71. He was reportedly recovering from a serious heart surgery, and despite recent reassurances from his wife Sky Daily about his condition, Hogan ultimately succumbed to complications related to the procedure and an earlier neck surgery.

The WWE issued a statement shortly after news broke, calling Hogan "one of pop culture's most recognizable figures" and crediting him with helping the organization "achieve global recognition in the 1980s". Hogan was considered a pioneer for professional wrestling and his accomplishments speak

for themselves. Hogan's look became iconic once he joined the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) in 1983. His trademark horseshoe mustache and bandanas made him a fan favorite, along with his charisma and ability to get the crowd into his matches. As an icon for the sport, Hogan naturally won tons of awards throughout his career.

Hogan headlined eight of the first nine editions of WrestleMania, helping launch professional wrestling into the mainstream media space. During his first stint with WWE/WWF, Hogan won the Championship five times, before winning it a sixth time in 2002.

From 1994 to 1999, Hogan won the WCW World Heavyweight Championship six times as well, during his run with World Championship

China Open: Unnati shocks Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag advance, Prannoy exits

AGENCIES
CHANGZHOU

In a defining moment of her fledgling career, young Unnati Hooda stunned two-time Olympic medallist and Indian badminton stalwart PV Sindhu in a gripping three-game contest to storm into the quarterfinals of China Open Super here Thursday.

Facing her decorated compatriot for only the second time, 17-year-old Hooda held her nerve in crunch moments to register a sensational 21-16, 19-21, 21-13 victory in 73 minutes, marking her maiden



quarterfinal appearance at a Super 1000 event. The teenager from Rohtak, who has won Super 100 titles at the 2022 Odisha Masters and 2023 Abu Dhabi Masters, will next take on Japan's Akane Yamaguchi,

the third seed and a two-time world champion.

On the other hand, HS Prannoy, a World Championships medalist, bowed out of the competition in the round of 16, facing a loss to Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien-

chen by 21-18, 15-21, 8-21 in a one-sided match despite winning the first game.

In women's singles competition, Unnati Hooda delivered a commanding performance to outplay experienced Scottish shuttler Kirsty Gilmour 21-11, 21-16 in just 36 minutes on Wednesday. With this impressive win, 17-year-old Unnati advanced to the Round-of-16, where she will take on compatriot PV Sindhu in an all-Indian clash. Sindhu brushed off an early scare to book her berth in the next phase at the Olympic Sports Centre Gymnasium in Changzhou.

Markram, Bavuma return in South Africa squad

AGENCIES
JOHANNESBURG

The Proteas men's head coach Shukri Conrad announced full-strength white-ball squads for South Africa's tour to Australia for three T20Is and ODIs each, starting from August 10 onwards, with ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final heroes Aiden Markram and Temba Bavuma returning to lead the T20I and ODI sides respectively. A statement from Cricket South Africa (CSA) said, "Proteas Men's head coach Shukri Conrad has today announced full-strength squads for the upcoming white-ball tour against Australia, scheduled to take place next month." Aiden Markram will lead the T20I side, while



Temba Bavuma returns to captain the ODI squad, following heroic performances in the Proteas' ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 triumph.

Dolphins off-spinner Prenelan Subrayan, who recently made his Test debut against Zimbabwe, has earned his maiden T20I call-up.

He is one of four frontline spinners in the squad alongside Western Province's

George Linde, Warriors' Senuran Muthusamy, and Lions' Ngqaba Peter.

Titans batters Dewald Brevis and Luan-dre Pretorius have been named in the ODI squad, with Pretorius receiving his first call-up to the 50-over setup. While Brevis was part of the ODI squad for the home series against Australia in 2023, he has yet to make his debut. Both players will aim to build on their experience

in T20Is and Tests as they continue their progression at the international level. Brevis, Pretorius and Subrayan feature in both squads, along with batters Aiden Markram, Ryan Rickelton and Tristan Stubbs, as well as seamers Corbin Bosch (Titans), Nandre Burger, Lungi Ngidi and Kagiso Rabada.

"It's great to have our senior players back in the mix after their rest following the WTC Final," said Conrad. "Their experience and quality add real value to the group as we continue to build a strong core in both formats," he added.

"Every series from here on plays a part in shaping our squads for next year's T20 World Cup and the 50-over World Cup at home in 2027."

Tour de France: Jonathan secures stage 17 win, pips Jordi in rain-soaked finale

AGENCIES
PARIS

Jonathan Milan (Lidl-Trek) won a chaotic Stage 17 of the Tour de France, pipping Jordi Meeus (Red Bull-Bora-hansgrohe) in a rain-soaked finale in Valence.

On Wednesday, with Tadej Pogacar (UAE Team Emirates) closing in on Milan in the race for the green jersey, Milan's team was determined to ensure the stage would finish in a bunch sprint and maximise the

Italian's points haul.

Although not what Milan would have wanted, that task was made easier by a crash that occurred beneath the flamme rouge banner, with a kilometre to go. Only the front ten riders were completely unaffected, with most of the rest of the bunch impeded by a wall of bodies and bikes. They included the rider most expected to challenge Milan for the stage, Tim Merlier (Soudal-Quick-Step), who stayed upright but was forced to slow to a



standstill and was unable to contest the final sprint.

It all came at the end of a short, somewhat punchy stage that wasn't even guaranteed to finish in a bunch sprint. That it did was almost entirely down to the efforts of Milan's Lidl-Trek team-mates throughout the stage.

Their first task was to restrict the size and make-up of the breakaway. Narrow roads out of Bollene made that an easier one. Once four riders had disappeared

up the road, a wall of riders mostly wearing red, yellow and blue appeared at the front, slowing the bunch down and repressing any further efforts to make the jump. Kasper Asgreen (EF Education EasyPost) was the most apparently keen of those who had missed out, but the Danish rider was put in a box and prevented from finding a way through.

By the time Axel Laurance (Ineos Grenadier) was able to bust out it was too little too late.

The Frenchman spent about 20km with his nose in the wind before being re-absorbed into the peloton. It was soon clear that Vincenzo Albanese (EF Education-EasyPost), Quentin Pacher (Groupama-FDJ), Mathieu Burgaudeau (Total Energies) and Jonas Abrahamson (Uno-X Mobility) were going to be allowed the most limited of leads. Although they worked hard and cooperated well, for most of the afternoon, they were about as invisible as a break could be.