



2
RAJYA SABHA ADJOURNED
TILL JULY 28 AMID
SLOGANEERING



11
THAI, CAMBODIA TRADE
HEAVY FIRE AS CLASHES
ENTER SECOND DAY



16
STOKES RETIRES HURT
AS ENGLAND REACH
538/7 ON DAY 3

LOK SABHA TO TAKE UP BIPARTISAN MOTION TO REMOVE JUSTICE VARMA

■ This ends speculation about the fate of a notice signed earlier by 63 Rajya Sabha members of Opposition parties

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha will take up a bipartisan motion to remove Justice Yashwant Varma, who is embroiled in a suspected corruption case, as the opposition-sponsored notice for a similar motion in Rajya Sabha has not been admitted.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Friday that it was a unanimous decision of all political parties to move unitedly in a case of perceived corruption in judiciary, asserting that Lok Sabha will take up the motion, which was signed by 152 MPs from the ruling alliance and the Opposition. Official sources said the



"We shouldn't remain in any doubt, proceedings will begin in the Lok Sabha - Kiren Rijiju Parliamentary Affairs Minister"

opposition-sponsored notice for a similar motion in Rajya Sabha, which received it on the same day when the bipartisan notice was submitted to Lok Sabha on July 21, has not been admitted.

This ends speculation about the fate of the notice signed by 63 Rajya Sabha members of opposi-

tion parties. Then Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar had mentioned receiving it in the House, alarming the government and triggering a chain of events that led to his abrupt resignation on the same night. Rijiju said all political parties had agreed that the re-

■ P3

Debate on Pahalgam attack, Ops Sindoor in LS on July 28

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday said that there will be a special discussion in the Lok Sabha on the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor on July 28, amid continued disruptions by the Opposition during the Monsoon Session of Parliament.

Addressing media persons in the national capital, Rijiju stated that Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla convened a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) earlier in the day, during which it was reiterated that the government is prepared for a full debate on the sen-

sitive issues.

"Today, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla called the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), and it was reiterated that we are ready for a discussion on Operation Sindoor. It has been decided today that there will be a special discussion on the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor on Monday (28th July)," Rijiju said.

The Union Minister said, "We have told them that Operation Sindoor will be discussed first. We will decide which issues will be discussed after that... Operation Sindoor will be debated for 16 hours in the Lok Sabha on Monday (July 28) and for 16 hours in the

■ P3

Modi overtakes Indira, becomes PM with second longest stint

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Narendra Modi on Friday overtook Indira Gandhi to become the second longest serving Prime Minister of India in consecutive terms. Modi, officials noted, completed 4,078 days in office on Friday. Gandhi was in the office in an unbroken stint for 4,077 days, from January 24, 1966, to March 24, 1977.

The record for the unbroken stint is held by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister. Both Modi and Nehru led their respective parties to victory in three consecutive Lok Sabha elections.

Nehru, who remained at the helm from August 15, 1947, till his death on May 27, 1964, had an uninterrupted tenure of 6,130 days.

As an elected head of a government, in state and at the Centre, PM Modi al-

■ P3



Completed 4,078 days in office on Friday



In the office for 4,077 days (January 24, 1966, to March 24, 1977)

PM MODI ENJOYS THE LONGEST STINT AS ELECTED HEAD OF A GOVERNMENT

- He became Gujarat CM in 2001 and remained in office before taking over as Prime Minister in 2014.
- Sworn in Prime Minister on May 26, 2014
- PM Modi is the first Prime Minister born after Independence
- He is the longest serving non-Congress PM
- Onlynon-Congress leader to complete two full terms as the head of the Central government.
- PM Modi is the only leader in India, among all PMs and CMs, to win six consecutive elections as the leader of a party — Gujarat assembly polls in 2002, 2007 and 2012, and the national elections in 2014, 2019, and 2024

Seven students killed as roof of Rajasthan school collapses

TDG NETWORK
JHALAWAR/JAIPUR

Seven children died and 28 children injured as the roof of the dilapidated building of Peepodi Government School in Manoharthana block of Jhalawar collapsed on Friday amid continuing rains. The injured children were admitted to the hospital and the condition of nine is said to be critical.

According to the school administration officials, the prayer meeting in the school was postponed due to rain in the morning and 35 children were sitting in a classroom when the roof of the school came down and all the 35 students were buried under the debris.

Local people rushed to the spot on hearing the screams of students and police and district administration officials too reached the spot. Villagers and teachers immediately started rescue operations and pulled out injured children from under the debris and admitted them to Manoharthana and Jhalawar hospitals.

The deceased have been



Locals during the rescue work after a government school building collapsed, in Jhalawar district, Rajasthan

Agitated villagers block road

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

As the tragedy led to chaos, screams of the children and scene of bodies of children caused anger among villagers. Accusing the education department and the school administration of negligence, the villagers blocked the Manoharthana-Aklara road. The agitating vil-

lagers demanded strict action against the officials and teachers who did not bother to renovate the dilapidated school building before the rains. They also demanded a compensation of Rs 50 lakh each to the family of each deceased child.

The villagers who were protesting by blocking the road alleged that the

■ P3

identified as Payal (14) Priyanka (14) Kartik (18) Harish (8) Meena (8) Sona (5) Mithun (11).

President Draupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor Haribhau Bagde and Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma expressed deep sorrow over the school accident.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also expressed condolences to the bereaved families and appealed to Congress workers to assist in relief work.

Meanwhile, the Education Department issued an order and suspended five teachers including the headmistress Meena Garg of Peepodi Government School. The suspended teachers are Javed Ahmed, Ramvilas, Kanhaiyalal and Badrilal Lodha.

District Collector Ajay Singh Rathore said that the education department was instructed not to run schools in dilapidated buildings. The villagers also alleged that with the intention of erasing the evidence of the accident,

■ P3

Centre blocks 25 OTT platforms, including Ullu

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a significant crackdown on objectionable digital content, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) has ordered the blocking of 25 over-the-top (OTT) platforms for allegedly publishing obscene, vulgar and, in some cases, pornographic material.

The directive was issued on July 23, 2025, in consultation with multiple government departments and civil society stakeholders, according to sources.

The platforms in question, which include Ullu, ALTT, Big Shots App, NeonX VIP, and Desiflix among others, were found to be disseminating content that violated several provisions of Indian law, including Section 67 and 67A of the Information Technology Act, Section 292 of the Indian Penal Code, and Section 4 of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.

In total, 26 websites and

■ P3

India 'most trusted' friend of Maldives, says PM Modi

AGENCIES
MALE

India on Friday announced a Rs 4,850-crore line of credit for the Maldives and agreed to finalise a free trade deal soon, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasising that New Delhi is proud to be the "most trusted" friend of the Indian Ocean archipelago.

New Delhi also decided to reduce the Maldives' annual debt repayment obligations by 40 per cent (from USD 51 million to 29 million), seen as a significant move to help the country deal with its economic woes.

These measures were announced after PM Modi held extensive talks with Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu that focused on deepening bilateral cooperation in a range of areas, including trade, defence and maritime security.

The two sides sealed six pacts in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture, meteorology, digital public infrastructure, UPI, Indian pharmacopoeia, and for India's concessional line of credit to the island nation.



The Ministry of Defence building in Male, Maldives displayed PM Modi's portraits on Friday. ANI

"For us, it is always friendship first," PM Modi said in his media statement, adding the "roots of our relations are older than history, and as deep as the ocean."

The outcomes of the Modi-Muizzu talks signalled

a major turnaround in the relationship after a spell of unease and tension. The renewed intensity in the ties assumes significance as Muizzu came to power in November 2023 on the back

■ P3

Doctor waylaid on way back home, stabbed to death

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

A 30-year-old doctor was killed and two others seriously injured in a violent gang attack in Safidon town of Haryana's Jind district, the police said on Friday.

According to the police the deceased has been identified as Dr. Vikas Sharma, the son of a local-level BJP leader. The incident has



Deceased Dr Vikas Sharma sparked outrage among locals and raised concerns

■ P3

Rahul: 'Couldn't protect OBC interests as much as I should have'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday acknowledged that it was his "mistake" to not get a caste census conducted earlier and he would correct it now, while also admitting that he could not protect the interests of Other Backward Classes (OBC) section in the past as much as he should have done.

He made the remarks while addressing the Bhagidari Nyay Sammelan of the

OBC department at Talkatora Stadium here.

He also said that 90 per cent people of the country are facing injustice and they are not getting the real value of their hard work and it is our work to make them socially and economically stronger so that they can become the part of country's growth.

The Congress leader said he had committed a "mistake" in his political career of 21 years after entering it in 2004.

He said his mistake was



Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, former Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot during the party's OBC Leadership 'Bhagidari Nyay Mahasammelan', at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

WHO SAID WHAT
IN PARLIAMENTEC APPOINTS RS
SECY GENERAL AS
RO FOR V-P POLL

New Delhi: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Friday announced the appointment of Rajya Sabha Secretary General PC Mody as the Returning Officer (RO) for the election to the office of Vice President. "The Election Commission, in consultation with the Ministry of Law and Justice and with the consent of the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, has appointed the Secretary General, Rajya Sabha, as Returning Officer for the ensuing Vice Presidential Election, 2025," the EC said in a media statement.

LOK SABHA
ADJOURNED TILL
MONDAY

New Delhi: Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day on Friday amid sloganeering and protests by opposition members in the well of the house. The lower house is set to meet next on July 28 at 11 am. The Rajya Sabha too was earlier adjourned at 2 PM, and is set to meet on Monday 11 AM. Bharatiya Janata Party MP Jagdambika Pal, chairing the Lok Sabha, urged the Opposition members to maintain decorum in the house and let the private members bill be introduced so that discussion can take place.

BJP MP MANI ON
INDIA-UK CETA DEAL

New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Shashank Mani on Friday welcomed the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which was recently signed between the two nations, saying that it would prove to be beneficial for both sides. India will benefit from signing the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) as it would help the nation with trade expansion and promote people-to-people interaction in large economic systems. "After many years, a free trade agreement has been reached that benefits both sides... Piyush Goyal has implemented this with great coordination.

KHARGE JOINS INDIA
BLOC PROTEST

New Delhi: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday joined the protest by MPs of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) against the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls in poll-bound Bihar. The protest, which entered its fifth consecutive day, was held at Parliament's Makar Dwar. Several senior Congress leaders, including the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, and party leader Priyanka Gandhi, also participated in the protest. The MPs marched from the Gandhi statue on the Parliament premises ahead of the start of the day's session.

The MPs were seen

RAJYA SABHA ADJOURNED TILL
JULY 28 AMID SLOGANEERING

Opposition protests as the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman declined the Rule 267 notices for the Suspension of Business.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Proceedings of the Rajya Sabha were adjourned till July 28 on Friday amid continuous sloganeering by Opposition members, while Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was responding to a question.

BJP MP Ghanshyam Tiwari, who was in the chair, announced the adjournment as protests intensified.

Actor and Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) chief Kamal Haasan took oath as a Rajya Sabha member in his mother tongue, Tamil.

DMK's Rajathi, SR Sivalingam, and P Wilson also took oath as Rajya Sabha members.

Opposition MPs began slo-



ganeering earlier in the day as the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh declined the Rule 267 notices for the Suspension of Business.

Addressing the ruckus in the house, the Deputy Chairman said, "There was a breach of decorum yesterday; some members were not in their designated seats. The

rules ban interruption to any member who is speaking with the permission of the chair. It is tantamount to a breach of privilege of the house."

Several opposition parliamentarians in the Rajya Sabha had moved Suspension of Business notices, urging a discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists in Bihar during the

ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament.

Congress MP Renuka Chowdhury moved a notice under Rule 267 in the Rajya Sabha on Friday morning, demanding the suspension of house business to discuss the SIR exercise being carried out by the Election Commission (EC) in Bihar ahead of the upcoming assembly elections.

Provide voter
list to parties:
Priyanka
to ECI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Friday called for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to respond to allegations made against it and provide political parties with the voter list, alleging that the poll panel is not being transparent. The party leader's comments come a day after her brother, and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi alleged that the poll panel is indulging in "cheating" during the voter list revision process in a Karnataka constituency, claiming to have "100 per cent proof"

Birla urges Oppn members to
let House function properly

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday called for an all-party meeting after the lower house was adjourned amid sloganeering and protests by Opposition members, urging for members to let the house function properly.

During the meeting, there was also a discussion regarding a session on Operation Sindoor. The proposed 16-hour discussion in Parliament is set for July 28.

Earlier today, both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha were adjourned. While the upper house is set to meet now on Monday 11 AM, Lok Sabha is set to convene again at 2 PM.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has called for the House to function with discussions and dialogues, including the Question Hour, to continue, amid protests by Opposition members demanding a discussion on



the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Bihar. Efforts are currently being made to reach a consensus during the all-party meeting.

The opposition MPs have been demanding a discussion on several key issues of public importance, including the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise being carried out by the Election Commission (EC) in Bihar ahead of the upcoming assembly elections.

"There's a way to register a protest. If you don't want to run the Parliament... the house is adjourned till 2:00 PM today," Birla said earlier

while addressing the lower house, as the Opposition members entered the well of the house, holding placards.

Before adjourning, the Speaker urged the opposition members to allow the lower house to function normally and objected to the banners, saying that the "stalemate" is not good.

"Come, there will be a discussion to end the stalemate. There will also be representatives from the government... If there is disagreement, it should be expressed as per house norms," Birla said.

Earlier in the day, Congress MP Manickam Tago-

Opposition MPs demand debate
on Bihar SIR in Rajya Sabha

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Several opposition parliamentarians in the Rajya Sabha moved Suspension of Business notices on Friday, urging a discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists in Bihar during the ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament.

Congress Rajya Sabha MP Akhilesh Prasad Singh submitted a notice demanding a detailed discussion on the SIR process in Bihar, highlighting concerns over the voter list revision. Similarly, Congress MP Ranjeet Ranjan also gave a notice under

Rule 267, pressing for an immediate dialogue on the same issue.

Another Congress MP, Ashok Singh, moved a separate notice, seeking clarity and discussion on the Bihar SIR exercise. Additionally, Congress Rajya Sabha MPs Neeraj Dangi and Rajani Patil also submitted Suspension of Business Notices under Rule 267, reinforcing the call for a thorough discussion on the Special Intensive Revision of voter lists in Bihar. Meanwhile, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha will again reconvene at 11:00

AM today.

On the fifth day of the monsoon session of Parliament, the Lok Sabha is set to discuss key legislations, including the Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill and the Merchant Shipping Bill 2024, on Friday. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal will move the Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in the Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill, 2024, for its passage along with amendments.

'Govt employees allowed 30 days
earned leave to take care of elderlies'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Central Government employees are allowed to avail upto 60 days of leave for taking care of elderly patients, including 30 days of Earned Leave, 20 days of Half Pay Leave, 8 days of Casual Leave and 2 days of Restricted Holiday per annum, apart from other eligible leave, to central government employee which can be availed for any personal reasons, including that of taking care of their elderly parents," Union MoS Jitendra Singh replied in Rajya Sabha.

Replying to a question in the upper house by MP Sumitra Balmik, Union Minister of State for Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh apprised the house on Thursday that 'Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972' allow

for leave to be availed for "any personal reasons, including that of taking care of elderly parents."

"The central Civil Services Rules, 1972 provides for 30 days of earned leave, 20 days of half pay leave, 8 days of Casual leave and 2 days of restricted holiday per annum, apart from other eligible leave, to central government employee which can be availed for any personal reasons, including that of taking care of their elderly parents," Union MoS Jitendra Singh replied in Rajya Sabha.

Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972, which came into effect on June 1, 1972 list out multiple types of leave available to central

government employees, including earned leave, half pay leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, child adoption leave, work related illness and injury, seamen's leave, departmental leave, study leave among others.

A 'leave account' of a central government employee is maintained in which instalments for leaves are made twice a year, on January 1 and July 1. Leaves are typically debited from the account when availed and granted.

However, certain kinds of leaves, known as 'special kinds of leave,' like Maternity, Paternity, Child care leaves are not debited in the account and granted when the need arises.

New IT Bill boosts ease of doing biz: Milind Deora

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The new proposed Income Tax bill will improve ease of doing business, reduce litigation burdens of the individual taxpayer, and give both small and large investors the confidence 'Make in India' and create jobs, member of select committee of Parliament Milind Deora said on Friday.

"I congratulate the Finance Minister for introducing the New Income Tax Bill, and I

say new because the existing Bill dates back to 1961. This bill has seen several amendments. The government's objective, which is the right idea, is that this bill which is over 60 years old and has so many amendments to do away with that bill and replace it with a new, fresh bill is a new idea. I think that step on its own and intent will lead to reduced harassment, improve ease of doing business and will give investments to Make in India, invest in India and to

create jobs," Deora who is a Rajya Sabha MP told ANI at Parliament premises.

Highlighting that the 6-decade old IT Bill has many archaic provisions which have been amended by the entrepreneur before, Deora said that this bill will promote MSMEs in and larger foreign companies alike while also reduce the burden on the individual taxpayer. "There are many ways the govt has already reformed the existing bill, but this bill is in some ways repurposing the old

ills and amendments and bringing in together a new bill. Once this bill is passed by the Parliament, hopefully in this session, the law of the land for small companies, for MSMEs, for large foreign companies who want to bring Foreign Direct Investment, and most importantly, for the average tax payer will make things, assessment process much simpler, and reduce litigation so that the individual tax payer doesn't have to go to court and litigate," Deora added.



MNM, MP Kamal Haasan during his oath ceremony in the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Govt inked six trade pacts with other
countries to boost trade since 2021

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said in the Rajya Sabha that since 2021 nearly six trade agreements have been signed to boost trade and commerce with countries like UK, EU, Australia, South Korea, ASEAN nations, UAE, Mauritius, etc.

Since 2021, India has signed and implemented Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) including Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (2021), India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (2022), India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (2022), India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (2024), and Trade and Economic

Partnership Agreement (To be implemented post ratification by EFTA countries).

The Union Minister said this while responding to the starred question of Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma today.

India has also signed India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) on 24th July, 2025. Further, India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations have been concluded. Negotiations are ongoing on the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement, India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement, India-Sri Lanka Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement, India-Peru Free Trade Agreement, India-Chile Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Agreement, India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, India-USA Bilateral Trade Agreement. Review of agreements for upgradation are being undertaken for ASEAN India Trade in Goods Agreement (2009) and India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (2009), he said.

The Union Minister also said that the FTAs are entered into with the concerned trading partner countries primarily with the aim to increase the bilateral trade and economic growth by enlarging the scope of market access and building on the trade complementarities for increasing trade and investment, thereby providing enhanced export potential, generating benefits for industry, farmers, MSMEs and creating job opportunities.

GLIMPSES FROM PARLIAMENT



BJP MP Kangana Ranaut while leaving the Parliament on Friday. ANI



Minister Anupriya Patel, NCP MP Supriya Sule and TMP MP Saayoni Ghosh at Parliament House in New Delhi on Friday. ANI



BJP MPs Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah with Mahima Kumari Mewar at Parliament House.



BJP MPs Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah with Mahima Kumari Mewar at Parliament House in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

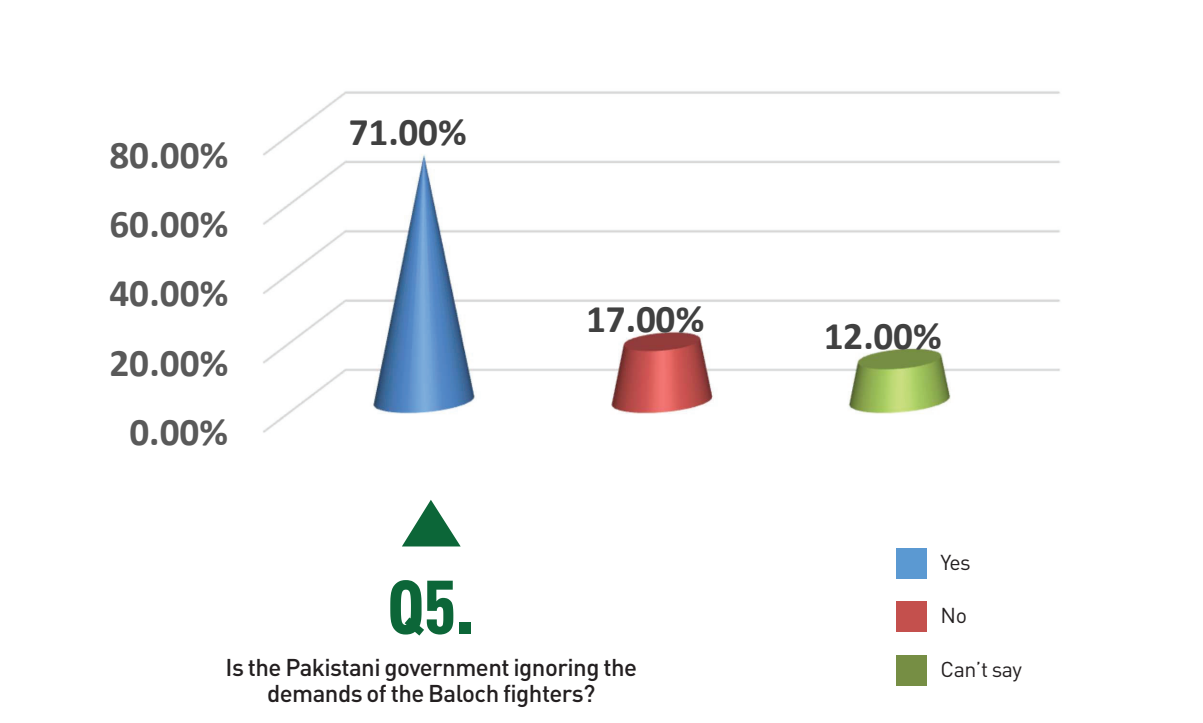
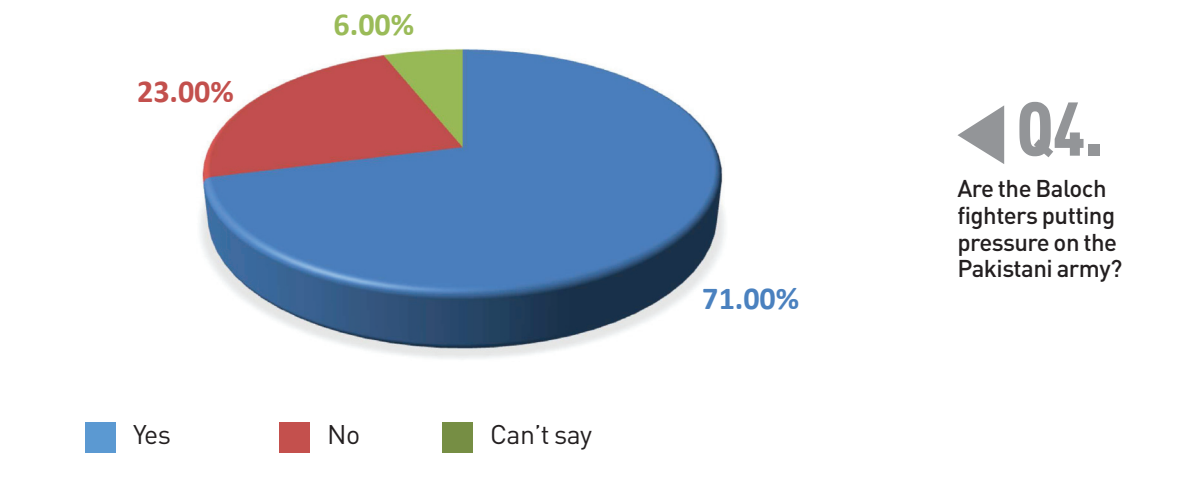
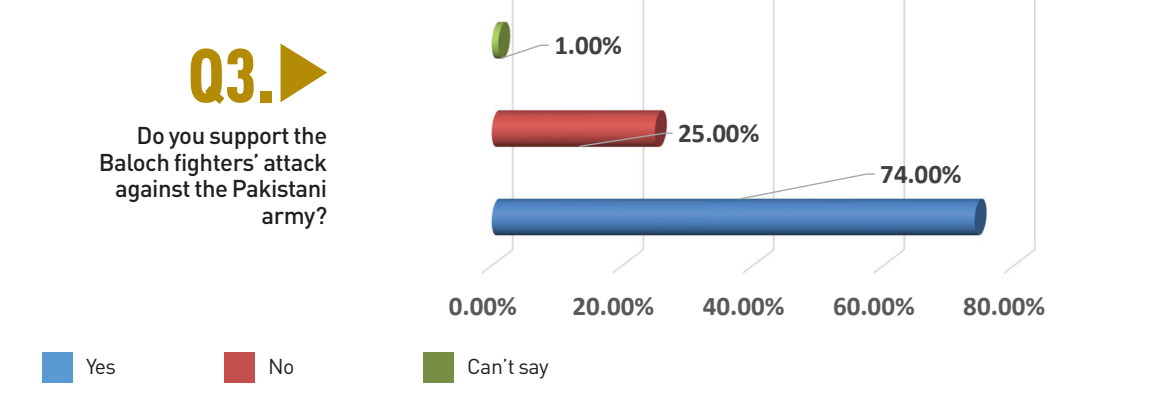
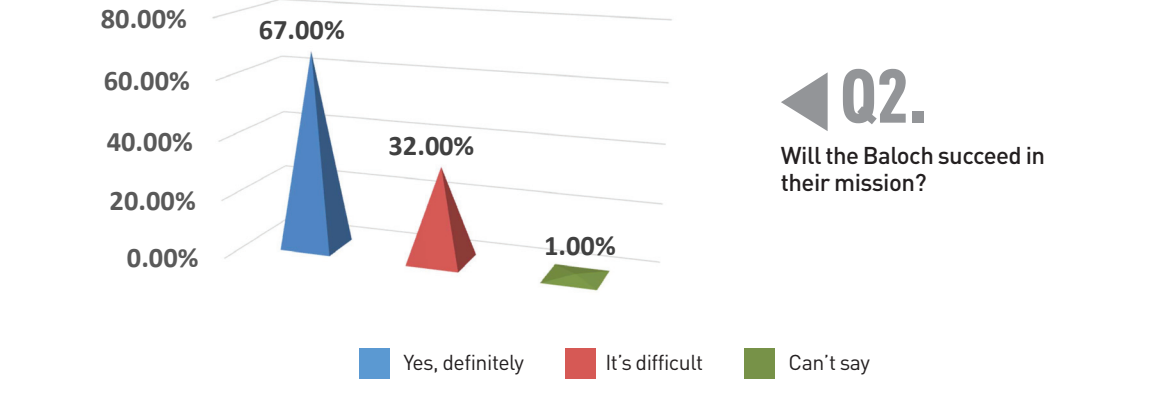
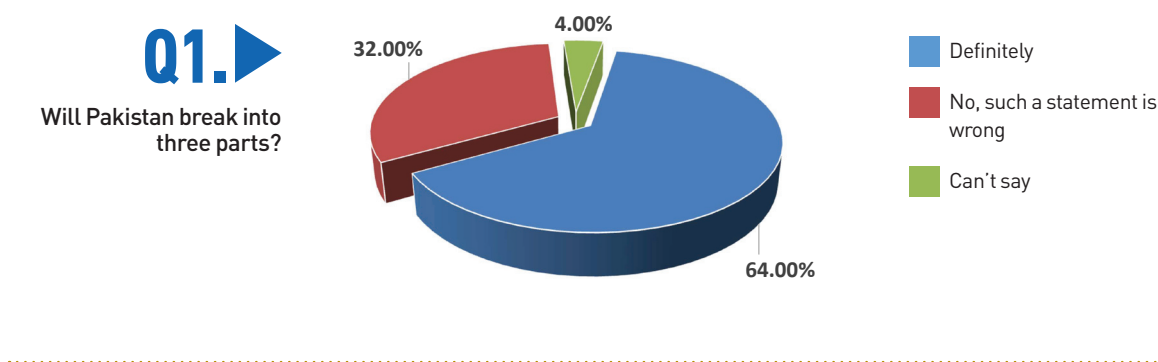


Rajya Sabha LoP Mallikarjun Kharge, symbolically tears the SIR as a protest against SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar at Parliament.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BLA ATTACK ON PAK ARMY

64% believe that Pakistan will definitely break into three parts.

A recent survey on the BLA attack shows strong Indian public support for Baloch fighters. 74% back their offensive against the Pakistani army, and 71% believe Pakistan is ignoring their demands. 67% feel Baloch will succeed, while 64% think Pakistan may split into three parts. Sentiment leans toward Baloch aspirations.



Debate on Pahalgam, Ops Sindoor

CONTINUED FROM P1

Rajya Sabha on Tuesday (July 29).““

He further said that several opposition parties, including the Congress, had requested a discussion on the issue, and the government agreed to the same, but despite that, the opposition kept on creating ruckus and disrupting the parliament proceedings.

“...Before the monsoon session began, several opposition parties, including the Congress, had requested that Operation Sindoor and the Pahalgam terror attack should be discussed in Parliament. The govern-

ment said we are ready to discuss it... The opposition has been creating a ruckus in Parliament from day one and protesting inside and outside Parliament and not allowing the House to function.”

“In the first week of the monsoon session of Parliament, we have been able to pass only one bill... I urge all opposition parties not to disrupt the proceedings of Parliament,” he added further.

Prior to this, Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day on Friday amid sloganeering and protests by opposition members in the well of the house. The lower house

is set to meet next on July 28 at 11 am.

The Rajya Sabha too was earlier adjourned at 2 PM, and is set to meet on Monday 11 AM. Bharatiya Janata Party MP Jagdambika Pal, chairing the Lok Sabha, urged the Opposition members to maintain decorum in the house and let the private members bill be introduced so that discussion can take place.

Prior to the adjournment, the house took up for further consideration and passing, ‘The Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill, 2024.’

Lok Sabha to take up bipartisan motion

CONTINUED FROM P1

moval of Varma should be a joint call, adding that the proceedings will be taken up in Lok Sabha and then move to Rajya Sabha in line with the Judges (Enquiry) Act. “We shouldn’t remain in any doubt, proceedings will begin in the Lok Sabha,” he said.

Speaker Om Birla is expected to announce the three-member enquiry

committee to probe the charge against the Allahabad High Court judge.

Dhankhar had on July 21 cited the Judges (Inquiry) Act in Rajya Sabha to assert that when notices of a motion are submitted on the same day in both the Houses of Parliament, a committee to examine the charges levelled against the judge will be constituted by the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Rajya Sabha Chairman.

However, official sources claimed that the notice was not admitted in the Upper House.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh is now the officiating presiding officer and has been part of the consultation with the government and within Parliament over the issue.

The three-member committee, which will include either the Chief Justice of

India or a Supreme Court judge, a high court chief justice and a distinguished jurist.

A fire incident at the outside of Varma’s residence in the national capital had led to the discovery of half-burnt wads of currency, leading to then-Supreme Court Chief Justice Sanjeev Khanna setting up a three-judge committee which had indicted him.

As Varma, who was re-

patriated from Delhi High Court to his parent Allahabad High Court, declined to heed Khanna’s suggestion to resign, the then chief justice of India sent the committee report to the President and the Prime Minister, recommending his removal.

Varma, who has protested his innocence, has moved the Supreme Court against the findings of the committee.

Centre blocks 25 OTT platforms,

CONTINUED FROM P1

14 mobile applications--9 listed on Google Play Store and 5 on the Apple App Store--have been ordered to be disabled by intermediaries under provisions of the IT Act, 2000 and the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. According to the sources, the Ministry said that much of the content showcased by these platforms involved graphic sexual innuendos, long sequences of nudity, and pornographic visuals. “There was hardly any storyline, theme, or message in a social context,” it said. Some content was also found to depict inappropriate sexual situations involving family relationships, further aggravating concerns over legality and decency.

The government had several rounds of

communication with the platforms. In September 2024, all 25 platforms had received official warnings. Prior to this, in February 2025, the Ministry had issued an advisory urging OTT platforms to comply with India’s obscenity laws and the Code of Ethics prescribed under the IT Rules, 2021. Yet, the platforms allegedly continued to host and stream objectionable content.

In one notable example, the series ‘House Arrest’ hosted on the Ullu platform was taken down in May following the Ministry’s intervention. However, the government alleges that certain platforms have continued their operations by creating new domains even after previous blocking orders--five such platforms reportedly resumed publishing similar content after being blocked in March 2024.

Agitated villagers block

CONTINUED FROM P1

officials of the Education Department were informed to get the school building repaired before the rains, but the Education Department did not pay any.

People of Piplodi and nearby villages reached

Manoharthana-Aklara road and blocked the road and sat on a dharna at Guradi intersection. The villagers sat on the dharna till evening demanding action against the education department officials and teachers who were allegedly negligent in the matter.

Seven students killed

CONTINUED FROM P1

the school administration demolished the remaining part of the dilapidated building using an earthmoving machine, commonly called JCB. The Rajasthan Human Rights Commission, taking suo motu cognizance, has issued notice to Jhalawar District Collector, District Education Officer, Education Director and SP and sought compliance report by August 7. Commission Chairman Justice GR Mulchandani termed the incident as heart-wrenching and directed to take legal action against the culprits, provide proper compensation to the families of the deceased and immediate assistance to the injured.

Modi overtakes Indira

CONTINUED FROM P1

ready enjoys the longest stint.

He became Gujarat chief minister in 2001 and remained in office before taking over as Prime Minister in 2014.

PM Modi, the first prime minister born after Independence, is also the longest serving non-Congress PM. The officials noted that the

Gujarat-born leader is the only non-Congress leader to complete two full terms as the head of the Central government.

“Modi is the only leader in India, among all PMs and CMs, to win six consecutive elections as the leader of a party -- Gujarat assembly polls in 2002, 2007 and 2012, and the national elections in 2014, 2019, and 2024,” an official said.

India ‘most trusted’ Maldives friend

CONTINUED FROM P1

of an ‘India Out’ campaign. India-Maldives friendship will always “remain bright and clear” irrespective of any circumstances, the prime minister said, outlining his vision for the relationship.

To give a new momentum to our development partnership, we have decided to give a line of credit of USD 565 million (Rs 4,850 crore) to Maldives, Modi said.

This amount will be used for projects related to the development of infrastructure in the Maldives, in accordance with the priorities of the people of the country, he added.

In his comments, Muizzu appreciated India’s “pivotal role” in supporting the Maldives to manage its eco-

nomic challenges.

“India’s continued assistance to the Maldives through the export of essential commodities is a key facet of our bilateral cooperation under the long-standing trade agreement,” he said.

At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said a key pact inked following the Modi-Muizzu talks was to reduce the Maldives’ annual debt repayment to India by 40 per cent.

It is learnt that China’s increasing assertive behaviour and its implications for regional security figured in the delegation-level talks between the two sides.

To a question on whether concerns over China’s activities in the region figured in the talks, Misri only said In-

dia continues to work closely with the Maldives on any issue that might “impinge not just our security but the common security of the region”. In his remarks, PM Modi said the two sides will soon work towards finalising a bilateral investment treaty and that the negotiations on a free trade agreement have already begun.

Noting that the two countries must take advantage of the digital economy, especially to promote tourism, he welcomed the recent understandings on UPI adoption, acceptance of RUPAY card and trade in local currencies.

“The speed with which UPI is being promoted in Maldives will give a boost to both tourism and retail,” he said.

Doctor waylaid on way back home

CONTINUED FROM P1

about law and order in the area.

According to police and eyewitness accounts, Dr. Sharma — who ran Anuj Multispecialty Hospital in Safidon — was returning home with his brother-in-law and a friend, both of whom are doctors, when their car was intercepted near Rampura Road. A group of armed men stopped the vehicle, hurled abuses, and attacked them with sharp-edged weapons.

Dr. Sharma suffered multiple stab wounds, including one to the heart, leading to mas-

sive internal bleeding. Despite efforts by a private hospital in Panipat, he could not be saved. The other two doctors are undergoing treatment and are said to be out of danger.

Dr. Vikas Sharma hailed from Muana village and was the son of Shiv Kumar Sharma, a former BJP Mandal Adhyaksh in Jind. Married just 18 months ago, he is survived by his wife and a five-month-old daughter. The devastating loss has sparked massive public anger. The family suspects the murder was linked to professional rivalry, but officials have yet to confirm a motive.

‘Couldn’t protect OBC interests..’

CONTINUED FROM P1

workers then we will understand that in the same most are from SC, ST and OBC community.

He also took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that he keeps on claiming about Hindu India, whereas 50 per cent of Hindus are OBC.

If Hindu India is there, then in corporate and me-

dia why OBCs are not there, why in the big anchor list there is no one from OBC community. “It is for a reason why we said that wherever there is Congress government, we will conduct caste-based census so that we can know that how much participation is of the OBC community,” he said.

He also asserted that any country is run by its productive force and that

productive force provides the country with essential things like buildings, roads, schools-colleges, tools etc. “So my question is, if you build the country with your blood, sweat and hard work, then what does the country give you?” Rahul Gandhi asked.

He also mentioned that BJP leaders say that we will wipe out English from India.

CENTRE SET TO EXTEND PRESIDENT'S RULE IN MANIPUR FOR 6 MORE MONTHS

The House is yet to take up the notice, which will be listed next week.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Centre is set to extend President's rule in Manipur for another six months from August 13 and a notice for bringing a statutory resolution on it has been given to the Rajya Sabha, which has been admitted by the chair.

The House is yet to take up the notice, which will be listed next week after time for discussing the same is allocated by the Business Advisory Committee of the upper house.

The Rajya Sabha Secretariat said, "Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs; and Minister of Cooperation has given a notice of the following Resolution which has been admitted:- "That this House approves the continuance in force of the Proclamation dated the



13 February, 2025 in respect of Manipur, issued under article 356 of the Constitution by the President, for a further period of six months with effect from 13 August, 2025'."

The BJP has been making efforts to form a new government in the state and the Meitei and Naga MLAs have been conducting a month-long campaign pushing for a government in the violence-hit state.

President's Rule had been

imposed in Manipur on February 13, 2025 after former chief minister N Biren Singh resigned.

The state has been witnessing violence with at least 260 people killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities since May 2023.

President's Rule refers to the suspension of a state government and the imposition of direct control by

the central government in an Indian state. It is implemented under Article 356 of the Indian Constitution when a state government is unable to function according to constitutional provisions. This situation is often termed a "failure of constitutional machinery."

President's Rule can be imposed in various circumstances, such as when no party secures a majority after state elections, if a government loses its majority in the assembly, or if there is widespread breakdown of law and order. The state governor sends a report to the President of India recommending the imposition of the rule.

Once imposed, the President assumes all functions of the state government and the Governor administers the state on behalf of the President. The state legis-

lative assembly is either dissolved or kept under suspension. The Parliament assumes the power to legislate on matters of the state.

President's Rule is initially imposed for six months but can be extended with parliamentary approval for up to three years, in six-month intervals. However, after one year, its continuation requires fulfillment of special conditions, such as a national emergency being in operation.

While intended as a measure of last resort, President's Rule has at times been criticized for being misused for political purposes. The Supreme Court of India, in the landmark S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) case, laid down strict guidelines to prevent such misuse and ensure judicial review.

JD (U)-BJP 'conspiring' to get Tejashwi 'murdered': Rabri Devi

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

Former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi on Friday alleged that the ruling JD(U)-BJP combine had hatched a "conspiracy" to "murder" her son Tejashwi Yadav ahead of the Assembly polls.

Talking exclusively to PTI Videos, the leader of the opposition in the legislative council also claimed that attempts have been made on the life of the young leader in the past, "at least two, three or four times".

Rabri Devi was asked about incidents inside the Assembly a day ago, where some members from the ruling side had charged at Yadav, who is the leader of the opposition in the lower house.

The doting mother replied, "There was an attempt to murder Tejashwi. So many killings are taking place in Bihar, let there be one more. Who else, but the JD(U)-BJP



is involved in this conspiracy. They want him bumped off so that he is not around to challenge them in elections".

She added, "There have been attempts on Tejashwi's life in the past, for about two, three or four times. Once a truck had tried to run over his vehicle".

Yadav, a former Deputy CM, is expected to lead the INDIA bloc charge in the upcoming polls.

Rabri Devi was also asked about the outbursts, inside the House, of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who had taken exception to opposition legislators turning up in black clothes, as a mark

of protest against the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The homemaker-turned-politician replied, "Nitish Kumar seems to be provoked by black clothes just like a bull begins to charge upon seeing red colour. What wrong did we do inside the House? The proceedings have been recorded. Schoolchildren were sitting in the viewers' gallery. I dare the government to prove any misconduct on our part."

The ex-CM had reached the House on the last day of the monsoon session, determined to put the government on the mat.

Earlier, she had staged a demonstration, joined by other opposition MLAs, at the gate of the Vidhan Parishad.

Slogans were raised against the special intensive revision and the conduct of NDA leaders in the Assembly on the previous day.

Fertilizer supply exceeds demand despite output gap: Union Minister Nadda

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers and Health and Family Welfare, Jagat Prakash Nadda, on Friday assured that there is no shortage of fertilizers in any part of the country, despite a significant gap between domestic production and consumption.

Responding to a question related to the reports of the shortage of the fertilizers in the various states asserted that fertilizer availability in the current financial year (2024-25) has consistently exceeded state-wise requirements, thanks to timely imports, strong monitoring systems, and efficient distribution.

According to government data, total fertilizer production stood at 517.85 lakh metric tonnes (LMT), while consumption reached 705.23 LMT, highlighting a continued dependence on imports to meet national de-



mand.

During the financial year 2024-25, India produced 306.67 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of urea, while consumption reached 387.92 LMT. The figures revealed that the diammonium phosphate (DAP), production stood at 37.69 LMT, compared to a much higher consumption of 96.29 LMT, while the production of NPK complex fertilizers was 121.05 LMT, against a consumption of 149.72 LMT.

In the case of single super phosphate (SSP), the production slightly exceeded consumption, with 52.44 LMT produced and 49.28 LMT consumed. However, there was no domestic production of muriate of potash (MOP), and the entire demand of 22.02 LMT had to be met through imports, reads the reply.

Despite these production shortfalls, the minister stated that the supply of fertilizers across the country has remained smooth, thanks to several measures implemented by the government. The minister assured of timely imports and long-term supply agreements with foreign producers of DAP and other nutrients. About the black-marketing and diversion of the highly subsidized fertilizers to the industry, Nadda said that the state governments are empowered to take action against individuals involved in the black-marketing of fertilizers under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday slammed the BJP and the RSS accusing it of divide and then rule by dividing the backwards and the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and added that his party has prepared a plan to bring people from the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to the forefront and asked all Congress chief ministers to launch new welfare schemes for this section of society.

Addressing the party's 'Bhagidari Nyay Sammelan' of OBCs at the Talkatora Stadium here, Kharge, who is also the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha said



that for the last 11 years, the Narendra Modi government has not taken any concrete steps towards the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) or women.

Taking a swipe at the Prime Minister, he alleged that Narendra Modi only gives slogans and tries to adopt the policy of divide and rule by dividing the backwards, oppressed

and the poor.

Training his guns at the Prime Minister, the Congress leader said: "Modi is not ready to give reservations to those who are poor, oppressed and belong to the backward classes. Thus, they have to unite and help achieve what they want."

He also alleged that they try and divide and then rule by dividing the backwards and the Scheduled Castes (SCs).

He also emphasised on the need for a socio-economic survey across the country, and said the Congress' Telangana government has prepared a report and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is also conducting a similar exercise on its lines in Karnataka.

He said: "Our people are doing, but Modi will not do anything."

He also pointed out that after Rahul Gandhi raised the issue of caste census, it was then that Modi has announced to include caste enumeration in the Census.

He also stated that Modi knows that the backward class people will soon rise and then snatch his chair.

Taking a pot shot at the Prime Minister, Kharge said: "The RSS has talked about retiring people after attaining 75 years of age and citing this rule, he (Modi) ousted many veteran BJP leaders like L K Advani or Murli Manohar Joshi and put them in the 'Margdarshak Mandal'."

99.8% Bihar electors covered so far under SIR exercise: ECI

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Friday said that 99.8 per cent Bihar electors have been covered so far under its exercise of the Special Intensive revision of the voter rolls.

The poll panel in a statement announced that 99.8 per cent Bihar electors have been covered so far and forms of 7.23 crore electors have been received and digitised; the names of all these electors will be included in the Draft Electoral Roll.

It said that the digitisation of forms, along with BLO reports, of the remaining electors will also be completed by August 1, 2025.

The lists of those electors who have not filled the forms or are deceased and those who have per-



manently migrated have already been shared on July 20 with all the 12 political parties in the state so that any errors can be rectified in the Draft Electoral Roll to be published on August 1.

It also pointed out that since June 24, 2025, the local BLOs/BLAs have reported the names of approximately 22 lakh deceased electors, approximately 7 lakh electors registered in more than one location, approximately 35 lakh electors

have either permanently migrated or could not be traced.

It said that enumeration forms of approximately 1.2 lakh electors is yet to be received.

"The credit for the successful completion of the first phase of SIR so far, goes to the CEO of Bihar, 38 DEOs, 243 EROs, 2,976 AEROs, BLOs deployed at 77,895 polling booths, volunteers, all 12 political parties, their 38 District Presidents, and the 1.60 lakh BLAs nominated by them," the EC said.

As per the SIR order, from August 1 to September 1, any elector or political party may fill the prescribed forms and submit claims to the ERO for any eligible elector who is left out or file objections for removal of any ineligible elector.

Notorious murder case convict gives slip from prison, caught hours later

TDG NETWORK
KANNUR

A notorious convict serving a life term in the sensational 2011 Soumya murder case, escaped from the high-security Kannur central jail on Friday morning but was apprehended by police several hours later with active public support.

"Govindachamy alias Govindaswamy (41), who is missing his left hand, was caught from a well near a derelict building in Thalap, within Kannur city limits," said a senior district police officer.

According to visuals on TV channels, the convict was hiding inside the well near the building.

Police used a sniffer dog to look for Govindachamy following his escape from prison. They were aided by the locals, many of whom

claimed to have seen the convict in the city during the morning hours.

Based on the information provided by the people, the police combed the area and apprehended him.

According to an eyewitness named Vinoj, "Part of his handless arm was tucked between the clothes covering a bundle on his head. When I saw that, I became suspicious. As soon as I called out, 'hey, Govindachamy!' he ran away."

CCTV footage aired on channels showed a man resembling Govindachamy walking on the roadside with a bundle on top of his head.

Shortly thereafter, a police team, including the sniffer dog, reached the area and inspected a derelict building at Thalap here where the convict was suspected to be hiding.

Four Naxalites held in Chhattisgarh's Sukma

TDG NETWORK
SUKMA

Four Naxalites allegedly involved in planting an improvised explosive device near Bedre security camp on June 29 were arrested in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, a police official said on Friday.

Tamu Joga (25), Punem Budhra (24) Madkam Bhima (23) and Midiam Aaytu (24) were held close to Bodangunda village under Jagargunda police station limits by a joint team of CRPF's 165th battalion and local police, the official said.

They are militia members of the Jagargunda area committee of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist), he said.

Tripura man walks to Delhi in support of 'Greater Tripura Land'



TDG NETWORK
AIZWAL

In a significant show of dissent, Tripura Motha leader and activist David Mura Singh has embarked on a protest march on foot from Tripura to Delhi's Jantar Mantar, accompanied by 16 members of the Tripuras community.

The march aims to draw attention to the long-pending demands of the indigenous Tripuras people, which include the implementation of Greater Tripura land, enactment of the Tripura Accord, and strict action

against illegal migration in the Northeast.

Speaking before the march, Singh alleged that the central government had failed to fulfill its promises to the Tripuras community. "Our voices have been ignored for too long. This march is a call for justice and recognition of our rights," he said.

The group plans to cover the arduous journey on foot, symbolizing the struggle and resilience of the community. On reaching Delhi, they will stage a peaceful protest at Jantar Mantar to press for their demands.

Bijli Mahadev ropeway faces local resistance

VIPIN PARMAR
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream project Bijli Mahadev Ropeway is being opposed in Himachal Pradesh. People will protest against it at Dhalpur ground in Kullu today (Friday). Several BJP leaders, including MP Kan-gaana Ranaut and PM Modi's close aide Ram Singh, are also opposing the project.

The Bijli Mahadev Temple of Kullu, has been closed for

the first time in history for darshan of common devotees due to the ropeway project. People arriving here from all over the country for the next 6 months will not be able to see Bijli Mahadev by the orders of Dev. This has heated up the political temperature over the ropeway project in Kullu.

Suresh Negi, chairman of Bijli Mahadev Sangharsh Samiti, said the people of the valley do not want a ropeway to be built here. This is a mess with Dev Aastha. This will also harm

the environment. So today the people of Kullu will take to the streets to protest against it.

Villagers in the Kharahal valley say that Bijli Mahadev said in Dev Vani that he did not accept the ropeway. People with Dev Aastha are therefore opposing this project.

A large number of pine trees are being cut down in the Kharahal valley for this ropeway. Villagers fear this will increase landslides-like incidents in the future.

The elderly Shivrath has

warned of self-immolation if the project is implemented. There should be no ropeway project in the area under any circumstances," he said."

"After the project is built, a large number of people will start reaching Bijli Mahadev." This will spread the dirt.3

advantages of ropeways If a ropeway is built for Bijli Mahadev, people will not face traffic jams to reach the Bijli Mahadev Temple at the top of Kullu's Kharahal valley. The 3-hour journey will be com-

pleted in just 7 minutes. This will enable daily movement of 36,000 passengers. This will provide all weather connectivity.

Tourists coming to Kullu from all over the country will be able to reach Bijli Mahadev easily.1

The project was also mentioned by PM Modi at a public meeting on 5 November 2017. When Narendra Modi was in charge of the Himachal BJP, he visited Bijli Mahadev's darshan several times.

ICMR study found Covid jabs didn't raise risk of sudden deaths: Nadda

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

An ICMR study has found that Covid vaccination did not increase the risk of unexplained sudden deaths among young adults in India, Union Health Minister J P Nadda told Lok Sabha on Friday.

Past Covid hospitalization, family history of sudden death and certain lifestyle behaviours increased the likelihood of unexplained sudden deaths.

Responding to a question, Nadda said the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has informed that it and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) explored two approaches to investigate the causes of sudden death.

The first approach was a retrospective case-control study to determine the risk factors associated with sudden death and the second approach of the study was to prospectively

investigate sudden deaths in young adults using a virtual autopsy approach.

The ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE) conducted a study titled "Factors associated with unexplained sudden deaths among adults aged 18-45 years in India - A multicentric matched case-control study" at 47 tertiary care hospitals located across 19 states and Union territories during May-August 2023.

RAHUL MEETS FAMILIES DISPLACED DUE TO DEMOLITIONS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, on Friday, visited Jailerwala Bagh and Wazirpur areas in Ashok Vihar in the national capital, where the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) allegedly demolished over 500 slum dwellings. During his visit, he met with families displaced by the demolition drive.

Congress, in a post on X, shared a video of Rahul Gandhi's visit to the area and alleged that the BJP government's "ruthless" action constitutes outright injustice. "Today, Leader of Opposition Shri @RahulGandhi reached Jailerwala Bagh and Wazirpur in Ashok Vihar, where DDA has demolished over 500 slums, rendering people homeless. Rahul Gandhi ji met the affected families there, shared their pain, and listened to their problems," a Congress post on X said.

"The way the BJP govern-



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi visits demolition sites in Wazirpur and Jailer Wala Bagh at Ashok Vihar, in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo)

ment is ruthlessly destroying the homes of the poor is an outright injustice. We stand firmly with these affected families and will strive to ensure they receive every possible justice," it added. The visit comes against the backdrop of repeated allegations by opposition parties accusing the newly formed BJP government of carrying out widespread slum demolitions across the national capital. Earlier in the day, Congress leader and Leader of Op-

position in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Friday admitted that not conducting a caste census during the UPA government was a mistake and said he is now determined to correct it. Addressing the 'Bhagidari Nyay Sammelan' of OBC at Talkatora Stadium in Delhi, he said he failed to understand the issues of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) community earlier, unlike those of Dalits, tribals, and women, where he claimed the Congress had

done commendable work. "I think about my work, where I did well and where I fell short, and I see two to three things.

Land Acquisition Bill, MN-REGA, Right to Food, Tribal Bill, and Niyamgiri struggle--all these things I did well.

As far as the issues of tribals, Dalits, and women are concerned, I should get good marks there. I did good work," he said. "One shortcoming remained in the Congress Party and my work: I didn't

protect the OBC community the way I should have. The reason is that I didn't deeply understand the OBC issues at that time. Ten to fifteen years ago, I understood the difficulties faced by Dalits. Their issues are visible; they are easily understood, but the problems of OBCs remain hidden. If I had known about your issues and problems at that time, I would have conducted a caste-based census right then. That was my mistake, which I am going to correct," he said, adding that in a way, it's good that it happened, because if I had conducted a caste-based census back then, it wouldn't have been like it is today.

He added that Dalits, backward classes, tribals, and minorities make up 90 per cent of the country's population yet remain excluded from key decision-making processes, including the Union Budget. "In the country, the population of Dalits, backward classes, tribals, and minorities together constitutes about 90 percent.

AAP slams BJP over fresh slum demolition notices

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The AAP on Friday claimed that demolition notices have been issued to slum clusters in Shalimar Bagh and Lalbagh here, and accused the BJP-led Delhi government of betraying the city's poor and reneging on its poll promises.

There was no immediate response available from the BJP or the Delhi government to the allegations.

At a press conference, Leader of Opposition Atishi said, "The BJP distributed cards to slum dwellers promising 'Jahan jhuggi, wahan makaan'. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured that no slum would be razed without alternative housing. Yet, within six months, slums have

According to Atishi, residents of Indira Camp in Shalimar Bagh and Lalbagh in Shahdara -- both established with allotment cards in 1990 -- have been asked to vacate their homes within 15 days.

been demolished across the city. Now, in Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's own constituency, notices have been served to two slum areas."

According to Atishi, residents of Indira Camp in Shalimar Bagh and Lalbagh in Shahdara -- both established with allotment cards in 1990 -- have been asked to vacate their homes within 15 days. Lalbagh slums are scheduled for demolition on July 31.

"No government touched these slums for 35 years. But this BJP government is bull-

dozing them," she said.

"Don't underestimate the power of the poor. They run this city and they can halt it," she said.

AAP leader and former MLA from Shalimar Bagh Vandana Kumari claimed the notice was served on July 23, in the same area where CM Gupta resides.

"This is an anti-poor policy. AAP has never demolished any slum without first providing permanent housing," she said, vowing to resist the move "with full force".

Flood fear persists in Delhi's coaching hub

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A year after a tragic basement flooding in Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar claimed the lives of three young UPSC aspirants, a quiet but persistent fear still lingers among students and residents of the city's coaching hub as monsoon clouds return.

Heavy rainfall on July 27 last year led to severe waterlogging in the area, and the basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle, reportedly being used illegally for classes, was quickly submerged.

Three civil services aspirants — Shreya Yadav (25) from Uttar Pradesh, Tanya Soni (25) from Telangana, and Nevin Delvin (24) from Kerala — were trapped inside and drowned before help could reach them.

The tragedy triggered widespread outrage and



protests. Students demanded action against coaching centres violating safety norms and urgent improvements in civic infrastructure.

In the year since, several changes have taken place. According to a senior official from Sriram IAS coaching, more than 50 basements in the area have been sealed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

"Our own basement and those nearby were shut

down. From January onwards, the MCD laid new drainage lines on both sides of the road. This time, even with intense rains, there has been no waterlogging," the official said.

He added that coaching institutes have introduced new safety measures. "We have increased housekeeping and security staff and shut gates during rain to prevent unsafe movement. Sriram IAS, Vajiram, Drishti, and Next IAS together contrib-

Students demanded action against coaching centres violating safety norms and urgent improvements in civic infrastructure.

uted Rs 10 lakh each to the families of the three deceased students."

They also provided support to the family of a student who died from electrocution in nearby West Patel Nagar just days earlier.

Despite the improvements, fear remains among students of Old Rajinder Nagar. "The basements are all locked now, but every time it rains, we feel panic," said a civil services aspirant. Vidya, another student, recalled, "Our PG was flooded

last year. We somehow managed, but I didn't feel safe for weeks. With the rains starting early, that fear is back."

"The basement libraries were never maintained well. After last year, I would never step inside one again," said Priya, an aspirant.

Even with new infrastructure in place at the student hub, residents feel the area remains vulnerable. "Drainage work began in February, but water still pools near our school gate," said a local school staffer.

A nearby bookstore owner said, "Last year, my shop was flooded. This year, the water reached the entrance but didn't come in. It's an improvement, but we haven't forgotten."

A faculty member of a coaching institute said quietly, "I do not wish to recall the incident. We lost students. All I remember is sorrow."

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Rouse Avenue Court has dismissed a money laundering case against businessman Ratul Puri, Moser Baer India Limited, and 11 other accused persons, following their discharge in the main case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Special Judge (CBI) Sushant Changotra on Thursday dismissed the Enforcement Directorate's complaint against Moser Baer India Limited, Ratul Puri, Rajiv Agarwal, Rajiv Saksena, Shivani Saksena, Ajit Singh Bubber, M/S Tanay Holding Ltd., M/S Matrix Group Limited, M/S Pacific International FZC, M/S Tiramisu Holdings INC, M/S Midas Metals International LLC, M/S Indian Hydro Electric Power Pvt Ltd. And M/S Hindu-



stan Power Projects Pvt Ltd. Special Judge stated, "Thus, in view of the aforementioned facts and settled proportion of law, I am of the considered opinion that the offence under section 3 read with section 70 and punishable under section 4 of PMLA does not survive."

"Accordingly, the present complaint is dismissed. The proceedings of this complaint case stand closed," Special Judge Changotra ordered on July 24. However, the court added that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) would be at liberty to reopen proceed-

ings if the discharge order dated May 24, 2025, is set aside by a higher court. The present complaint case arose out of a predicate offence registered by the CBI vs. M/s Moser Baer India Ltd. & Ors under section 120-B, 420, 468 & 471 IPC and section 13 (2) r/w 13 (1) (d) of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. Advocate Vijay Agarwal, appearing for Ratul Puri, argued that under Section 3 of the PMLA, the existence of "proceeds of crime" is a sine qua non (an essential condition) for prosecuting a money laundering offence.

Delhi sees intensified mosquito surveillance to combat vector-borne diseases

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi has ramped up its mosquito-control efforts in 2025, with over 2.26 crore house inspections carried out between January 1 and July 19, a significant rise from the 1.89 crore inspections during the same period in 2024, officials said on Friday.

Data from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's (MCD) anti-malaria operations headquarters indicates a substantial increase in house inspections, legal notices issued, and G-8 challans imposed in 2025 compared to the same period last year. This trend



highlights enhanced vector surveillance and enforcement throughout the city.

Between January 1 and July 19, 2025, field workers visited over 2.26 crore houses to check for mosquito breeding. This represents nearly a 37 lakh increase compared to 2024, which saw 1.89 crore house visits. Additionally, the numbers surpass those from 2023 (1.97 crore) and 2022 (1.68

crore).

Spraying operations have also picked up pace. So far in 2025, 5.36 lakh houses have been sprayed with insecticides, compared to 2.23 lakh last year and 5.22 lakh in 2023, indicating a 140 per cent increase from 2024 figures.

The number of houses found positive for mosquito larvae has also increased, touching 79,913 this year

compared to 49,513 last year, a rise of over 60 per cent, pointing to a possible surge in stagnant water breeding sites, likely aggravated by intermittent monsoon rains.

In terms of legal enforcement, the MCD has issued 64,424 notices to property owners for mosquito-breeding conditions in 2025, up from 44,070 notices in 2024 and 76,131 in 2023.

Additionally, 11,949 prosecutions have been initiated this year, nearly matching the total of 15,607 from 2023. Officials also imposed G-8 challans (spot fines) worth nearly Rs 9.85 lakh this year, compared to around Rs 7.8 lakh collected by this time last year.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Uma Kanjilal has been appointed the first woman Vice Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), four decades after it was established, according to education ministry officials.

"With over 36 years of distinguished service in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system, Kanjilal brings a wealth of academic leadership, digital innovation, and institutional knowledge to the helm of one of the world's largest open universities," an official said.

"She was currently serving as active Vice Chancellor of the university and has



previously served as Pro Vice Chancellor of the university (March 2021-July 2024)," the official said.

A professor of Library and Information Science since 2003, Kanjilal is nationally recognised for her expertise in e-learning, ICT in libraries, digital libraries, and multimedia courseware development. She is currently the National Coordinator for

Uma Kanjilal appointed first woman VC of IGNOU

for Informatics and Innovative Learning (2012-2013); Director, School of Social Sciences (2007-2010); and University Librarian (2004-2006).

Her global contributions include a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (1999-2000), consultancy for the Commonwealth of Learning, and digital education work for UNRWA in Jordan. She has received multiple accolades including the Manthan Award for e-Education, an Australia-India Council Grant, and a DANIDA Fellowship.

"Kanjilal has been instrumental in expanding IGNOU's digital infrastructure and online education offerings.

Rekha Govt orders audit as 32,000 CCTV cameras fail; 15,000 uninstalled

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The ambitious CCTV project in Delhi, initiated by the previous government, has come under scrutiny following the discovery of significant lapses. Out of the 2.64 lakh CCTV cameras installed across 70 assembly constituencies, over 32,000 have been found non-functional, while more than 15,000 cameras remain uninstalled. In several areas, the number of installed



cameras falls far short of the approved count.

In response, the current government has announced a comprehensive technical audit of the entire project to

pinpoint deficiencies and establish accountability. Meanwhile, on March 19, the Delhi government's anti-corruption branch (ACB) registered a case against AAP leader and former

MLA Satyendar Jain, alleging corruption and bribery in connection with the Rs 571 crore CCTV project for the national capital. According to Madhur Verma, Joint Commissioner of Police (CP) and Head of ACB, the liquidated damages worth Rs 16 crore were allegedly arbitrarily waived by receiving a bribe of Rs 7 crore. An FIR was registered against former Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Jain under section 17A of the

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, after receiving previous approval from the competent authority. ACB said, "Bribery of Rs 7 crore was allegedly arranged to be paid to Satyendra Jain to waive off the Rs 16 crore penalty for delays in CCTV installation."

Despite previous delays, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) received additional orders for another 1.4 lakh cameras under the project.

The bribe was allegedly paid through contractors who benefited from

the additional orders. According to officials, the project was allegedly carried out in a "shoddy manner", with many cameras being dysfunctional even at the time of project handover.

Moreover, payments were artificially inflated to accommodate the bribes involving different vendors. ACB has already examined a BEL officer, who confirmed the allegations and provided a detailed account of the complaint.

Govt mandates installation of CCTVs at pharmacies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has mandated the installation of CCTV cameras in the national capital by the end of July. The decision comes after a meeting under the 11th National Narcotics Coordination portal (NCORD), aiming to curb the sale of Schedule H, HI, and X drugs without prescription. It is a significant move to prevent the mis-

use of dual-use medicines. The decision was taken after authorities had received complaints about these drugs being misused for intoxication, on humans and animals, and even in textiles, chemicals, and food items. This step is expected to enhance surveillance in coordination with the Narcotics Control Bureau and the Delhi government, thereby curbing illegal drug distribution.

'RULES OF ORIGIN UNDER UK TRADE PACT TO BOOST INDIA'S E-COMMERCE EXPORTS TO UK'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The rules of origin in the free trade agreement with the UK will facilitate India's e-commerce exports to Britain as consignments valued below 1,000 pounds are exempt from submitting origin documentation, an official said.

The official also said that there are authentication and verification procedures in the free trade agreement with the UK, which would prevent circumvention of products from third countries.

The agreement was signed on Thursday in London.

"The rules will facilitate e-commerce exports to the UK



since there is a waiver on the requirement of submission of origin documentation for consignments less than Brit-

ish Pound 1,000," the official said.

The 'Rules of Origin' provision prescribes minimal pro-

cessing that should happen in the FTA country so that the final manufactured product may be called originating

goods in that country.

Under this provision, a country that has inked an FTA with India cannot dump goods from a third country in the Indian market by just putting a label on them. It has to undertake a prescribed value addition in that product to export to India. Rules of Origin norms help contain the dumping of goods.

The official added that there is an option for exporters to self-certify origin of product, thereby facilitating ease of doing business by saving time and costs.

UK importers can also use the importer's knowledge for certifying origin, which reduces burden and compliance costs for Indian exporters.

Conviction, acquittal not based on YouTube video, courts do it: SC to scribe

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday rappled a Kerala-based journalist for allegedly publishing a defamatory video against a prominent woman politician on his YouTube channel "Crime Online".

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and K V Viswanathan said, "You want to convict people based on your YouTube videos? Conviction or acquittal doesn't happen based on a YouTube video. Courts do that."

The bench continued,

"Say some nice things on YouTube. Why do you put this crime online, etc.? Something nice happening in Kerala, God's own country, speak about that."

The top court, in the meantime, extended the interim granted bail to journalist Nandakumar TP who has sought anticipatory bail in the matter.

He was booked under the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for offences of outraging a woman's modesty, intimidation and intent to cause reputational harm aside from dissemination of obscene content electronically. He was also

booked under Section 67 of the Information Technology Act which penalises publication or transmission of obscene material in electronic form. The state police alleged a YouTube video posted by Nandakumar contained derogatory, sexually coloured, and threatening remarks aimed at humiliating and tarnishing the reputation of the woman leader.

The Kerala High Court on June 9 declined to grant Nandakumar anticipatory bail and directed him to surrender before the police.

The journalist then challenged the high court order in the top court.

Assam CM flags suspected encroachers on govt lands from Bihar, Bengal

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday that people claiming to be from states like Bihar and West Bengal are among encroachers of government, forest and other land in the northeastern state.

He said his government will share details of these people with local authorities from where they claim to have come, so that it can be verified that they are not actually from "across the border".

Talking to reporters after inspecting sites for eviction drives in Uriamghat in Golaghat district, Sarma said, "When we went through the list of encroachers, we found that these people are not just from Assam. There are people from districts like Cachar, Sribhum, Dhubri, Hojai, Nagaon, Morigaon, but there are people even from Bihar and West Bengal."



"They have said that they are from Bihar, but they could be from across the border," he added.

The CM said names, addresses and other details will be taken from them, and shared with the authorities of the place they claim to have come from.

"If they are genuine people from those parts, we have nothing against them. But if they are not permanent residents there, the local authorities can take steps," he

said.

He said encroachers in Uriamghat were in possession of hundreds of bighas of forest land.

"Government cannot be a mute spectator and we have to take necessary action. We seek cooperation from the people," he said.

Sarma said locals have told him that illegal activities like drug use and thefts were rampant in the encroached areas and a "lot of negative things were happening".

"Now, all can work together to make it an area with positive vibes. Local youths can engage in business by utilising the resources after the land is cleared," Sarma said.

He said about 70 per cent of the encroachers have already left the place, and the remaining will also do so before the anti-eviction drive is launched as per law.

8 Bangladeshis, 2 Indian touts held in Assam's south Salmara

NIBIR DEKA
NEW DELHI

Eight Bangladeshi nationals, along with two Indian touts, have been arrested in South Salmara in Assam.

The operation, conducted around 5:30 am in the Fekamari Tinali area, was jointly carried out by the district police and personnel of the 183 Battalion of the BSF under the supervision of the Assistant Superintendent of Police (Headquarters) and the Deputy Superintendent of Police (Border).

According to officials, intelligence reports had suggested that the group of Bangladeshi nationals had already reached Fekamari and were

attempting to cross the international border from the area under Border Outposts (BOPs) Sanjay Sadhu and Deepchar.

The apprehended Bangladeshi nationals have been identified as Tarek Ali (26), MD Rabel (25), MD Riyaj (22), Abdul Hamid (22), MD Nadim Islam (36), Dulal Hoque (30), MD Morsalim (22), and MD Sariful Islam, all residents of Rajshahi district in Bangladesh. Several of them reportedly entered India through different routes, including Sonamasjid in Malda, Komilla in Tripura, and Cooch Behar-Siliguri.

Along with them, two Indian touts - Khairul Islam (25) of Borobila and Nurul

Islam (25) of Nandia Pipulbari - were also arrested. A black Mahindra Bolero Neo (registration number AS-01 FU 1779) suspected to have been used for trafficking was seized.

The Bangladeshi nationals are currently lodged at the Sishumara BOP of the BSF, where biometric data collection and interrogation are underway. Authorities have stated that they will be pushed back to Bangladesh following due verification and protocol.

Earlier, two individuals from Assam's Sribhum (formerly Karimganj) district have been arrested for allegedly trying to obtain an Indian passport for a Bangla-

deshi national using forged documents created in the name of a deceased Indian citizen.

The accused—identified as Burhan Uddin and Faizur Rahman, both residents of Patharkandi—were arrested after police detected discrepancies during a routine verification process linked to a passport application filed a few months ago.

According to officials, the passport application had been submitted in the name of one Farooq Ahmed. However, upon verification, law enforcement found discrepancies in the submitted documents, which included a birth certificate, Aadhaar card, and PAN card.

Office space leasing in Delhi-NCR more than double in Apr-Jun

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Office space leasing in Delhi-NCR more than doubled to 2.62 million square feet during April-June on better demand of work-space in Gurugram and Noida from corporates, according to Vestian.

On Friday, US-based real estate consultant Vestian released its report on India's top seven office markets that showed a 10 per cent rise in absorption or leasing of office space to 18.79 million sq ft during the second quarter of this calendar year.

The consultant attributed the rise in demand to increased activities in three southern cities (Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai), whose share rose to 59 per cent from 46 per cent in January-March quarter.

As per the data, Bengaluru retained its dominant position with leasing of 5.62 million sq ft area in the latest June quarter, an increase of 32 per cent from the year-ago period.

In Hyderabad, the demand grew 5 per cent to 3.56 million

sq ft, while Chennai saw a 4 per cent increase in leasing activities to 1.82 million sq ft.

In Delhi-NCR, the office space absorption surged 130 per cent to 2.62 million sq ft in the second quarter of 2025 calendar year. The share of the Noida market in the leasing activities was 27 per cent, while Gurugram contributed the rest.

The leasing of office space in Mumbai was 2 per cent higher at 3.45 million sq ft, led by Navi Mumbai with a 52 per cent share.

However, Pune witnessed a drop of 52 per cent to 1.37 million sq ft.

Kolkata, a small office market, saw a 52 per cent growth in leasing to 0.35 million sq ft during the April-June period.

On the demand trend, Shrinivas Rao, CEO of Vestian, said, "As more enterprises are transitioning back to in-office operations and several grade-A office projects are planned to be completed in the second half of 2025, the growth momentum is anticipated to continue with an increase in office utilisation ratio."

Chat facility in gaming apps now communication tool for terror groups, say officials

TDG NETWORK
SRINAGAR

Online war games akin to PUBG requiring chats with partners anonymous or otherwise have emerged as a key communication channel for terror groups and Pakistan's ISI to convey messages to their recruits in Jammu and Kashmir, officials here said.

As terror groups operating across the border seek to bypass social media and conventional channels of communication and escape scrutiny by security agencies, it is a virtual battleground and in some cases a real one too. Four cases have been identified, the officials said.

In one case, an underage boy was being radicalised by his gaming partner sitting across the border. The boy was handed over to parents after proper counselling of the entire family.

The gaming chat applications allow players to communicate with each other in real time in the guise of



playing online games, the officials explained without going into details of which game and how.

These applications, which facilitate voice, video, and text-based communication to enhance teamwork, strategy discussions and social interaction among players, are being used for different purposes, they said.

The prospective recruits are identified during playing.

The gaming applications have been increasingly incorporating encryption to protect user communications but the level of security varies widely. So, some games use basic encryption for in-game voice chat and

others offer more robust end-to-end encryption for text and voice. There are also applications that allow for self-destructing messages.

Though several of these gaming applications are banned in India, they are downloaded using Virtual Private Network (VPN) illegally. A VPN creates a secure and encrypted connection over the internet by masking Internet Protocol addresses and encrypts online traffic, making it more difficult to track online activity and access data.

In the past, messaging platforms like WhatsApp were delinked by terror groups and their handlers

from Pakistan and they switched to other applications to communicate with each other. The included one developed by a Turkish company that is being used by terror group handlers and their prospective recruits in the Valley, the officials said.

The new applications have the ability to work with the slowest internet connections where Enhanced Data for Global Evolution (EDGE), used in the late 2000s, or 2G is in operation.

The Central government had suspended internet across Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of the special status of the erstwhile state on August 5, 2019.

All encryption and decryption happen directly on the devices, therefore reducing third party intervention at any point. These new apps use encryption algorithm RSA-2048 which was adopted as the most secure encrypted platform, officials said.

Special trains for devotees during Ganesh Utsav-2025

MANOHAR KESARI
NEW DELHI

Marathi Manush or Hindi basically suburban rail passengers will face very rush in Suburban rail route in daily life. During festive season, this problem is very big, but this year railway is going to operate special trains during Ganesh Utsav -2025. Indian Railways have decided to operate Special trains to cater to the needs of passengers during this festival.

The halts of Ganpati Special trains serving over Konkan Railway have been planned at Kolad, Indapur, Mangaon, Goregaon Road, Veer, Sape Warmne, Karanjadi, Vinhere, Diwankhavati, Kalambari Budruk, Khed, Anjani, Chiplun, Kamathe, Sawarda, Aravali Road, Sangameshwar Road, Ratnagiri, Adavali, Vilavade, Rajapur Road, Vaibhavwadi Road, Nandgaon Road, Kankavali, Sindhudurg, Kudal, Zarap, Sawantwadi Road, Madure,



Thivim, Karmali, Madgaon Jn, Karwar, Gokarna road, Kunta, Murdeshwar, Mookambika Road, Kunda-pura, Udupi, Mulki and Surathkal.

Railways operate special trains to supplement the availability of accommodation in regular train services and to cater to the extra rush of passengers during peak seasons, festivals, special events etc., subject to traffic justification, operational feasibility, availability of resources, etc. The loads of existing services are also augmented this way. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw replied this to an unstarred question in the Rajya Sabha on Friday.

Over 2 800 killed in elephant attacks in India from 2019 to 2023: Govt

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

More than 2,800 people lost their lives in elephant attacks in India from 2019 to 2023, with Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal among the worst-affected states, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Friday.

According to data shared by Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh in response to a question by CPI(M) MP John Brittas, between 2019-

20 and 2023-24, a total of 2,869 people were killed in elephant attacks.

Odisha reported the highest deaths in the country at 624, followed by Jharkhand (474), West Bengal (436), Assam (383) and Chhattisgarh (303), according to the data.

The annual toll from elephant attacks has been rising steadily, increasing from 595 in 2019-20 to 629 in 2023-24. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka recorded 256 and 160 human deaths



due to elephant attacks, respectively, over the five years.

In contrast, tiger attacks claimed the lives of 378 people between 2020 and 2024. Maharashtra reported the highest number of deaths during this period at 218, followed by Uttar Pradesh (61) and Madhya Pradesh (32).

As many as 110 deaths were reported from tiger attacks in 2022, most of them from Maharashtra (82). The number declined

slightly to 85 in 2023 and 73 in 2024. The minister also said that the environment ministry does not compile data on livestock and crop losses caused by wild animals at the national level.

On the question of declaring animals as vermin under Section 62 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Singh said the environment ministry had declared rhesus macaque monkeys as vermin in Himachal Pradesh for one year through a gazette no-

tification dated April 23, 2020. Asked whether the Centre would consider amending the Act to empower states to declare animals as vermin within their jurisdictions, the minister said, "There is no proposal to amend the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 as on date."

He added that following the 2022 amendment, Section 11 of the Act empowers the State Chief Wildlife Warden to manage human-wildlife conflict situations.

INDIA NEEDS MORE PACTS LIKE UK FTA, SAYS RBI GUV SANJAY MALHOTRA

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday welcomed the signing of the free trade agreement with the UK, saying it will help multiple sectors of the Indian economy.

Speaking at the Financial Express Modern BFSI Summit here, Malhotra said multilateralism has “unfortunately” taken a back seat, and the country needs more such pacts (like the UK FTA) with countries and added that negotiations with the US are in advanced stages.

“Hopefully, it (UK FTA) should help us... that is the way going forward now, because unfortunately multilateralism seems to have taken a back seat,” Malhotra said in the central bank’s first comments on the trade

deal with the UK signed in London.

“It should help various sectors in our manufacturing as well as on the services side,” Malhotra added.

Malhotra said that given the current realities, where multilateralism has taken a back seat, it is necessary for India to have more such pacts with other countries.

He also acknowledged that there are many more such pacts in the negotiation stage.

India and the UK signed the FTA during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s two-day visit to the UK. The agreement has been in the making for many years now and will open up markets for both countries across goods and services.

Meanwhile, Malhotra backed his US counterpart Jerome Powell for his work on upholding the Federal Reserve’s independence, at

a time when US President Donald Trump has gone public with his disagreement with its policies.

“... He (Powell) is doing a very good job. Maintaining the independence of the central bank is very important. I think he has done a commendable job,” Malhotra said.

On cryptocurrency regulations, Malhotra said the government-appointed panel to look into the issue in India will take into account the RBI’s concerns.

There is no work for a separate currency for the BRICS grouping, the RBI governor said, maintaining that like any other country, India is working on popularising its own currency, and the US dollar is here to stay.

India has an agreement with the UAE and is also looking at some arrangement with Maldives on the rupee trade, he said.

‘RBI FOCUSES MORE ON OUTLOOK THAN CURRENT DATA ON MONETARY POLICY’

MUMBAI : RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday highlighted that the Reserve Bank of India’s monetary policies are forward-looking and the Monetary Policy Committee of India (MPC) will focus more on outlook than current data.

MPC is set to hold a meeting on August 4-6, and monetary policy will be announced on August 6, 2025. Addressing the Financial Express BFSI Summit in Mumbai, Governor Sanjay Malhotra said, “Monetary policy being data-driven, more on the outlook will be guided by the revised numbers if any call is taken.”

He further added that, “I may mention over here that the stance of neutral allows them to give them the flexibility to move in either direction or even to have a pause, and the MPC will be looking at the data that comes in.”

During the event, the governor also commented on the RBI’s effort to maintain price stability.

Malhotra said, “Price stability continues to be a challenge number one, and I would say banking regulation, because that’s our other area we’re a full-service central bank, as they say, so apart from monetary policy, we do so many other things, including banking regulation.”



Nifty falls below 25,000, Sensex slips under 82,000 in early trade

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Indian stock markets came under pressure on Friday as selling by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) weighed on investor sentiment.

At the time of reporting, the Nifty 50 stood at 25,010.35, down 51.75 points or 0.21 per cent, while the BSE Sensex was trading at 82,065.76, a decline of 118.41 points or 0.14 per cent.

Ajay Bagga, Banking and Market Expert, told ANI, “Indian markets are pointing to a continued negative outlook as per the traded futures. FPIs remain sellers while DIIs are absorbing the selling. Once more critical support levels are being challenged, so today’s price action is important for the health of the Indian markets. Earnings continued to be weak on the whole, and with no US India Trade deal on the horizon before the August 1st deadline, markets are getting into a worry zone on that front.”

He further added, “Fasten seat belts, we see key supports holding due to the blessed Indian retail investors who are determinedly buying every dip and keeping their faith in the Indian managements and economy even as FPIs are selling consistently.”

Broad market indices on the NSE also reflected the pressure. The Nifty 100 was down by 0.53 per cent, Nifty Midcap 100 slipped by 0.34 per cent, and the Nifty Smallcap 100 lost 0.56 per cent. All other major indices were trading in the red.

Among the sectoral indices, Nifty Auto declined by 0.66 per cent, Nifty IT by 0.19 per cent, Nifty Media by 0.40 per cent, and Nifty Metal by 0.46 per cent. The

GOLD FALLS RS 500 TO RS 99 120 10 G SILVER TRADES FLAT

NEW DELHI: Gold prices extended losses for the second straight day, by declining Rs 500 to Rs 99,120 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, amid easing global trade tensions and dampening the safe-haven demand.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 99,620 per 10 grams on Thursday.

At the local markets, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also decreased Rs 500 to Rs 98,750 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday as against the previous closing level of Rs 99,250 per 10 grams.

“Gold edged lower on Friday impacted by easing tariff-related concerns, a rebound in the US dollar, and waning expectations for multiple interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve due to a strong job market,” Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

However, silver prices traded flat at Rs 1,15,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday, as per the association.

Gandhi further highlighted that the US has already secured a trade deal with Japan, and there is optimism surrounding the US-EU trade agreement.

FM honours tax officers for outstanding service

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman honoured several Income Tax officers for their exceptional contributions to the department during the celebration of the 166th Income Tax Day, recognising decades of service in modernising India’s tax administration.

The ceremony, held on Thursday, highlighted the transformation of the Income Tax Department from manual processes to AI-driven systems, with the Finance Minister acknowledging officers who



have been instrumental in driving these changes across their careers spanning over two decades.

Chief Commissioner Surbhi Ahluwalia received special recognition for her remarkable three-decade career that has set new benchmarks in tax administration.

Her leadership spans multiple critical areas including field operations, policy reform, complex litigation management, and innovative taxpayer outreach initiatives. Ahluwalia’s most notable contribution has been her groundbreaking work in modernising the depart-

ment’s communication strategy.

As the longest-serving media coordinator of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), she pioneered and led the department’s strategic foray into structured social media usage, transforming how the Income Tax Department engages with taxpayers and addresses their grievances.

Her leadership in official language cadre reforms has also been instrumental in making tax processes more accessible to diverse linguistic communities across India.

Chief Commissioner An-

urag Sahai received the Certificate of Meritorious Service for his outstanding contributions to administrative and infrastructure reforms.

His achievements include developing and establishing the Central Processing Centre in Bengaluru and strengthening preventive vigilance as Chief Vigilance Officer of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

Sahai also executed India’s first equalisation levy survey in international taxation, modernised exemption processes, and represented India at international anti-corruption and tax forums.

SEBI mulls relaxing rules for issuers of non-convertible securities

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday proposed to ease the rules for issuers of non-convertible securities by replacing the requirement of sending a hard copy of financials and annual reports to security holders with a web link and quick response (QR) code to access the same.

The relaxation from sending physical copies of financials will result in cost savings and prevent paper wastage. Also, this would lead to regulatory consistency and ease of doing business.

In its consultation paper, Sebi suggested that issuers should send a letter pro-

viding the quick response code and web link, including the exact path, where complete details of the annual report are available, to holders of non-convertible securities.

“Unlike entities having listed specified securities, there are issuers having listed non-convertible securities, which are not constituted under the Companies Act, 2013, and hence, the timelines specified under the Companies Act, 2013, with respect to sending of copy of financials to the debenture holders are not applicable upon them. Therefore, there is a need to specify timelines within which the issuer is required to comply with the said requirements,” Sebi said.

To provide a timeline for the issuer, Sebi proposed that for listed entities, which are companies, the

Sebi cancels registration of 13 entities as investment advisers

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday cancelled the registration of 13 entities as investment advisers after they failed to pay the renewal fees.

“The main purpose of cancellation of certificate of registration, as investment adviser, of the noticees (13 entities) is to prevent the misuse of their expired certificate of registration with Sebi on unaware investors,” the regulator said in its order.

However, Sebi clarified that these entities would continue to be liable for anything done or omitted to be done as investment advisers despite the cancellation of registration.

These 13 entities are -- Manjeet Singh Vohra, Tarun Kumar Sapra, Gowri Suganya B, Sanjay Subodhchandra Shukla, Shaji George, Ravi Mittal, VBS Investments, Ravishankar K Iyer, MG Funds, Sandeep Ahuja, Harsh Agarwal, Varun Jalan and Gaurav



Kedia.

Considering that the entities have not paid the renewal fees to keep the registration in force, and their registration certificates as investment advisers have expired, Sebi has cancelled their registrations, the order noted.

Under the Sebi (Investment Advisers) Regulation,

To provide a timeline for the issuer, Sebi proposed that for listed entities, which are companies, the timelines specified under the Companies Act, 2013, should be applicable.

viding the quick response code and web link, including the exact path, where complete details of the annual report are available, to holders of non-convertible securities.

The provision of a QR code is proposed to be incorporated to facilitate ease of access for the debenture holders, the regulator said.

Additionally, Sebi proposed specifying timelines for issuers having listed non-convertible securities regarding the requirements of sending a copy of finan-

timelines specified under the Companies Act, 2013, should be applicable.

For listed entities, which are constituted under some other Act or statute, the relevant provisions of their parent Act or statute should be applicable. In the absence of any such provision, a timeline of 21 days in line with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, should be provided.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has sought public comments till August 15 on the proposals.

SpiceJet to lease 5 Boeing 737 planes

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

SpiceJet has finalised an agreement to lease five Boeing 737 planes, and the aircraft are scheduled to join its fleet in October.

The aircraft are being inducted on a damp-lease basis, where operational crew will be shared between the operator and the airline, according to a release on Friday.

The airline said it has finalised a lease agreement to induct five Boeing 737 aircraft, and they are scheduled to join the fleet in October and will cater to the peak winter season as well as the early summer season of 2026.

“SpiceJet is also in advanced discussions with other lessors to further enhance its fleet and strength-



“SpiceJet is also in advanced discussions with other lessors to further enhance its fleet and strengthen both domestic and international operations,” it added.

en both domestic and international operations,” it added.

The budget carrier, which had been facing multiple headwinds, operates Boeing 737s and Q-400s. It did not mention the current num-

ber of operational planes in its fleet.

As per data available on fleet tracking website Plane-spothers.net, the airline has 20 planes in operation and 33 on the ground for various reasons as on July 24.

Rs 104.38 cr tax evasion by tobacco entities detected

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The authorities have detected 61 cases of tax evasion by entities dealing in tobacco products such as gutka, cigarettes and pan masala, amounting to Rs 104.38 crore till June this financial year, Lok Sabha was informed on Friday.

In a written reply, Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav said the Department of Revenue has informed that illegal trade of tobacco products is a clandestine activity and hence, the loss of revenue cannot be accurately estimated.

“However, Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) zones and Directorate General of Goods and Service



Tax Intelligence (DGGI) have detected 61 cases of (tax evasion by) gutka/chewing tobacco/cigarettes/pan masala (entities) involving tax amounting to approximately Rs 104.38 crore in the current financial year up to June 2025,” Jadhav’s reply said.

The minister was responding to a question on whether the government has assessed the extent of tax evasion, illicit trade and unregulated manufacturing in the Zarda sector.

Sanjay Kapur’s mother questions circumstances of son’s death

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The mother of late billionaire industrialist Sanjay Kapur, Rani Kapur, has raised serious questions over the circumstances surrounding her son’s sudden death in London last month.

In a startling statement, she alleged that the incident, reported as a cardiac arrest during a polo match, is being wrongly labelled, and the actual facts point to something “far more troubling.”

“For my client, as a mother, it’s deeply painful to watch this being dismissed as a mere freak accident and cardiac arrest. The truth doesn’t match the headlines,” said her legal counsel, senior advocate Vaibhav Gaggar.

“She would not stay silent



until that truth is acknowledged,” he added.

Rani Kapur has also claimed that soon after her son’s death, she was coerced into signing certain documents under distress. She has now urged that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Sona Group, scheduled for

today, be cancelled, cautioning against the appointment of any new directors in the current situation.

Gaggar confirmed that while his client is not presently pursuing legal proceedings, she has sought a deferment of the proposed AGM and reserves all her rights.

FROM ROTE TO ROOTS

HOW NCERT'S NEW TEXTBOOKS ARE TRANSFORMING INDIAN CLASSROOMS AND IGNITING YOUNG MINDS

OPINION

RAGHAVENDRA P. TIWARI



PHILOSOPHY: FROM FACTS TO FRAMEWORKS

As India commemorates five years of the NEP-2020, the sweeping reforms implemented by the NCERT have ignited both optimism and debate. The 2025 rollout of revised school textbooks is perhaps the most visible expression of NEP's vision — aiming to shift pedagogy from rote memorization to experiential, inquiry-driven, and values-based learning. This transformation reimagines classrooms as dynamic spaces for critical thinking and textbooks as living documents reflecting India's diverse cultural heritage. While these reforms aspire to cultivate holistic, critical, and culturally grounded learners, they have also sparked debate over historical interpretation, ideological neutrality, and inclusivity in curricular framing. This article explores the transformative promise of the new textbooks and critically engages with the emerging criticisms, situating them within broader civilizational and pedagogical currents.

A NEW PEDAGOGICAL

The revised textbooks mark a departure from passive learning toward active exploration and deeper conceptual understanding. Rote memorization is being replaced with critical inquiry, interdisciplinary connections, and engagement with ethical and cultural questions. This shift aligns with constructivist learning principles, encouraging students to build knowledge by interacting with diverse perspectives.

A key feature of this transformation is the integration of Indian knowledge System into the curriculum. Stories and teachings from the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Ramayana*, *Panchatantra*, and local folktales etc. are used not just for cultural familiarity, but to illustrate values, philosophical inquiry, and civic duties. For example, in Class 6 Social Science, students are introduced to the idea of Bhakti from the *Gita* — as an inclusive devotional practice, while Sanskrit texts include verses like “कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन” to teach the idea of performing one's duty without attachment to outcomes. In senior secondary Modern History textbooks, topics like the Vaikom Satyagraha are used to explore themes of social justice and equality. Yet, the challenge lies in how these texts are used. Their true educational val-

ue lies in encouraging students to probe philosophical plurality and regional diversity—thereby fostering critical pluralism rather than ideological rigidity.

Learning by Doing: Experiential and Inquiry-Driven Classrooms

In line with NEP's emphasis on experiential learning, the textbooks promote student-led exploration from early grades onward. For example, Class 3 EVS encourages children to explore their neighbourhood and talk to community members, while Class 6 History includes projects that document oral histories. In Science, hands-on activities using ropes, springs, and household items replace rote definitions to explore physical laws. Class 11 Biology asks students to investigate real-world questions like ‘How urban pollution affects biodiversity’.

This inquiry-based approach promotes lifelong curiosity and deeper learning, encouraging students to connect scientific knowledge with social responsibility.

Inclusion and Representation: Broadening the Historical Canvas

A key strength of the revised curriculum is its attention to previously marginalized histories. Tribal revolts like the Santhal and Bhil uprisings, along with regional movements such as the Travancore Temple Entry agitation, now receive detailed treatment. These narratives, once relegated to footnotes, are now integrated into the core of the Political Science and History syllabi.

Students from these communities gain visibility in the national narrative, while others are exposed to India's pluralistic past. This inclu-

sive lens is extended across disciplines—linking stories of reform and resistance to ethical lessons in literature, civic duty in Political Science, and community mapping projects in Social Science. The result is a more holistic and contextualised curriculum.

Fostering Scientific Temperament with Civic and Ecological Ethics

The revamped NCERT textbooks mark a clear shift from rote learning to curiosity-driven education. Science lessons now begin with real-world questions—such as connecting theory to practice through activities like home energy audits (Class-8 Geography reference book), encouraging critical thinking and practical application. Equally transformative is the emphasis on ethics and sustainability. Students compare traditional farming methods with the UN's SDGs and study indigenous techniques like Zabo and Khadin as innovative, eco-friendly solutions, prompting critical discussions on climate resilience and sustainable living. By integrating scientific inquiry with ethical reasoning and civic awareness, the curriculum redefines science as a tool for problem-solving and social progress.

Emotional Growth and Language Diversity

Emotional and moral education is now woven into learning. Class-4 and 5 English textbooks use *Panchatantra* stories and regional folklore to spark reflection on empathy, fairness, and kindness. Prompts like “What would you do in this situation?” create a bridge between narrative and self-awareness. Moreover, language learning honours India's multilingualism. Students

are asked to translate local proverbs or songs, nurturing linguistic confidence and preserving cultural identity. These practices develop not just communication skills but a deeper appreciation for diversity.

ADDRESSING THE TEXTBOOK CONTROVERSIES: A CALL FOR OPEN DISCUSSION

While the new textbooks aim for positive change, they have also sparked significant debate, especially regarding how history is presented. The portrayal of the Mughal period, emphasis on religious violence, a note on “darker periods,” and the reduction of Mughal content have become focal points of debate.

The biggest arguments revolve around the historical content, particularly the changes made to the Mughal period and the portrayal of some Islamic rulers. Critics argue that these changes are driven by a specific viewpoint, removing parts of India's diverse history. However, these revisions are actually based on facts and pitch for honesty, arguing that history should show both good and bad actions, and that acknowledging events like the Chittorgarh massacre or Aurangzeb's Jizya tax is simply being truthful, not biased.

ADDRESSING SPECIFIC POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT:

- Portrayal of Mughal and Sultanate Rulers: Critics caution that highlighting violent acts, like Babur's conquests or Aurangzeb's temple demolitions—may create a selective, negative portrayal of certain rulers, ignoring the complexity and multiple interpreta-

tions of history. However, these events are grounded in historical records and that acknowledging both the virtues and vices of rulers is essential for balanced storytelling, asserting that confronting uncomfortable truths fosters critical thinking and ethical understanding among students.

- About Religious Intolerance and Violence: Critics worry that highlighting events like temple destructions or religious persecution, without proper context, may reinforce communal biases and foster social division. They stress the risk of such content being misinterpreted by young minds. But these inclusions will help critically examine how religion was politicized in the past. Moreover, such discussions will help students distinguish faith from fanaticism and promote values like pluralism, tolerance, and good governance.

- About the ‘Note on Some Darker Periods in History’: The introduction of a note in textbooks advising students not to hold present-day communities accountable for past injustices has also drawn mixed reactions. This, in my view, is a thoughtful, empathetic step that promotes unbiased historical understanding, reconciliation, and social harmony.

- About Reducing Mughal History: The reduced focus on the Mughal era has sparked debate. Critics argue that downplaying such a pivotal period weakens the historical narrative's depth and continuity. In fact, the aim of these reduction is to broaden perspectives by including underrepresented histories like

ancient dynasties, tribal and regional movements, thereby enriching and diversifying the understanding of India's holistic past, and making the history curriculum more comprehensive.

CIVILIZATIONAL ETHOS AND MORAL EDUCATION IN CURRICULUM REFORM

The debate over NCERT's 2025 textbook revisions often overlooks a deeper educational vision which aims to foster moral and intellectual growth of learners through values-based curriculum grounded in India's civilizational heritage.

Texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Ramayana*, and *Mahabharata* are not simply literary or religious sources; they offer enduring insights into ethics, duty (*dharma*), and critical decision-making. These timeless lessons guide human civilization to act with integrity in the face of adversity, to stand for *satya* (truth), and to resist *adharma* (injustice), even when it is entrenched or dominant. Lord Krishna's exhortation to Arjuna — to perform his righteous duty without fear is framed in the curriculum not as a retreat from historical complexity, but as a timeless moral compass, encouraging learners to approach the world with clarity rather than reactive victimhood.

Similarly, the Sikh tradition contributes powerfully to this ethical discourse. The lives and teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus, especially Guru Gobind Singh Ji, exemplify the *Sant-Sipahi* (saint-soldier) ideal, an ethic that combines spiritual reflection with social courage and action. His stirring hymn, “*Deh Shikha Bar Mohe Eh...*” embodies values of moral courage, service,

and justice that education aspires to instill in citizens.

Thus teaching IKS enshrined in scriptures will help younger generations to imbibe values and virtues.

TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATIONAL ERA

The NCERT's revised textbooks are more than curricular updates, they represent a transformative shift in Indian education. By introducing concepts like *svadharma*, sustainability, and civic responsibility at the school level, these lay a strong ethical and intellectual foundation for life-long holistic learning.

The colleges and universities must sustain this momentum by fostering critical inquiry, broadening ethical discourse, and translating foundational values into research, innovation, and social impact. This is not a project of erasure, but of expansion of embracing India's rich civilizational wisdom while engaging with global challenges. Education must illuminate both history's triumphs and its trials, empowering learners to navigate the future with courage, integrity, and discernment.

The real task ahead is to deepen these reforms with inclusivity, ensuring that Indian education remains rooted in its heritage, responsive to its diversity, and resilient in the face of change. This moment presents an unprecedented opportunity to realign Indian education with its civilizational values and future aspirations. It is now for us to deepen and extend these transformations, creating a knowledge ecosystem that is rooted, resilient, and forward-looking.

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

Trumpeting Trump: Between American real estate foray in India, trade deals to trade wars

OPINION

DR. SHADAB AHMED



US President Donald John Trump is as much recognized for his uncontrived press conferences, protracting and retracting statements, controversial resolutions to diplomatic issues and undiplomatic gauches as much as he is acknowledged for starting an obtuse trade war which redundantly unsettled the world financial markets, upended decades of negotiated global trade agreements and stoked worries about a new wave of reticent inflation. Despite the personal and political

bonhomie with the Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, there is no love lost and Indo-American relations under Trump can be at best described as ambivalent in nature.

But when Trump is not the partisan Trump, he is the entrepreneurial Trump. With his “Trump Towers”, a series of Trump-branded real estate projects that are rapidly expanding in a resurgent India driven by e-commerce boom and manufacturing expansion in the industrial and warehousing sectors, Trump signalled the entry of the American real estate ship into India along with his son Eric Frederick Trump from the renowned Mar-a-Lago Club in Florida, USA. India has emerged as an influential market for The Trump Organization conglomerate for the increasing demand for luxury homes in the country. The

business model of Trump Towers in India follows a brand licensing strategy. The Trump Organisation does not directly invest in real estate projects in India. Instead, it licenses the “Trump” name to Indian real estate developers who finance, construct and sell luxury properties under the Trump brand. The Trump Organisation earns royalty fees or a percentage of sales in exchange for allowing developers to use its brand name, which adds an internationalized appeal to the properties. To add more fascination to the fascinating intrigue, Trump is expected to earn crores of rupees from these projects without even directly investing any capital. In India, there are currently four “Trump Tower” properties forthcoming in Mumbai, Pune, Gurugram and Kolkata. With more launches expected in the coming months, India will have the highest number of Trump Towers, surpassing the USA.

On one side, as the Indian property market prepares for the American real-estate gentrification and the deal of a lifetime, on the other hand, Indian



economic policy formula-tors and the Niti Aayog policy strategists are closely monitoring the reciprocal tariffs USA is imposing on other nations to assess the potential bitter-sweet impact and adoption of any contingency measures. India's Commerce Ministry officials are in the USA for the extended fifth round of discussions regarding the proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), with an expected 26% tariff rate and trying their best to sal-

vage the predatory agreement to under 20%. This would give India a competitive advantage over other economic adversaries in the Asia-Pacific geo-political region. Indian corporates across textiles, jewellery and electronics have kept their operational strategies on the side-lines awaiting clarity on the reciprocal tariff plan, or any interim plan engineered. As high-level talks between both the commerce affiliates continue, Trump has indicated

that Washington and New Delhi are very close to finalizing a trade deal.

In February this year, US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced the intent for a trade deal by fall of 2025. Trump had first announced 27% tariffs on Indian goods on 2nd April 2025 as part of a wider trade policy move. While the tariffs were initially paused until 9th July 2025, USA later extended the deadline to 1st August

2025.

For India, the shark in the blood-infested waters are the agricultural products and the elephant in the room are the farm exports. India has traditionally drawn a red line and maintained an impregnable position on providing duty concessions to the USA for agricultural and dairy products, given their sensitive and neurotic status for economic and political reasons. India's policy has consistently protected its dairy sector across all the previous trade arrangements. Additionally, India continues to uphold her ban on genetically modified food crops, which contrasts with the United States' agricultural practices. Unresolved agreements persist in duties on steel, aluminium and automotive sectors. But in all likelihood, the trade deal with India will give the Americans better access to Indian markets. For years, Washington amid its administrative transitions has been pushing for greater access to India's farm sector, envisaging it as a major untapped market.

The Indian administrators, legislators and strategists should prioritize

their own commercial and differential interests over the Americans with their classic old American brisandage approach. American business conservatism should not come at the cost of Indian economic manipulation and exploitation. India must resist to make any impulsive and precipitate strategic commitments under political hegemony in Free Trade Agreements (FTA) at the broader areas of Intellectual Property Rights, Service Trade and Digital Regulations and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) easing in multi-brand retail and commercial acquisition of nuclear reactors, Boeing aircrafts and Liquefied Natural Gas. It remains yet to be seen that whether the tariff wars are a short-term international political gimmick by the American politicians under Trump administration or a stoic acceptance of some unhealthy corn syrup in Indian vanilla-white bread world.

Dr Shadab Ahmed is an Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon, acclaimed Columnist and author; renowned for his insightful writings on Indian History, Geopolitics and Ethnic Culture



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduces Income Tax Bill in Lok Sabha, in New Delhi on Feb 13, 2025. ANI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A new Income Tax Bill, 2025 has been introduced in Parliament to replace India's aging Income-tax Act of 1961. This landmark bill promises a cleaner, easier-to-understand tax law without fundamentally altering how much tax anyone pays. It's a comprehensive rewrite aimed at simplifying language and structure while preserving core tax provisions. In effect, the government is attempting to declutter six decades of amendments and jargon to create a tax code that ordinary citizens can grasp. This explainer breaks down what the new Bill entails, how it compares to the 1961 law, and what it means for different taxpayers – from salaried individuals to businesses and non-profits.

WHY A NEW INCOME TAX BILL?

The Income-tax Act of 1961 has been the bedrock of India's tax system for over 60 years, but it has accumulated hundreds of amendments and become notoriously complex. Finance Ministry officials likened updating it to renovating an old house with too many extensions – at some point, you need a fresh blueprint. The Income Tax Bill, 2025, was tabled in the Lok Sabha on February 13, 2025, precisely to create that fresh blueprint. According to the Press Information Bureau, the effort was guided by three core principles:

Simplify text and structure: eliminating archaic, intricate language for clarity.

No major policy changes: keeping tax rates and rules stable for continuity.

No rate changes: ensuring tax slabs and rates remain unchanged, giving predictability to taxpayers.

TDG EXPLAINER

In short, the government sought to rewrite the rule-book without moving the goalposts. Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary summed it up by saying the new code should be “not just understood by experts but also accessible to the common citizens”. This means an average taxpayer reading the law should have a better chance of understanding it without needing a tax lawyer at every turn.

The initiative for a new Bill was highly consultative. The Finance Ministry received nearly 21,000 suggestions from the public and experts during the drafting process. Best practices from countries like the UK and Australia were studied to learn how they simplified their tax codes. The result is a proposed law that's almost half the length of the old one. The Bill trims the fat: it cuts the word count by over 2.5 lakh words and reduces the number of sections from 819 to 536, consolidating 47 chapters into just 23. In place of dense text, it introduces user-friendly tables and formulas to present information more clearly (57 tables and 46 formulas, up from a handful before). All this was done to make the Act more “streamlined and navigable”, as a government press release noted.

SIMPLIFICATION VS. STATUS QUO: WHAT CHANGES AND WHAT STAYS THE SAME

Despite the massive clean-up in presentation, the substance of tax law remains largely the same. The Bill “retains most of the provisions of the 1961 Act”. Key concepts like how

income is defined, the heads of income (salary, business, capital gains, etc.), and how tax is assessed are aligned with the old law. Notably, tax rates and tax slabs for individuals and companies are unchanged in the Bill's text – so your tax liability would compute the same way under the new law as it did under the old, at least for now. The annual Finance Acts will continue to set the exact rates each year, just as before.

What *has* changed is largely about simplification and modernisation:

● **Plain Language:** The Bill gets rid of legalese and antiquated terms. Phrases like “notwithstanding anything contained herein” are replaced with plain English (“irrespective of anything contained”). Long, convoluted sentences have been broken into shorter ones. The passive voice gives way to the active voice. Even basic terminology sees improvement – for example, the confusing distinction between “previous year” and “assessment year” is streamlined by using the term “tax year” uniformly for clarity.

● **Logical Reorganisation:** Related provisions are grouped more sensibly. The Bill consolidates scattered amendments and sections that dealt with similar topics into one place. For instance, exemptions that were listed throughout Section 10 of the old Act are now reportedly reorganised into six distinct schedules for easier reference. Redundant and outdated sections – such as those providing old incentives no longer relevant – have been removed. The naviga-

tion of the law should be easier, meaning taxpayers and professionals can find relevant rules without flipping through as many pages or cross-references.

● **Schemes for Efficiency:** The new Bill empowers the government to introduce schemes to improve tax administration efficiency, transparency, and accountability. This builds on the existing “faceless” and electronic systems by allowing further innovations. For example, the law explicitly allows the government to roll out new technology-driven processes (with Parliament's oversight) to eliminate in-person interactions and optimise resources. In practice, this could mean more advanced e-filing systems or AI-assisted compliance tools in the future, all under a legal framework.

While mostly a carry-forward, the Bill does introduce a few **notable updates** to address emerging areas and plug gaps:

● **Virtual Digital Assets Acknowledged:** The definition of “undisclosed income” in tax raids is expanded to include crypto assets and digital assets. Under the 1961 Act, if tax officials found unaccounted cash, gold, or jewellery in a search, it could be deemed undisclosed income. Now, cryptocurrencies and digital tokens are explicitly on that list. This recognises the reality of modern investments – if you're hiding gains in Bitcoin, the taxman has a legal basis to count it as unaccounted wealth.

● **Searching the Cloud:** To keep up with the digital age, tax authorities will have clearer powers to access data stored in “virtual digital space” during searches and seizures. Earlier, officers could search physical premises or seize computers and drives. The Bill explicitly allows them (with due authorisation) to penetrate online accounts and cloud storage – email accounts, social media, online trading or wallet accounts – by overriding passwords or encryption if needed. In simple terms, your cloud backup or online portfolio is not off-limits in an authorised tax investigation. While this boosts enforcement in an era where transactions are digital, it has also sparked privacy debates about the extent of these powers. Observers note that maintaining proper safeguards and oversight will be crucial as authorities venture into digital realms for evidence.

● **Dispute Resolution Transparency:** The Bill retains the Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP) mechanism for certain cases (like those involving foreign companies or transfer pricing issues) and adds a taxpayer-friendly

DECODING THE INCOME TAX BILL, 2025: A SIMPLER TAX CODE FOR NEW ERA

The government is attempting to declutter six decades of amendments and jargon to create a tax code that ordinary citizens can grasp. It's the same game with the same rules, but a new rulebook that's easier to read.



tweak. Now, when this panel gives its directions on a tax dispute, it must also spell out the points of determination and the reasons for its decision. This means more transparency and clarity for taxpayers who take their case to the panel – you won't just get a one-line order, but the rationale behind it, hopefully reducing confusion and grounds for further appeals

● **Clarity in Tax Treaties:** India has treaties with many countries to avoid double taxation. Sometimes, these treaties use terms not defined in the treaty or in Indian law. The current Act said in such cases, the government could notify a definition, but if not, it was a grey area. The Bill now provides that if a term is undefined in both the treaty and the Act (and no notification exists), one can use the meaning from any other central law of India. This is an esoteric change, but it closes a loophole by providing an interpretational fallback, potentially reducing disputes in cross-border tax situations.

Crucially, what stays the same are the fundamental features: the five heads of income (Salary, House Prop-

erty, Business/Profession, Capital Gains, Other Sources) are intact; the residency rules (determining who is taxed as an Indian resident) remain as before; and the methods of computing income under each head carry on with only cosmetic alterations. The Bill also doesn't tinker with existing offences and penalties for tax evasion – those remain as defined under the old law. So, evaders face the same consequences; the difference is that the provisions punishing evasion are now written in clearer language, not in any weaker terms.

The end goal, as stated by the government, is a law that “preserves existing taxation principles, ensuring continuity while enhancing usability”. In other words, it's the same game with the same rules, but a new rulebook that's easier to read.

TAX SLABS, EXEMPTIONS AND DEDUCTIONS: STABILITY WITH SIMPLICITY

The Income Tax Bill, 2025 makes no changes to existing tax rates or slabs – your tax bracket remains the

same unless revised by the annual Budget. Notably, the **Union Budget 2025-26** made income up to Rs 12.75 lakh effectively tax-free under the new regime, but this is a Budget measure, not part of the Bill.

Exemptions and deductions like **Section 80C, 80D**, etc., continue, though reorganised for clarity. Some initial confusion arose due to their absence in the draft's main text, but experts confirmed this was a structural change, not a removal. The parliamentary committee has asked for clearer placement before enactment.

Exempt incomes and special rates (like those under Section 10 of the 1961 Act) are now presented in structured schedules, improving readability without altering benefits. Procedural simplifications – such as streamlined TDS applications – aim to ease compliance.

Bottom line: no surprises. Benefits continue, now written in simpler, more accessible language.

ANTI-AVOIDANCE MEASURES AND TRANSPARENCY

The new Bill retains all key anti-evasion tools from the 1961 Act, including GAAR, which remains intact to curb tax-avoidance schemes. By rewriting these rules in clearer language, the Bill aims to reduce misuse and ensure taxpayers better understand compliance boundaries.

Transparency is enhanced with a requirement for the **Dispute Resolution Panel** to issue reasoned orders. The ethos of the law supports a **non-adversarial tax environment**, complementing faceless systems and the Taxpayers' Charter.

Emerging income streams from the **digital economy** – like influencer income or small e-commerce – may require clearer treatment. The parliamentary committee has recommended future amendments to address these.

Additionally, the **updated return filing window has been extended from 2 to 4 years**, encouraging voluntary compliance. For **charitable**

trusts, the validity of registrations is proposed to increase from 5 to 10 years, easing administrative burdens for genuine non-profits.

In short: The Bill strengthens enforcement without adding new burdens, combining clarity, fairness, and tech-friendly compliance.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR SALARIED INDIVIDUALS

For salaried taxpayers, the Income Tax Bill, 2025, offers continuity and simplicity. Tax slabs, deductions like 80C and standard deduction remain unchanged – your benefits stay intact. What changes is the language: clearer terms in salary components (HRA, perquisites, etc.) make the law easier to follow.

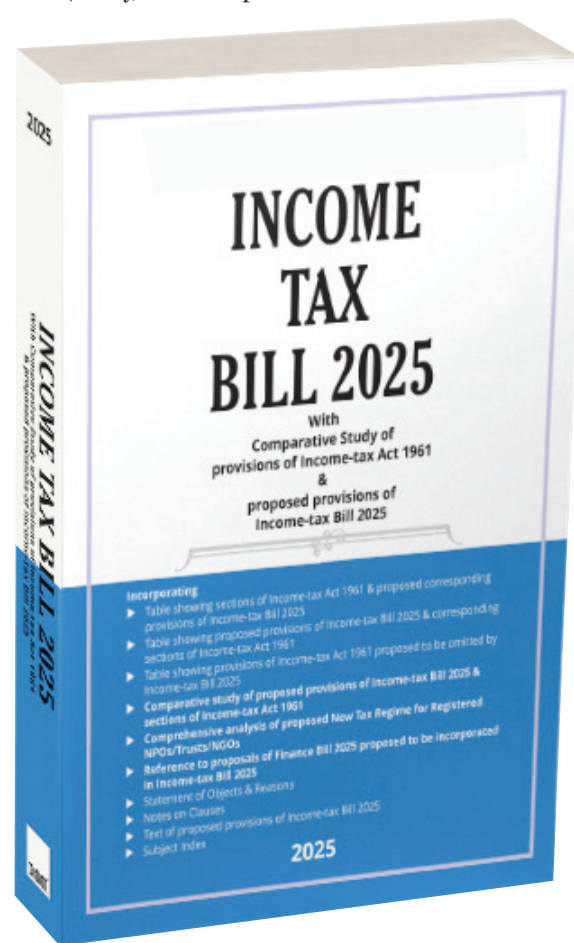
Tables and formulas simplify calculations, and legal backing for digital systems like pre-filled returns and faster refunds. While the structure of exemptions may be reorganised, all key deductions are expected to stay. Official FAQs and mapping tools will help taxpayers transition with clarity and confidence.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BUSINESSES

The Bill simplifies tax compliance for businesses without altering corporate tax rates or core rules. Provisions like depreciation, MAT, and transfer pricing remain, but with clearer language to reduce disputes and litigation.

Compliance may become easier – filing obligations could be streamlined, especially for MSMEs. Large businesses will appreciate clarity in rules for mergers and cross-border transactions, with transitional safeguards for losses and credits.

The Bill reinforces digital integration, encouraging more automation and data pre-filing from other systems (like GST or MCA), boosting efficiency. Overall, it promises a less ambiguous, more predictable tax environment that fosters compliance and investor confidence.



MBA DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT: A ROAD TO SHAPING LEADERS FOR A SUSTAINABLY SOUND FUTURE



DR. PR SODANI

With rapid globalization comes robust societal & environmental changes, and India being one of the most dynamic economies needs professionals who can overcome such complex challenges. This points towards development management as a career waiting to be explored. MBA Development Management unlike other MBA programmers opens a specialized arena of career opportunities. Development Management offers a more focused approach to the person to work in a very niche yet



specialized area which calls for attention towards making strategic decisions. The curriculum integrates management competencies to achieve a higher Human Development Index (health, knowledge, and standard of living) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

WORLD IN 2030
The global narrative is shifting toward solution-oriented approaches to construct a sustainable society by 2030. However, as

per the UN SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2023, India ranks 112th among 166 countries, achieving an overall index score of 63.5%. NITI Aayog which helps the efforts to achieve the SDG goals has established a framework emphasizing the importance of close coordination with the states. The healthcare systems too acknowledge how pivotal their role is in fighting the health-related catastrophe. The healthcare systems are found to be

inquisition-based for sustainable procurement, thus ensuring transparency and proof of environmental responsibility from suppliers. They are also using AI to optimize logistics on waste and maximize it. Digitally-enabled care models, telehealth, and virtual consultations significantly reduce the environmental footprint of healthcare by scaling patient triaging and decreasing carbon-intensive hospitals' and patients' travel. Addressing the varying



environmental influence of healthcare systems, providers are significantly highlighting sustainability and climate resilience through robust ESG strategies. Such initiatives focus on science-based targets, achieving net-zero emissions, and ensuring climate-resilient

healthcare delivery.
ESR AND CSG IN EDUCATION
ESR and CSR in higher education are not isolated entities but interlinked dimensions of development management. Changes in the entire ecosystem have been noticed where the

boundaries between the Rural and the Urban are slowly disappearing. According to the National Commission on Population (NCP) in India, 38.6% of Indians i.e. about 600 million are predicted to live in urban areas by 2036 which is in the next 15 years. It indicates that there would be more opportunities for professionals to build an ecosystem for this population. Another important focus of professional education in this domain is to construct new rural-urban management knowledge and theories and influence public policy through action-oriented problem-solving and policy-oriented research consultancy.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
Graduates of Development Management acquire skills in analytical processes, financial and human resource systems, and sustainable development strategies. Such qualifications can enable them

to work successfully in a broad spectrum of diverse and distinguished sectors, including banking, trade centres, marketing, investment, financial services, business development, urban and rural development, and evidence-based policy and program planning. They can take up jobs as Business Development Executives, professional planners in the transformation of urban and rural areas, or take up a career as a lecturer/researcher in colleges/universities. They are also sought after by prominent organizations like the WHO, UN, Water Aid, NHM, and the National Rural Livelihood Mission. The degree opens doors to impactful careers where they contribute to driving sustainable development and social change.
The writer is the President, IIHMR Universit. Disclaimer: The opinions are personal and do not reflect any institutional position.

India's open tech battle: ONDC vs Giants



RITIKA GOSWAMI

India's digital economy is experiencing a seismic change. At the forefront of this change is a bold, government-sponsored initiative: The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) which aimed at leveling online commerce. Proposed as an antidote to platform monopolies such as Amazon and Flipkart, ONDC aims to deconstruct e-commerce layers and create a level playing field. The fight, though, is less than straightforward and far from won.

THE PROMISE OF ONDC
Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is the initiative behind launching ONDC, and it is not another platform but a protocol, akin to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). ONDC links buyers and sellers in a decentralized manner, enabling kirana stores, independent retailers, and consumers to join online commerce without being bound to a particular

platform. The vision is one of freedom of choice, wherein purchasers and sellers trade on various apps, and nobody dominates visibility, transactions, or data. In theoretical perspective, it is the antithesis of the current dominant structures.

SHATTERING THE PLATFORM MONOPOLY

India's e-commerce market has traditionally been dominated by two giants: Amazon and Flipkart. Deep discounting, algorithmic bias, preferential treatment of

tices. ONDC's decentralized model seeks to break down these digital bastions. Any seller who is on boarded to the network becomes visible on any ONDC-compatible buyer app. For small businessmen and start-ups, this amounts to a revolution. It disrupts Big Tech's gatekeeper role and redistributes online visibility.

POLICY AND REGULATORY SUPPORT

ONDC does not exist in a vacuum. It supplements India's changing digital leg-

(Amendment) Act, 2023 brings new instruments to end anti-competitive behavior, such as digital cartels, abuse of dominant position and predatory data practices.

* The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 gives rights to consent to users and puts caps on data harvesting which is essential in a networked world like ONDC.

Collectively, these regulations represent a broader policy thrust: moderating monopolies, facilitating interoperability, and protecting user rights.

hassle-free browsing, one-click buying, and strong return guarantees, ONDC's platform is still fragmented.

Second, logistics and fulfilment are decentralized. Unlike Flipkart or Amazon, ONDC doesn't own delivery networks or warehouses. This reliance on third-party logistics players can affect delivery speed, cost, and reliability.

Third, the trust deficit casts a long shadow. Inherently trusted brands have consumer goodwill. For newer sellers and smaller platforms, establishing credibility is a function of time — and repeated delivery.

That notwithstanding, the biggies such as Paytm, PhonePe (Pincode), Magicpin, and government-sponsored apps are already on ONDC. Government incentives for MSME onboarding, along with increasing digital literacy, indicate incremental yet meaningful expansion.

DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY AND INCLUSION

ONDC is more than a marketplace, it's a declaration. Fundamentally, it's India's attempt at digital sovereignty, the freedom to manage its own digital economy on its own terms and for its own benefit. It also provides a way towards inclusion, enabling millions of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to join formal e-commerce for the very first time.

If it works, ONDC has the potential to be one of India's most impactful digital public goods, alongside Aadhaar, UPI, and CoWIN.

A BATTLE OF WORLDS

ONDC vs e-commerce companies is really not a business contest at all, it is a conflict of worlds. One believes in centralized control, closed systems, and data monopolies. The other espouses openness, interoperability, and collective good. The result is in doubt. But with regulatory tailwinds and popular momentum, India could just redefine the game of e-commerce in its own terms, and in its own language

Shiksha Jain: Rising golf star from India aiming for global glory

TDG NETWORK JAIPUR

At just 14 years old, Shiksha Jain from Jaipur, India, is already making waves in the national golfing circuit with a stellar track record, unmatched dedication, and a burning ambition to shine on the global stage. Ranked among the top 3 golfers in her age category in India, Shiksha has achieved more than most athletes do in a lifetime. Her journey is not only about breaking records—it's about breaking barriers and becoming a symbol of youth achievement, discipline, and empowerment in Indian sports.

A TRAIL OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Shiksha's list of accomplishments is truly remarkable. With over 93 tournament wins at the national level, she has proven her dominance time and again on the golf course. Her success is not limited to Indian soil—Shiksha has received invitations to participate in over 201 international tournaments,

craft. While most teens are still discovering their interests, Shiksha has already committed herself to an intense daily training schedule of 10–11 hours, combining technical golf practice, mental conditioning, and physical fitness.

Her focus on total athletic development includes personalized fitness sessions to build stamina, strength, and flexibility—essential components for peak performance in competitive golf. This level of discipline reflects her vision not just to compete but to dominate at the international level.

A ROLE MODEL FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

Shiksha Jain's story is also one of inspiration. As a young girl in a sport that is still growing in popularity in India, especially among female athletes, she represents the power of early ambition, hard work, and perseverance. She is quickly becoming a role model for countless other young athletes—especially girls—who are watching her journey unfold with

with her journey stand to benefit from:

Extensive Media Exposure: As a top-performing young athlete, her participation in national and international events attracts significant media coverage, offering sponsors visibility across diverse platforms.

Alignment with Strong Values: Shiksha embodies values like excellence, perseverance, discipline, and ambition—traits that resonate deeply with forward-thinking, value-driven brands.

Wide Audience Reach: With growing popularity among youth and families, sponsors can connect with a dynamic and aspirational audience through digital campaigns, event appearances, and influencer engagements.

Flexible Sponsorship Models: From apparel and equipment to travel and training support, Shiksha is open to various sponsorship arrangements that align with brand strategies and budgets.

Long-Term Partnership Potential: With her career just beginning, sponsors

The vision is one of freedom of choice, wherein purchasers and sellers trade on various apps, and nobody dominates visibility, transactions, or data. In theoretical perspective, it is the antithesis of the current dominant structures.

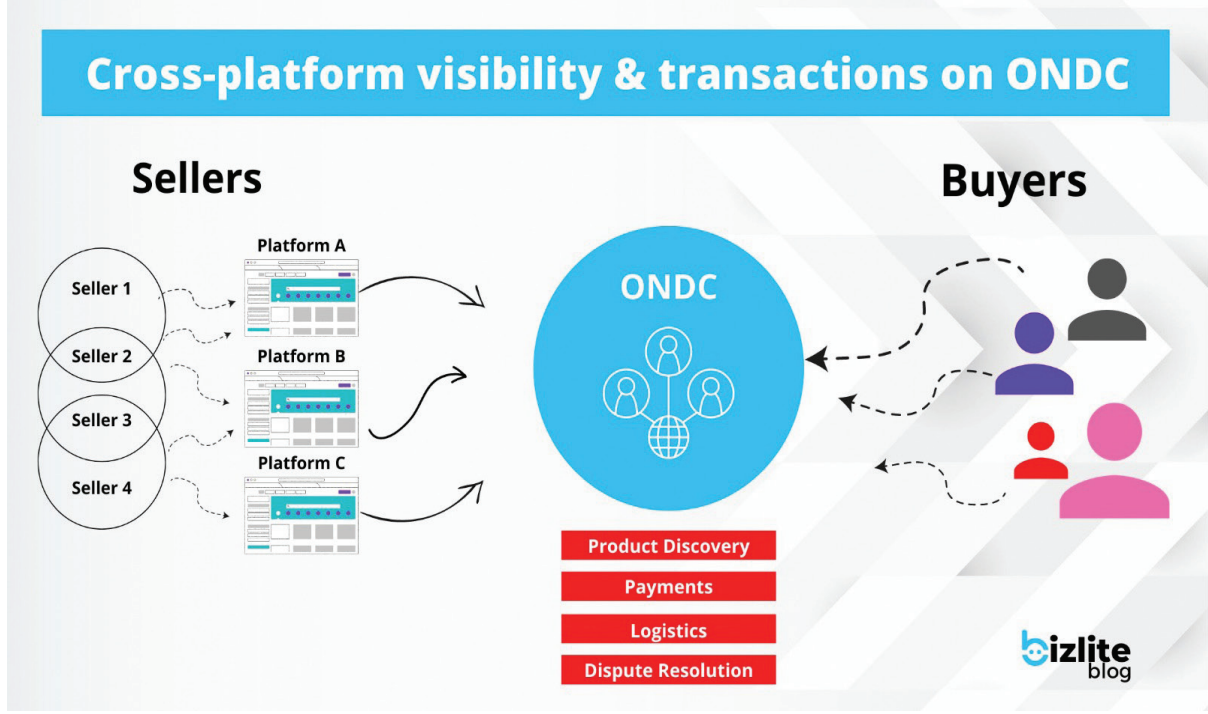


avored sellers, and exploitation of data have been the subject of media headlines in recent years. These actions have led to several probes by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for possible anti-trust prac-

islative landscape:
* The Digital India Act (DIA), which is to replace the Information Technology Act, is focused on regulating big platforms and holding them accountable.
* The Competition

REAL-WORLD CHALLENGES

The path to disruption, however, is not smooth. Firstly, user experience on ONDC is still patchy. On contrast with Amazon's



underscoring her growing reputation as one of the most promising young golfers on the horizon.

These accolades are more than just trophies; they are milestones in her journey toward becoming one of the world's leading golfers. Her world ranking is already in place, and she has set an ambitious yet achievable goal to break into the top 500 globally within the next year.

DEDICATION THAT INSPIRES

What sets Shiksha apart from her peers is her unrelenting commitment to her

hope and pride.

Her achievements are a testament to the possibilities that open up when talent is matched with opportunity, guidance, and relentless effort.

In a country where cricket has long overshadowed other sports, Shiksha is helping to carve a new space for golf in the national sporting consciousness.

Why Sponsoring Shiksha Jain is a Golden Opportunity Shiksha is not just a rising sports star—she's a marketing opportunity, a symbol of empowerment, and a future icon. Brands that associate

have the unique chance to support her growth journey and build a long-lasting, meaningful partnership.

LOOKING AHEAD: AIMING FOR THE WORLD STAGE

Shiksha's vision extends far beyond national boundaries. Her goal of entering the top 500 in world rankings within the next year is backed by her performance, mindset, and unwavering focus. She dreams of representing India at major global tournaments, bringing home medals, and placing Indian golf firmly on the international map.

THAI, CAMBODIA TRADE HEAVY FIRE AS CLASHES ENTER SECOND DAY

Thailand’s shelling caused major damage to the 11th-century Preah Vihear temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

AGENCIES
SURIN, THAILAND

Thailand and Cambodia exchanged heavy artillery fire for a second day on Friday as border fighting intensified and spread, while Cambodia's leader said Thailand had agreed to a Malaysian cease-fire proposal but then backed down.

At least 20 people have been killed and more than 130,000 people displaced in the worst fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours in 13 years.

Both sides have blamed each other for starting the conflict and on Friday ratcheted up the rhetoric. Thailand accused Cambodia of deliberately attacking civilians and Cambodia condemned Thailand for using cluster munitions, controversial and widely condemned.



Thailand’s acting prime minister, Phumtham Wechayachai, said Cambodia had attacked on multiple fronts.

“The situation has intensified and could escalate into a state of war. At present, it’s a confrontation involving heavy weapons,” he told reporters.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said in a social media post that he had agreed to a ceasefire

proposed by his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim, chair of the ASEAN regional bloc, who had informed him that Phumtham had also agreed.

“However, it is regrettable that just over an hour later, the Thai side informed that they had reversed their position,” Hun Manet said.

Thailand late on Friday said it agreed in principle with the idea of a ceasefire and would consider it, but

that it must be based on “appropriate on-the-ground conditions”.

“Throughout the day, Cambodian forces have continued their indiscriminate attacks,” the Thai foreign ministry said in a post on X. “Cambodia’s actions demonstrate a lack of good faith and continue to place civilians in danger.”

Two senior Thai foreign ministry officials earlier said Bangkok had received offers of mediation from the U.S., Malaysia and China, but preferred to use bilateral mechanisms.

Fighting re-erupted before dawn on Friday, with clashes reported in 12 locations, up from six on Thursday, according to Thailand’s military. It accused Cambodia of using artillery and Russian-made BM-21 rockets to attack areas that included schools and hospitals.

UN Security Council holds closed-door meeting on Cambodia-Thai clashes

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS

The UN Security Council will hold a closed-door meeting on Thailand-Cambodia border clashes on Friday.

According to the Security Council program, the meeting, scheduled for 3 p.m. EDT (1900 GMT) Friday, was reportedly requested by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet.

The situation at the Thai-Cambodian border escalated following skirmishes that began Thursday morning.

The two sides blamed each other for violating international law.

According to the deputy spokesperson of the Thai Ministry of Public Health, 14 Thai people were killed and 46 others injured in military clashes near the Thailand-Cambodia border as of 9:00 p.m. local time on Thursday.

Cambodia’s Oddar Meanchey deputy governor, Met Meas Pheakdey, told Xinhua over the telephone that one villager was killed and five others were wounded on Thursday.

Thailand warns of war with Cambodia as 138,000 flee fighting

AGENCIES
THAILAND

Thailand’s acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai warned Friday that cross-border clashes with Cambodia that have uprooted more than 130,000 people “could develop into war”, as the countries traded deadly strikes for a second day.

A long-running border dispute erupted into intense fighting with jets, artillery, tanks and ground troops on Thursday, and the UN Security Council is set to hold an emergency meeting on the crisis later Friday.

A steady thump of artillery strikes could be heard from the Cambodian side of the border Friday, where the province of Oddar Meanchey reported one civilian -- a 70-year-old man -- had been killed and five more

wounded. More than 138,000 people have been evacuated from Thailand’s border regions, its health ministry said, reporting 15 fatalities -- 14 civilians and a soldier -- with a further 46 wounded, including 15 troops.

On Friday evening, a Thailand military border commander declared martial law in eight districts on the frontier with Cambodia, citing “Cambodia’s use of force to enter Thai territory”.

“We have tried to compromise as we are neighbours, but we have now instructed the Thai military to act immediately in case of urgency,” said Phumtham.

“If the situation escalates, it could develop into war -- though for now, it remains limited to clashes,” he told reporters in Bangkok.

US cuts short Gaza ceasefire talks and accuses Hamas of lacking ‘good faith’

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The United States is cutting short Gaza ceasefire talks and bringing its negotiating team home from Qatar for consultations after the latest response from Hamas “shows a lack of desire to reach a ceasefire in Gaza”, President Donald Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff said Thursday.

“While the mediators have made a great effort, Hamas does not appear to be coordinated or acting in good faith,” Witkoff said in a statement. “We will now consider alternative options to bring the hostages home and try to create a more stable environ-

ment for the people of Gaza.”

It was unclear what “alternative options” the U.S. was considering. The White House had no immediate comment.

At a news briefing Thursday, State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott did not offer details on what the “alternative options” the U.S. is considering.

When pressed for clarity on whether and how the U.S. would proceed, Pigott did not offer clarity and said, “This is a very dynamic situation.”

He said there’s never been a question of the U.S. commitment to reaching a ceasefire, but of Hamas’ commitment.

A breakthrough in talks on a ceasefire deal between

Israel and Hamas has eluded Trump’s administration for months as conditions worsen in Gaza. The territory recently had its deadliest day yet for aid-seekers in over 21 months of war, with at least 85 Palestinians killed while trying to reach food Sunday.

The sides have held weeks of talks in Qatar, reporting small signs of progress but no major breakthroughs. Officials have said a main sticking point is the redeployment of Israeli troops after any ceasefire takes place.

Witkoff said the U.S. is “resolute” in seeking an end to the conflict in Gaza and it was “a shame that Hamas has acted in this selfish way.”

Earlier Thursday, Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office recalled his country’s negotiating team back to Israel in light of Hamas’ response.

In a brief statement, the prime minister’s office expressed its appreciation for the efforts of Witkoff and mediators Qatar and Egypt, but it gave no further details.

The deal under discussion is expected to include an initial 60-day ceasefire in which Hamas would release 10 living hostages and the remains of 18 others in phases in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Aid supplies would be ramped up and the two sides would hold negotiations on a lasting ceasefire.

Dozens of people in Gaza have starved to death in July as hunger surges

AGENCIES
DEIR AL-BALAH, GAZA STRIP

Five starving children at a Gaza City hospital were wasting away, and nothing the doctors tried was working. The basic treatments for malnourishment that could save them had run out under Israel’s blockade. The alternatives were ineffective. One after another, the babies and toddlers died over four days.

In greater numbers than ever, children hollowed up by hunger are overwhelming the Patient’s Friends Hospital, the main emergency center for malnourished kids in northern Gaza.

The deaths last weekend also marked a change: the first seen by the center in children who had no preexisting conditions. Symptoms are getting worse, with children too weak to cry or move, said Dr. Rana Soboh, a nutritionist. In past months, most improved, despite supply



shortages, but now patients stay longer and don’t get better, she said.

“There are no words in the face of the disaster we are in. Kids are dying before the world ... There is no uglier and more horrible phase than this,” said Soboh, who works with the U.S.-based aid organization Medglobal, which supports the hospital.

This month, the hunger that has been building among Gaza’s more than 2 million Palestinians passed a tipping point into accelerating death, aid workers and health staff say. Not only children -- usually the most vulnerable -- are falling victim under Israel’s blockade since March, but also adults.

In the past three weeks, at least 48 people died of causes related to malnutrition, including 28 adults and 20 children, the Gaza Health Ministry said Thursday. That’s up from 10 children who died in the five previous months of 2025, according to the ministry.

The U.N reports similar numbers. The World Health Organization said Wednesday it has documented 21 children under 5 who died of causes related to malnutrition in 2025. The U.N humanitarian office, OCHA, said Thursday at least 13 children’s deaths were reported in July, with the number growing daily.

Ishiba Don’t quit’: unlikely support grows for Japan PM



AGENCIES
TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba’s future is uncertain but an unlikely campaign for him to stay was growing online this week, including from people who are his natural political opponents.

The life raft has emerged since upper house elections on Sunday deprived Ishiba’s coalition of an upper house majority, months after it suffered a similar disaster in the lower chamber.

Despite Ishiba, 68, insisting that he has not discussed

his resignation with members of his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), multiple reports say that it is just a matter of time.

Some conservative members of the LDP are collecting signatures to hold a special meeting to discuss a leadership election to oust Ishiba, Fuji TV reported on Friday.

One reported signee is Sanae Takaichi, a hardline nationalist and onetime heavy metal drummer who lost a leadership contest to Ishiba in September.

Takaichi, 64, would likely run again to lead the party -- and become Japan’s first woman prime minister if she wins -- if Ishiba does depart.

The prospect of someone as premier with hawkish views on Japanese history and China has fuelled online calls for the moderate Ishiba to remain in power under the hashtag “#Ishiba Don’t quit”.

SIGHTSEEING



A tourist takes photos in an open-air studio with a view of the Bosphorus, Istanbul, Turkey.

NETANYAHU SAYS ISRAEL WEIGHING OPTIONS TO CEASEFIRE TALKS WITH HAMAS

AGENCIES
CAIRO

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday his government was considering “alternative options” to ceasefire talks with Hamas after Israel and the U.S. recalled their negotiating teams, throwing the future of the negotiations into further uncertainty.

Netanyahu’s statement came as a Hamas official said negotiations were expected to resume next week and portrayed the recall of the Israeli and American delegations as a pressure tactic.

The teams left Qatar on Thursday as President Donald Trump’s special envoy, Steve Witkoff, said Hamas’ latest response to proposals for a deal showed a “lack of desire” to reach a truce. Witkoff said the U.S. will look at “alternative options,” with-



out elaborating.

In a statement released by his office, Netanyahu echoed Witkoff, saying, “Hamas is the obstacle to a hostage release deal.”

“Together with our U.S. allies, we are now considering alternative options to bring our hostages home, end Hamas’s terror rule, and secure lasting peace for Israel and our region,” he said. He did not elaborate. Israel’s government didn’t immediately respond to whether negotiations would resume next week.

Hiroshima marks 80 years since atomic bombing with message of peace

AGENCIES
HIROSHIMA

The year 2025 marks a significant milestone- 80 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It is a solemn and memorable year for both cities, especially Hiroshima, which continues to share its message of world peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

To commemorate this occasion, Hiroshima City and its partners are showcasing powerful evidence of the

devastation caused by the atomic bomb.

Their goal is to spread the “Hiroshima Spirit” -- a global call for everlasting peace and the complete elimination of nuclear arms.

As part of these efforts, the interior of the Atomic Bomb Dome -- a place usually off-limits to the public -- has been opened to the media.

This rare access serves as a powerful symbol, offering the world a first-hand look at the remains of the catastrophe. Inside the dome lie broken bricks, collapsed stones,

and deformed steel frames, all damaged by the blast.

In 1996, the Atomic Bomb Dome was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site, standing as a reminder of the horrors of nuclear warfare.

Before the bombing, approximately 6,500 people lived in what is now the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Today, their remains lie beneath the ground. Every year, citizens gather to offer prayers, saying: “Please sleep peacefully. We shall not repeat the same mistake.”



An estimated 1,40,000 people died as a result of the bombing in 1945. As of now, around 2,50,000 survivors -- known as Hibakusha -- are still alive, serving as liv-

ing witnesses to the tragedy. However, as time passes and survivors age, Hiroshima City is taking steps to preserve their testimonies for future generations.

To ensure these stories live on, the city has introduced a Legacy Successor Training Program, aimed at training younger generations to share the survivors’ experiences. Additionally, a groundbreaking AI-based testimony simulation has been developed. It features virtual interviews with six survivors, including 94-year-old Yoshiko Kajimoto. On one side, she appears in a recorded video, while on the other, an interactive AI avatar answers audience questions. The system includes

responses to over 900 questions, selected by AI.

Explaining her decision to participate, Ms Kajimoto said, “Even after I am gone, the horror of the atomic bombing must not be forgotten. I want future generations to know and remember. I’m happy to support this project.”

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui emphasized the city’s commitment to peace. He said, “To preserve the memory of this tragedy, we are training the next generation to carry on the testimonies.

In a world where conflicts still erupt, Hiroshima sends a message of peace and non-violence.”

He also extended a message to India and said, “We received a statue of Mahatma Gandhi, a symbol of nonviolence. I sincerely hope that India will embody this ideal and work toward a peaceful society and the abolition of nuclear weapons.”

On August 6, Hiroshima will host a major ceremony to commemorate the anniversary and send a strong message of peace to the world.

FRENCH PRESIDENT MACRON SAYS FRANCE WILL RECOGNIZE PALESTINE AS A STATE

Israel strongly condemned the move, calling it a reward for terrorism

AGENCIES
PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron announced Thursday that France will recognize Palestine as a state, in a bold diplomatic move amid snowballing global anger over people starving in Gaza. Israel denounced the decision.

Macron said in a post on X that he will formalize the decision at the U.N. General Assembly in September. “The urgent thing today is that the war in Gaza stops and the civilian population is saved,” he wrote.

The mostly symbolic move puts added diplomatic pressure on Israel as the war and humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip rage. France is now the biggest Western power to recognize Palestine, and the move could pave the way for other countries to do the same. More than 140 countries recognize a Palestinian state, including more than a dozen in Europe.

The Palestinians seek an independent state in the occupied West Bank, annexed east Jerusalem and Gaza, territories Israel occupied in the 1967 Mideast war. Is-



rael's government and most of its political class have long been opposed to Palestinian statehood and now say that it would reward militants after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack.

“We strongly condemn President Macron's decision,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. “Such a move rewards terror and risks creating another Iranian proxy, just as Gaza became. A Palestinian state in these conditions would be a launch pad to annihilate Israel — not to live in peace beside it.”

The Palestinian Authority welcomed it. A letter announcing the move was presented Thursday to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Jerusalem.

“We express our thanks and appreciation” to Macron, Hussein Al Sheikh, the PLO's vice president under

UK, French and German leaders hold a call on Gaza

LONDON : The leaders of Britain, France and Germany will hold an emergency call Friday about the growing hunger crisis in Gaza, after French President Emmanuel Macron announced that his country will become the first major Western power to recognize a Palestinian state.

The surprise announcement exposes differences among the European allies, known as the E3, over how to ease the worsening humanitarian crisis and end the Israel-Hamas war.

All three support a Pal-

estinian state in principle, but Germany said it has no immediate plans to follow France's step, which Macron plans to formalize at the United Nations General Assembly in September.

Britain has not followed suit either, though Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday came closer than ever before, saying “statehood is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people.”

Starmer said he, Macron and Chancellor Friedrich Merz will speak Friday about “what we can do urgently to stop the killing and get peo-

ple the food they desperately need while pulling together all the steps necessary to build a lasting peace.”

“The suffering and starvation unfolding in Gaza is unspeakable and indefensible,” said Starmer, who is under mounting pressure to formally recognize Palestinian statehood, both from opposition lawmakers and from members of his own Labour Party government. Health Secretary Wes Streeting on Tuesday called for an announcement “while there's still a state of Palestine left to recognize.”

Abbas, posted. “This position reflects France's commitment to international law and its support for the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination.” The United States “strongly rejects” Macron's plan to recognize a Palestinian state, Secretary of State Marco Rubio wrote in a post on the social platform X. “This reckless decision only

serves Hamas propaganda and sets back peace. It is a slap in the face to the victims of October 7th,” Rubio said.

With Europe's largest Jewish population and the largest Muslim population in western Europe, France has often seen fighting in the Middle East spill over into protests or other tensions at home.

The French president of-

fered support for Israel after the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks and frequently speaks out against antisemitism, but he has grown increasingly frustrated about Israel's war in Gaza.

Given its historic commitment to a just and sustainable peace in the Middle East, I have decided that France will recognize the state of Palestine,” Macron posted.

US condemn France’s move to recognise Palestinian state

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said Washington “strongly rejects” French President Emmanuel Macron's plan to recognise a Palestinian state, as the administration of President Donald Trump announced it would not attend an upcoming United Nations conference seeking a two-state solution for Palestinians.

Posting on X late on Thursday, Rubio criticised Macron's “reckless decision”, which he claimed “only serves Hamas propaganda and sets back peace”.

Earlier, Macron had said he would formalise France's decision to officially recognise a Palestinian state at the UN's General Assembly in September. “In keeping with its historic commitment to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East,

I have decided that France will recognise the State of Palestine,” Macron wrote on X.

At least 142 countries out of the 193 members of the UN currently recognise or plan to recognise a Palestinian state. But several powerful Western countries – including the US, the United Kingdom and Germany – have refused to do so. Fellow European Union members Norway, Ireland and Spain indicated in May that they had begun the process to recognise a Palestinian state. But Macron's decision would make France – one of Israel's closest allies and a G7 member – the largest and arguably most influential country in Europe to make the move.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the decision, saying such a move “rewards terror and risks creating another Iranian proxy”.

US drops sanctions on Myanmar junta allies after Trump praise

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The United States has lifted sanctions on several allies of Myanmar's ruling general and their military-linked firms, a US Treasury notice shows, after the junta chief sent a glowing letter of praise to President Donald Trump.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing seized power in a 2021 coup, deposing the civilian government and sparking a civil war which has killed thousands, leaving 3.5 million

displaced and half the nation in poverty.

Two weeks ago, the top general sent a letter to Trump, responding to his threat of tariffs by lauding his presidency with praise, including for shutting down US-funded media outlets covering the conflict. A US Treasury notice on Thursday said sanctions were dropped against KT Services and Logistics, the Myanmar Chemical and Machinery Company, and Suntac Technologies -- as well

as their managers.

KT Services and Logistics and its CEO Jonathan Myo Kyaw Thauing were described as junta “cronies” when they were sanctioned in 2022 for leasing Yangon's port from a military firm for \$3 million a year. The Myanmar Chemical and Machinery Company and its owner, Aung Hlaing Oo, and Suntac Technologies owner Sit Taing Aung were sanctioned later that year for producing arms, including tanks and mortars.

Kremlin says Putin, Zelenskiy can only meet as final step to clinch peace deal

AGENCIES
KREMLIN

The Kremlin on Friday ruled out any meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky before the last stage in signing a peace deal, definitively rebuffing the Ukrainian leader's calls for a meeting and describing the two sides' positions as “diametrically



opposed.” The statement appears to ef-



fectively preclude any kind of top-level meeting in the near

future and casts doubt on further progress in the peace talks within the 50-day deadline given by President Donald Trump for a peace deal to be reached before the United States imposes new sanctions on Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov indicated that any meeting between the two leaders could only take place after a draft settlement was

reached, a direct rejection of Zelensky's call on Thursday for a meeting with Putin to move the stalled peace process forward. In comments to journalists on Thursday, released Friday, Zelensky said negotiating an end to the war “probably begins with a meeting of leaders. It won't work any other way with them.”

“We need an agenda for such a meeting — a meeting at

the level of leaders,” he said.

Peskov rejected the proposal on Friday. “A summit meeting can and should put an end to the settlement and formalize the modalities and agreements that are to be worked out in the course of expert work,” he said. “It is impossible to do the opposite. Is it possible to complete such a complex process in 30 days? Obviously, it is unlikely.”

FORTRESS JEWEL



An aerial view of an octagonal fortress that forms one of the most extraordinary cities in the world. Constructed in the 17th-century by Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, a military architect serving King Louis XIV, the city in Alsace features evenly spaced bastions, perpendicular streets and star-shaped fortifications. Neuf-Brisach, France. Agnecies

Trump travels to Scotland for golf, bilateral talks amid Epstein furor

AGENCIES
EDINBURGH/LONDON

U.S. President Donald Trump, dogged by questions about his ties to disgraced financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, flew to Scotland on Friday for some golf and talks that could yield a trade deal with the European Union.

Trump told reporters that he will visit his golf resort in Turnberry on Scotland's west coast, where he will meet British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday, before the two of them head to his sprawling golf property 200 miles (320 km) away near Aberdeen in the east.

As part of the visit, Trump will open a second 18-hole course on the Aberdeen property named in honor of his mother, Mary Anne MacLeod, who was born and raised on a Scottish island before emigrating to America.

As he left the White House, Trump told reporters that he looked forward to meeting both Starmer and Scottish leader John Swinney, who had publicly backed Demo-



cratic candidate Kamala Harris in the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

“We have a lot of things in Scotland. I have a lot of love - my mother was born in Scotland,” he said. “The Scottish leader is a good man, so I look forward to meeting him,” Trump said.

Trump said he and Starmer would discuss the U.S.-British trade deal and perhaps even “improve” it, but gave no details. He said Washington was also working hard on a possible trade deal with the European Union, which he said was very keen to make a deal; European Commission

President Ursula von der Leyen said later she would meet Trump in Scotland over the weekend.

EU diplomats say a deal could result in a broad 15% tariff on EU goods, mirroring a framework agreement with Japan and half of the 30% Trump is threatening to impose by August 1. At home, Trump faces the biggest domestic political crisis of his second term in office. Allies and opponents alike have criticized his administration's handling of investigative files related to Epstein's criminal charges and the circumstances of his 2019 death in prison.

PM MODI VISITS UK AND MALDIVES; INDIA, UK SIGN HISTORIC FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

This week, the Indian PM travelled to the United Kingdom (UK) and Maldives to initiate a new era of collaboration with both nations. The PM's trip to the Maldives holds significant strategic importance, in light of the fact that President Muizzu won the elections based on his anti-India rhetoric and has requested the withdrawal of Indian troops from the Maldives earlier, indicating a challenging situation for India concerning regional and maritime security. However, the situation has changed and the grand reception Indian PM received on his arrival in the Maldives speaks volumes. On the other hand, the visit to the UK has resulted in India securing a long-awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA), creating a mutually beneficial scenario for the economies of both coun-

tries.

This FTA has been under negotiation since 2022, and on 6 May 2025, India and the UK successfully concluded this significant agreement. The Government of India has characterized this as a historic and ambitious deal aimed at enhancing employment, exports, and national growth for both the nations. The FTA encompasses the elimination of tariffs on 99% of Indian tariff lines, which accounts for nearly 100% of the trade value, and it also reduces tariffs on 90% of UK tariff lines, projecting an estimated annual economic increase of 6.4 billion USD for the UK by the year 2040. Additionally, it is expected to foster investments, encourage innovative practices, and facilitate the mobility of services.

From India's perspective,

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI

the agreement opens up considerable export avenues by abolishing tariffs on 99% of its tariff lines. Key industries like textiles, marine products, leather, and engineering goods are set to reap substantial rewards. Also, sectors such as footwear, sports goods, toys, gems, jewellery, auto parts, and chemicals will also benefit. The introduction of zero-duty access will not only facilitate Indian companies a better entry into the UK market but also aligns with the government's strategy to foster job creation in labour-intensive industries through the agreement. For the UK, this initiative

is set to provide significant advantages to various sectors, particularly those involved in beverages, automotive, medical devices, and advanced manufacturing. It encompasses a wide range of products, including whisky, gin, aerospace components, lamb, salmon, electrical machinery, soft drinks, chocolate, and biscuits. A key aspect of this initiative is the substantial reduction of automotive tariffs, which will drop from over 100% to as low as 10% through a tariff rate quota system. Such reductions are projected to significantly boost exports of various products to India benefiting the consumers.

Currently, the bilateral trade between the two countries is valued at approximately 56-60 billion USD. Both nations aspire to double this figure by the year 2030. FTA is anticipated to facilitate this growth trajectory, which is expected to result in substantial job creation in India. Also, the implementation of a Double Contribution Convention (DCC) will allow Indian workers temporarily residing in the UK to be exempt from social security contributions for a period of three years, similar to the UK's Social Security Agreements with nations such as Switzerland and Canada. This exemption will not impact access to benefits or the UK immigration health surcharge and will be enacted concurrently with the broader FTA. This provision not only boosts competitiveness but also

generates financial advantages for both Indian workers and their employers. Additionally, UK service sectors, including financial and legal services, will benefit from increased market certainty within India's expanding economy. In addition to this agreement, the high-level interactions of the Indian PM in the UK were focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in various areas. He had a productive meeting with His Majesty King Charles III. During this meeting, various facets of India-UK relations were discussed, including the progress made in trade and investment following CETA and Vision 2035. Other topics of conversation encompassed education, health and wellness, with a particular emphasis on Yoga and Ayurveda. Prime Minister Modi mentioned that they

also addressed issues related to environmental protection and sustainability. In the second leg of his visit, the Indian PM has embarked on a State Visit to the Maldives at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Maldives, Dr. Mohamed Muizzu. This marks the Indian PM's third visit to the Maldives and is the first visit by a Head of State or Government to the Maldives during President Muizzu's term. The Prime Minister will serve as the ‘Guest of Honour’ at the celebrations commemorating the 60th anniversary of Maldives' Independence on July 26, 2025. Throughout the visit, it is expected that the Indian PM will engage in discussions regarding issues of mutual interest. Additionally, the two leaders will review the progress made in implementing the India-Maldives Joint Vision

for a ‘Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership’, which was established during the State Visit of the President of Maldives to India in October 2024. This visit underscores the significance India places on its maritime neighbour, Maldives, which remains a key component of India's ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy and Vision ‘MAHASAGAR’, which was announced by Indian PM during his visit to Mauritius. Furthermore, the visit will create an opportunity for both nations to enhance and fortify their close bilateral relationship. Overall, this week deserves recognition for India due to its endeavours in promoting both bilateral and multilateral cooperation and collaboration, continually echoing the philosophy and vision of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’!

TAHIR RAJ BHASIN CALLS HIMSELF A 'GREEDY ACTOR'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Tahir Raj Bhasin, who is currently receiving praise for his role in the recently released 'Special Ops 2,' says he's always looking for exciting challenges as an actor. Calling himself a "greedy" performer, Tahir shared that he wants to explore genres he hasn't worked in before.

Speaking to the media, the actor said, "I'm quite a greedy actor. I want to try every type of character and genre, but two things I haven't tried yet are all-out comedy and detective dramas. I've never done either, and I think both would be very exciting to explore."



Tahir also spoke about how happy he is with the appreciation coming his way for playing the antagonist in Special Ops 2. He

mat Singh. "I am really enjoying playing the role of the Collector, and I'm thankful for all the love the show is receiving," he added.

In Special Ops 2, Himmat Singh and his team face a dangerous enemy, AI. Tahir's character kidnaps a top Indian scientist who has access to vital national secrets. His goal? To take control of the country through technology.

The show, directed by Neeraj Pandey and Shivam Nair, premiered on JioHotstar on July 18. It also stars Prakash Raj, Karan Tacker, Vinay Pathak, Tota Roy Chowdhury, Saiyami Kher, Muzammil Ibrahim, Gautami Kapoor, Revathi Pillai, and Kamakshi Bhatt.

Stellan to be honoured with 'Heart of Sarajevo'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Swedish acting star Stellan Skarsgard will be honoured with the prestigious Heart of Sarajevo award at the Sarajevo Film Festival in August, reported Deadline.

According to the outlet, the actor is a longtime friend of the festival, as well as a curator and one of the patrons of the Katrin Cartlidge Foundation, the scholarships of which were awarded at the Sarajevo Film Festival.

"The Sarajevo Film Festival remains unwavering and driven in its aim to highlight subjects of great consequence, underscored



by an intense lust for life. I love going there", said Skarsgard as quoted by Deadline.

The actor follows in the wake of past celebrated Sarajevo honorees who include Meg Ryan, Alexander Payne, Lynne Ramsay, Charlie Kaufman, Jesse Eisenberg, Ruben Ostlund,

Mads Mikkelsen and Angelina Jolie, reported Deadline.

"It is a true honor to present the Honorary Heart of Sarajevo to Stellan Skarsgard, an actor of remarkable depth, strength, and integrity," said Jovan Marjanovic, director of the Sarajevo Film Festival, as quoted by Deadline.

"Stellan has been a longtime friend of Sarajevo, and we are delighted to welcome him back. His career is filled with unforgettable roles in films that challenge, move, and stay with audiences. This award is a heartfelt thank you for his outstanding contribution to cinema and for the continued support he has shown to our festival," added Jovan Marjanovic, director of the Sarajevo Film Festival, as quoted by Deadline.

With more than 150 TV and film credits to his name, Skarsgard is one of Sweden's most internationally celebrated actors.



Ananya Panday (in Right) while posing with her brother Ahaan Panday (in Left) recently in Mumbai. Instagram

Riddhima Kapoor Sahni exudes royal grace at ICW 2025

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Riddhima Kapoor Sahni turned heads on the second day of Hyundai India Couture Week 2025 as she walked the runway for designer Suneet Varma.

Riddhima looked graceful and confident as she walked the ramp wearing a beautiful outfit designed by Varma. The dreamy attire had a soft and romantic feel.

The outfit featured a pastel base with floral embroidery in pink and green, along with golden threadwork. The dress was styled with a long sheer cape that flowed behind her, adding a magical touch to her look. Her hair was styled straight and sleek, and her makeup was subtle, letting the outfit take centre stage.

The collection by Suneet Varma was inspired by twilight and the beauty of femininity. It featured soft, flowing fabrics, detailed hand embroidery, and soft



shades that evoked the beauty of moonlight. Each outfit told its own story of charm, mystery, and elegance.

While speaking to the media, Riddhima talked about the collection, saying, "So this is not overly dramatic,

it just resonates with what I usually wear to weddings and to other functions. It's something that I would wear because it's very comfortable, it's something that I could wear, it is wearable, and I think it's absolutely stylish."

BRAIN PICKING



I never did films for the money or because I needed to buy a house or car. I do it because I love my job.

—SONAKSHI SINHA
(Indian Actress)

Anupam Kher congratulates 'Saiyaara', 'Tanvi The Great' over successful run

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Anupam Kher, whose 'Tanvi The Great' recently opened in theatres, has praised Mohit Suri's 'Saiyaara' over its newfound success.

Taking to his Instagram handle, Kher penned a ote and shared his views about the film, while also appreciating the love that 'Tanvi The Great' has received. "A BIG CONGRATULA-

TIONS TO SAIYAARA AND TO TANVI THE GREAT. My relationship with Yashraj films is very



very old, deep and like family! So I wish #AdiChopra @mohitsuri @ahaanpanday @aneetpadda_ for this immense success!" the actor wrote in the post.

Further in the post, the actor-filmmaker heaped words of praise for his co-star, Shubhangi Dutt. "Shubhangi played the role of Tanvi in her first film so brilliantly and proved that she has come to the industry for a long run," Kher continued.

'War 2' trailer out: Hrithik Roshan, Jr NTR lock horns over patriotism

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The much-awaited trailer of Yash Raj Films' action thriller War 2, starring Hrithik Roshan, Jr NTR, and Kiara Advani, was unveiled on Friday, promising an action-packed cinematic experience.

The sequel to the 2019 blockbuster 'War' has been generating significant buzz since its teaser release earlier this year. The newly launched trailer, clocking in at two minutes and



thirty-five seconds, offers glimpses of high-octane action sequences and intense performances by the lead trio.

The trailer appears to be a perfect mix of action, emo-

tion and romance. The two-minute and thirty-five-second trailer begins with a heartfelt monologue from Hrithik Roshan, narrating his decision to live his life as a "nameless, faceless shadow" to protect the nation.

It was immediately followed by Jr NTR's narration in which he strives to "fight the battles of the nation which no one else can", signifying his true love for the nation.

REVIEW: SAIYAARA ★★★★★

SAIYAARA



PRAVEEN NAGDA

In the age of GenZ and social media, where things hook up and cook up via swipes - whether left or right - which this reflects in the contemporary cinema too, Saiyaara is a super-refreshing experience

that stirs the chords in your hearts, deeply touching your souls. An intense romance, emotions that you will relate to profoundly, the power of love that not only transforms a human being but also helps heal a severe medical condition - everything packed into a fully engaging two-and-a-half-hour drama can bring tears to many at many times in the film.

Saiyaara, directed by Mohit Suri and written by Sankalp Sadanah and Rohan Shankar, stands out as a beautiful romantic drama in recent times. Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda bring excellent

screen chemistry, making the film a close-to-the-heart affair. Krish Kapoor (Ahaan) and Vaani Batra (Aneet), while dealing with their own struggles - professional and personal - end up bringing a transformative moment for each other in a musical, poetic, and emotionally powerful storytelling.

Krish, a struggling musician, composer, and the lead singer of the band Josh, and Vaani, a writer, journalist, and poet nursing a heartache, meet strangely on the very first day of Vaani joining the media company, where the hot-tempered Krish creates a ruckus for getting a poor review of his work not being acknowledged. Krish had a bad past where

his father, Ashok Kapoor (Varun Badola), turned alcoholic after his mother's death and abandoned him, leading to the accumulation of hate and anger towards his father, creating a toxic personality in him. On the other hand, Vaani is left stranded by her love, Mahesh Iyer (Shaun Grover), on the very day of her wedding, who marries the daughter of his company's owner like a business deal.

Vaani is developing Alzheimer's, and that comes as a shock to the whole family. And Krish stands by his love. Symptoms like the loss of memory, violent episodes, and old memories mixing up with current events are dealt with extremely well in the screen-

play and the dialogue. Vaani's diary, with its constant presence, plays an important role in the story right from her first ever introduction with Krish and till the climax.

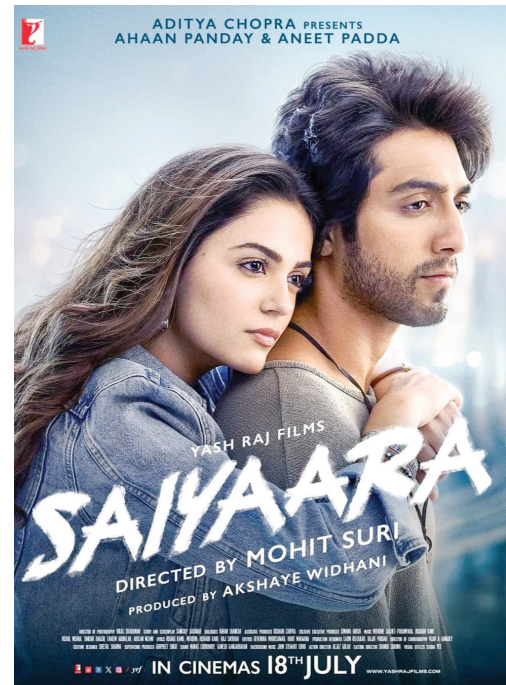
One of the fond memories of the film is the line 'mere paas abhi bhi kuch pal hai' that is often narrated in the film by Krish while holding Vaani's hand, and not letting her go, comes back in the climax as Vaani's words, in their reunion.

The music is soul-stirring throughout the film, and the songs connect you with the story in a pretty poetic manner. Irrespective of the issues Krish and Vaani are facing in their individual lives, the flame of love kept burning high, and

the passion remained unshattered. One sacrifices her love for her career, and the other sacrifices his career for his love, but as the destiny had it - they unite forever. Even if their sacrifices kept them away from each other for some time, their profound love for each other found a way to reunite them.

Any love story with a happy ending is always more lovable than a tragic ending one. It's a film that is going to be a compassionate watch for every adult - whether in their 20s, 30s, or 60s, for that matter.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals



“46 YEARS OF IVF: HOW SCIENCE TURNED HOPE INTO PARENTHOOD”



DR. SHOBHA GUPTA

It was on July 25, 1978, that the world welcomed Louise Brown, the first baby born through In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), marking a turning point in reproductive medicine. In the 46 years since, IVF has evolved from an experimental procedure into a highly sophisticated and successful fertility treatment that has given hope to millions of couples around the globe. As a fertility specialist, I have personally witnessed this transformation, both in terms of technology and so-

cial acceptance. What began as a single, groundbreaking birth is now a global phenomenon — with over 12 million IVF babies born worldwide said Dr. Shobha Gupta. “IVF is no longer the last resort — today, it’s a proactive option for many couples, single parents, and LGBTQ+ individuals wanting to build families,” says Dr. Shobha Gupta.

FROM TRIAL-AND-ERROR TO PRECISION SCIENCE
In the early years, IVF was a fragile process. Success rates hovered around 5-10%, and procedures were costly, emotionally draining, and poorly understood. But thanks to decades of research and innovation, we now have state-of-the-art techniques that have dramatically improved success rates. Today’s IVF labs are equipped with AI-assisted



embryo selection, time-lapse incubators, PGT (Preimplantation Genetic Testing), and laser-assisted hatching — technologies that weren’t even dreamt of in the late 70s. “Back then, the focus was just fertilization. Today, we focus on embryo quality, genetic health, and uterine receptivity. It’s a much more holistic and personalized approach now,” explains Dr. Gupta.

IVF FOR EVERYONE — A SHIFT IN MINDSET

IVF has also become more inclusive. Initially, it was offered mainly to heterosexual couples facing infertility. Now, it is a valid and celebrated route to parenthood for single women, older women, cancer survivors, and same-sex couples.

The social stigma around IVF has also diminished considerably. Thanks to awareness campaigns and celebrities sharing their IVF journeys, the conversation has shifted from whispered worries to public celebration. “We see couples now openly discussing their IVF journey on social media. This openness is powerful — it helps normalize fertility struggles and creates community support,” Dr. Shobha Gupta notes.

PRESERVING FERTILITY: EGG FREEZING & MORE
One of the biggest revolutions in assisted reproduction has been the ability to preserve fertility. With egg freezing becoming increasingly accessible, more women are choosing to delay childbearing for personal or professional reasons without sacrificing their chances of motherhood.

For women in their 30s who aren’t ready for motherhood yet, egg freezing is a smart and empowering option. It puts the biological clock on pause.

CHALLENGES REMAIN
Despite the progress, IVF still comes with its share of challenges — cost being the most significant in many countries, including India. Moreover, emotional stress, repeated failures, and lack of insurance coverage remain barriers. “We need more government support and insurance reforms to make IVF affordable and accessible to all. Fertility is a health issue, not a luxury,” urges Dr. Gupta.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE FUTURE OF IVF
What does the next decade hold? Experts believe that non-invasive embryo testing, stem-cell-derived gametes, and even uterine

organoids could further enhance IVF outcomes. With AI and genomics playing a bigger role, the future of IVF looks even more promising. IVF has come a long way — from a last resort to a leading choice. As we celebrate 46 years since Louise Brown’s birth, we also celebrate millions of families created, hearts healed, and dreams fulfilled. With science on our side and empathy at the center, the IVF journey continues to inspire hope — one baby at a time. “We’re heading toward a future where IVF will be faster, more successful, and emotionally less taxing. I dream of a time when no couple has to give up on their dream of parenthood,” Dr. Shobha Gupta concludes.

The author is Medical Director, IVF Expert from Mother’s Lap IVF Centre and Founder Mumma’s Blessing IVF and Birthing Paradise in Vrindavan

July is sleep awareness month: How menopausal women can reclaim rest



TAMANNA SINGH

Sleep is the most healing gift we can give our body — but for many menopausal women, it becomes one of the hardest things to achieve. As we observe Sleep Awareness Month this July, it’s time to address a silent epidemic: sleep disturbances during menopause. From difficulty falling asleep to waking up drenched in sweat, this phase can turn nights into battlegrounds for rest. Yet, far too often, women are left navigating it alone, or worse — offered only sleeping pills as a temporary band-aid. So, what’s really happening behind the scenes? Menopause is a hormonal rollercoaster. The decline in estrogen and progesterone — hormones that help regulate body temperature, mood, and our natural sleep-wake cycle — disrupts the body’s internal balance. Add to this the stress of midlife transitions, emotional shifts, hot flashes, and anxiety, and it becomes clear why nearly 60% of women in midlife report chronic sleep issues.

But sleep during menopause isn’t just about comfort. It’s critical for hormonal balance, mood stability, bone health, cognitive clarity, and immune function. Chronic sleep deprivation can accelerate aging, increase the risk of weight gain and cardiovascular issues, and even affect mental health. The good news? There are natural, time-tested ways to restore restful sleep — and Ayurveda offers powerful tools. At Menoveda, we’ve seen the impact of adaptogenic

Then there’s Jatamansi, a potent nervine that helps relax the body and mind, traditionally used in Ayurveda for insomnia and emotional distress. Tagara (Indian Valerian) has sedative properties that help ease the body into sleep naturally, without the grogginess associated with synthetic sleep aids. Shankhpushpi, known for enhancing cognitive function, also supports a calm mental state and promotes uninterrupted rest. These herbs are thought-

right environment. Sleeping in a cool, dark room, following a regular bedtime routine, limiting caffeine and screen time in the evenings, and incorporating simple practices like journaling or deep breathing can make a tangible difference. Even 15 minutes of gentle yoga or a warm herbal tea before bed can signal the body that it’s time to rest. Menopause doesn’t have to mean surrendering to sleeplessness. With awareness, the right support, and



herbs in helping women regain rest. Take Ashwagandha, for instance — a renowned adaptogen that calms the nervous system, regulates cortisol (the stress hormone), and promotes deeper sleep. Brahmi is another hero herb — it supports mental clarity while gently soothing the mind, reducing anxiety that often strikes at bedtime.

fully combined in our formulation, Akira, designed to support emotional, mental, and sleep health during the menopause transition. Women using Akira have reported not just better sleep, but reduced anxiety, improved focus, and a general sense of calm — all of which are deeply interconnected. Beyond herbs, reclaiming rest also means creating the

a commitment to self-care, sleep can once again become a nourishing, nightly ritual. After all, in this new chapter of life, women don’t just deserve rest — they’ve earned it. *The author is Certified Menopause Coach & Co-founder of MENOVEDA, India’s 1st menopause only brand, easing menopause transition through Ayurveda.*

World IVF Day: Can business innovation make IVF more accessible?



ABHISHEK AGGRAWAL

The science behind IVF has never been stronger. From embryo selection aided by artificial intelligence to precision-driven protocols, fertility care is becoming more advanced and data-informed than ever before. Yet for millions, access to that care remains distant. The World Health Organization reports that one in six people globally face infertility, and in India, 10 to 15 percent of couples are affected. But fewer than one percent receive advanced treatment. The problem is not science. It is access. And solving that requires rethinking how fertility care is structured, supported, and delivered.

RETHINKING THE COST BARRIER
For many, the biggest hurdle to IVF is financial. A single cycle can cost between Rs 1.2 and Rs 2.5 lakh, and more than 80 percent of patients in India pay entirely out of pocket. This financial burden often leads to delays in starting treatment, which can reduce the overall chances of success.

What is needed now are scalable solutions that ease this pressure. Tier-wise pricing models, transparent package structures, and zero-interest EMI options are gaining traction. Some clinics report that nearly 20 percent of patients now choose EMI plans. But affordability cannot rely on instalments alone. Insurance coverage must evolve to include fertility treatment as part of essential reproductive care. Without that, financial access will remain one of the biggest barriers to timely intervention.

TAKING CARE CLOSER TO PEOPLE
Fertility services have traditionally been concentrated in large metro cities, limiting access for much of the population that lives outside them. This urban concentration often results in delayed diagnosis and lower success rates. To change this, fertility infrastructure must expand into tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Full-service clinics, local diagnostic camps, and awareness initiatives can bring timely care closer to where people live. While some progress is underway, sustained investment will be key to making this reach reliable and equitable.

Fertility treatment can be overwhelming. It involves frequent appointments, hormonal medications, and emotional highs and lows that can stretch over months. Many patients drop out not because of medical failure, but because the process becomes too exhausting to continue. Digital tools can play a critical role in easing this journey. App-based systems that offer automatic reminders, medication trackers, cycle updates, and ovulation monitoring can help patients stay informed and on track. Nudges, simplified communication, and continuous engagement help reduce the burden of coordination and keep people from falling through the cracks.

But the real power of these tools lies in how they make patients feel. In a process where stress often affects outcomes, feeling supported at every step can make all the difference. The goal is not just efficiency, but care that is more human, consistent, and reassuring. Despite all the advancements, awareness is still limited, and stigma, particularly among men, continues to delay care-seeking. These gaps are precisely why business innovation must remain central to the evolution of fertility care. Because innovation is not just about new systems or technologies. It is about re-

imagining care in a way that is more accessible, more compassionate, and more complete.

MOVING FROM PROTOCOL TO PERSONALISATION
Fertility care is steadily moving beyond one-size-fits-all protocols. Most clinics now begin with comprehensive diagnostic workups that include hormonal profiles and ultrasound assessments. In many cases, treatment plans are becoming more tailored based on age, ovarian reserve, medical history, and response to previous cycles. For selected patients, tools like preimplantation genetic testing (PGT) are being used to improve embryo selection and reduce the risk of failure.

REDEFINING WHAT ACCESS REALLY MEANS
Access is not only about cost or geography. It is also about timing, clarity, and emotional readiness. Making IVF more accessible will depend on how care is designed, how it is communicated, and how patients are supported throughout. Medical science is already advanced. To match that progress, the systems around it must now evolve with equal intent. That is how access can shift from an aspiration to a reality.

The author is CEO, Birla Fertility & IVF

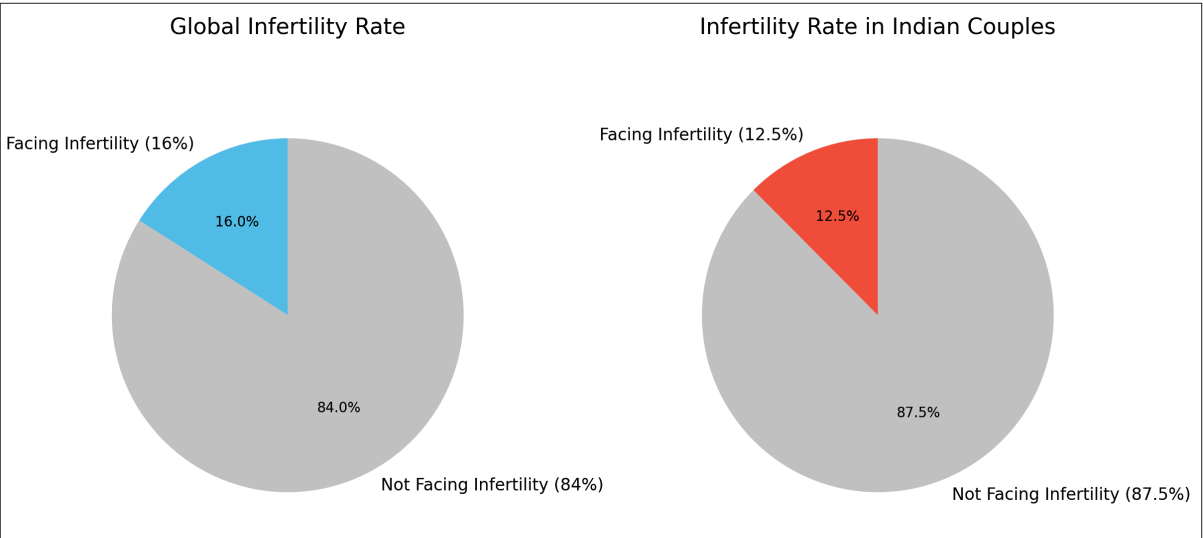
QUOTE OF THE DAY

World IVF Day serves as a profound occasion to reflect on the transformative power of reproductive science, especially in a country like India where conversations around infertility were long silenced by stigma and social taboo. At Jindal IVF, this day is more than a celebration of science. It is a tribute to the many Indian families who dared to hope despite societal resistance. It reminds us that every positive pregnancy test is not just a medical success but the beginning of a deeply personal journey. Since delivering North India’s first IVF baby in 1996, we have grown to become a national benchmark in fertility care. Our work has spanned over 15,000 IVF cycles, 20,000 IUI procedures and 12,000 successful deliveries.



What defines this progress is not just its volume but its purpose and direction. We have committed ourselves to

expanding access to advanced genetic screening, upholding the highest ethical standards and reaching couples in geographies where fertility care was once unimaginable. On this day, we honour both the courage of aspiring parents and the dedication of every member of our team who works tirelessly to make parenthood possible. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the many families who have trusted us with their most intimate hopes. Their unwavering faith continues to inspire our mission of compassionate, inclusive and evidence-based fertility care across India.” — Dr Sheetal Jindal-MBBS, MD OBG, EPHM (IIM Kolkata) Senior consultant and medical director, Director Medical Genetics program, Jindal Icf Chandigarh.



Here are the pie charts illustrating infertility prevalence:
• Left Chart (Global): 16% of the global population faces infertility.
• Right Chart (India): Approximately 12.5% of Indian couples are affected.
These visuals highlight the significant portion of the population impacted, emphasizing the need for broader access to fertility care.

WHEN DO GOOD INTENTIONS LEAD TO GOOD RESULTS?



B.K. SHEILU

Moral teachings tell us that the legitimacy of any action is decided by the intention behind it. That is why when someone acts with sincere goodwill, but the outcome turns out badly, we tend to forgive or even honour that effort. Many religious traditions emphasise pure intention as essential to the ethical or spiritual legitimacy of an action. Even in law, intent often determines whether an act is criminal.

Actions performed with intentions such as promoting well-being, justice, or honesty, are seen as morally right. They are considered superior to kindly acts that are done with other motives. For example, donating to charity out of genuine concern for others is more ethical than doing so for personal gain or to impress others.

Actually, intentions reflect our state of mind, including our values, beliefs, and attitudes. They indicate whether we have acted out of compassion, duty, self-interest, or any other motive.

However, having good intentions is not enough. We may have noble intentions but never act on them — or act too late. For example, someone might intend to help the poor but never actually do anything concrete. We can also act on good

intentions without understanding the full context or consequences. For example, giving money to a beggar on the street might feel generous, but if that money is spent on buying and consuming liquor, which harms the beggar's health and leads to criminal behaviour, we contribute to doing more harm than good.

Actions, no matter how well-intentioned, can have unfortunate consequences if they are naive, poorly executed, and are actually unwanted but are still carried out because of overzealousness.

The phrase "The road to hell is paved with good intentions" is a warning about how good intentions, without thoughtful action or awareness of the outcome, can lead to damaging results. The effects of our actions and the responsibility



The effects of our actions are sometimes more important than the intention behind them.

ity taken for them are sometimes more important than the intention behind them.

This is what the law of karma teaches us. Karma refers to the principle of cause and effect. Most of us know, even if we do not remember it all the time, that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, and that we reap what we sow. Positive actions generate good karma, while negative actions result in bad karma. Even a good deed done with a selfish motive may not generate good karma. Conversely, a lofty motive may end up causing suffering if it is misguided.

Sometimes we assume what is good for others, based on our own perspective. With a sense of superior intelligence or moral righteousness, we set about 'helping' people, believing that we are doing them a world of good, even as the

hapless victims of our attentions pray for a quick end to our unwise exertions. Misplaced charity can go a step further, when good intentions are cited to justify actions that end up causing harm. "I was just trying to help" becomes a convenient excuse to avoid accountability.

The law of karma emphasises personal responsibility. Each individual is responsible for their actions and the consequences that arise from them. To be ultimately beneficial, good intentions must be accompanied by wisdom, humility, critical thinking, and a willingness to be accountable. Without all of these, they can cause real damage — even if they were meant to do good.

B.K. Sheilu is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Mount Abu, Rajasthan.

What is karma?



ANTHONY STRANO

Karma is the silent and invisible thread of justice running through life. Everyone weaves their own thread over many lives and in interactions with many others. The tapestry of life is made up of the karmic interactions of the eternal actors on this eternal stage of action.

WHAT CREATES NEGATIVE KARMA?

Lack of respect for others, but especially the misuse of something, like money, or the senses, incurs karmic debts.

There are five ways through which negative karma is created: mind, body, relationships, money, and time.

MIND

When caught in the consciousness of "I", "my", "mine", or in conflict with others, the mind creates wasteful and negative thoughts that drain the soul of strength, peace and happiness.

BODY

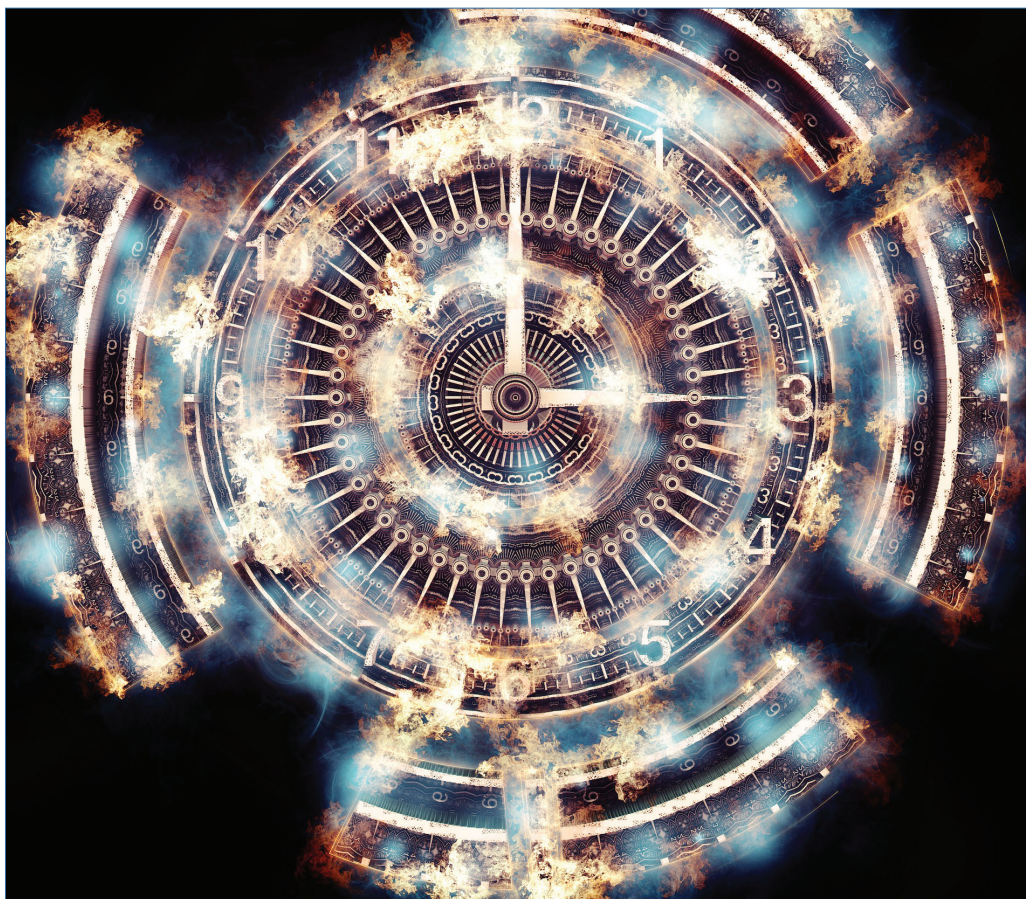
Misuse of the senses and any organ of the body eventually leads to illnesses and various types of disease. Eating the wrong food, smoking, drinking, all prove very detrimental to health.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the cause of both our highest happiness and our deepest sorrow. However, if the soul misuses others because of selfish desires and motives, then it eventually comes into a state of existence where it feels empty, lonely, dissatisfied. It will not be able to relate to others and, when it does, there will always be some conflict or dissatisfaction. Also, when a person lacks self-respect and a sense of identity, it attaches itself to others, believing that other people will fulfil them. So the slogan we hear nowadays is, "I want, I want, I want" and "I need, I need, I need." This is the cry of personal emptiness.

MONEY

In itself there is nothing wrong with money, but when people become attached to it, making it the goal of their lives, then problems begin. Self-respect and a sense of purpose in life cannot come from anything external; it is only possible with a consciousness based on spiritual values and criteria. Money is misused not only on a personal level, but



Time constantly offers us opportunities to create good karma, but they are wasted when we procrastinate.

countries also use money negatively. When so many billions are used to buy, invent, or use weapons of war, for example, what kind of karma can that create? Most countries produce much more than for mere defensive purposes because, as with individuals, the condition of fear

creates great insecurities which people and countries try to solve in various materialistic ways; inevitably, a materialistic solution is short-term and leaves a void.

TIME

Time is precious. It is said, never leave for tomorrow what you can

do today. People who waste time and put things off do not value the opportunity that time is constantly offering so that improvement and development can be made for the self. The constant use of such words as "tomorrow", "perhaps", "maybe", "in the next life", all indicate the re-

luctance of a person to face himself and their responsibilities.

One thing that one can never get back is time that has passed. The person who understands the power of the "now" (the present) has the ability to change any negative consequences of the past and, with confidence and faith, sees a good future.

WHAT CREATES GOOD KARMA?

When a person is selfless - free of egocentric desires and ambitions - he is able to create good karma. Selfless action is the basis of personal peace and happiness and good relationships with others.

A person who is spiritually independent - free of materialistic needs and values - is also full of love and respect for the self and others. A soul who is not dependent on the praise or appreciation of what is done, finds his happiness and contentment come from the simple fact that an action is being done in the right way at the right time. A closeness to God, spiritual values and personal experience shows such a soul what "the right" is.

WHERE IS KARMA RECORDED?

Our accounts, our debts, are recorded in the soul. These recordings then determine where and to whom we are born in every life, what talents we are born with, what handicaps we

have, either emotional, mental or physical. This process, of balancing our accounts with others, works automatically, with no interference or direction from God.

HOW IS NEGATIVE KARMA REMOVED?

Negative karma is cancelled when a soul performs pure action, that is, selfless action. However, at this period in time such selfless action is just about impossible without the co-operation of God. When the soul works with God as an instrument in spiritual service, then such actions are called selfless. When we have yoga with God, the Supreme Soul, then we experience Him as the absolute Purifier, who through His power burns away the many many layers of negative accounts that are stored in the 'sanskars'. Divine energy directly from the Supreme, together with spiritual service of others, removes our karmic debt. Spiritual service of others means to help others find lasting happiness and peace through realising their own spiritual selves and their eternal relationship with the Supreme. This relationship enables souls to claim their imperishable right to God's qualities - peace, truth, purity, love, and happiness.

The late Anthony Strano was an author and Rajyoga teacher with the Brahma Kumaris.

The wonder of spiritual learning



JUDY JOHNSON

Learning is central to the spiritual journey. It is at the heart of my awakening and transformation. What does it mean to be a spiritual learner and how does a learning attitude help me respond well in the world?

Events and media coverage in the world today can push buttons of fear and disheartenment, creating a treadmill of reactions.

As a spiritual learner... I stop and reflect and broaden my awareness. Reflection enables me to discern a positive, life-affirming response rather than reacting out of fear and compulsion.

In a world where the ruling paradigm privileges financial wealth, experts, and extroverts, the power

of personal experience can be marginalised.

As a spiritual learner... inquiry becomes the norm. Together with other learners, I am part of co-creating a culture and systems based on the practice of soul consciousness and humble discovery. This learning community becomes a living model for a society of equity and respect.

In the world today, many think of those who have a different world view than their own as the other. Seeds of fear are planted when we consider the other as a threat to our security. In such a social garden, this attitude makes people shrink away from exposure to differences, not wanting their beliefs to be challenged.

As a spiritual learner... I delight in the rich variety of stories offered by those of diverse cultures and world views. The effect is a blossoming of collective learning, and I am enriched by newness.

In organisations and institutions, learning is dictated by a 'set of deliverables' determined by others. The capacity to self-direct is lost.



Learning is central to the spiritual journey.

As a spiritual learner... curiosity and intuitive wisdom guide me to generate newness. Learning awakens my creative core, and I feel empowered to self-organise.

We live in times where many views diverge about the best path forward. A beautiful world would reflect the highest truth and beauty of humanity.

As a spiritual learner... a genuine desire for positive change lies at the heart of my journey. I understand that a beautiful world is created when there is coherence

between my inner world of values and their expression in my behaviour. Integrity and personal accountability are most important.

Today it is as though time

is the master of all. We run after it and bow down to the pressures created by limited time frames. We are constantly seeking more time. Managing priorities more effectively has NOT freed us.

As a spiritual learner... my awareness expands beyond the frenetic time of worldly thinking to reveal the constant heartbeat of a slow and steady, patient approach to life. I learn to move with dignity, infusing peace into all my actions.

Insecurity can lead to over-planning for the future.

As a spiritual learner... I understand the quality of my energy in this moment creates my future, so I focus on investing high-quality energy in every moment. The future unfolds naturally and beautifully as a result.

An attitude of being a learner, a student of spirituality, frees me from arrogance and infuses me with humility, which takes a lifetime to fully acquire.

Judy Johnson coordinates the activities of Brahma Kumaris meditation centres in Atlantic Canada.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

To see life through the lens of black/white, right/wrong, my way/your way, is to be trapped in polarity. Between polarities, there are subtle threads that tie opposing energies together, helping them blend and integrate. When I see these threads I am able to stand between polarities and become a third way. Today let me be a thread of unity that integrates polarity.

STOKES RETIRES HURT AS ENGLAND REACH 538/7 ON DAY 3 OF 4TH TEST

AGENCIES
MANCHESTER

England ended Day 3 of the Test match at 538/7, with Ben Stokes retiring hurt on 66. The day saw steady progress from the English side, led initially by Joe Root, who scored a commanding 150 before being stumped off Jadeja. Jamie Smith and Liam Dawson added crucial runs, while India made key breakthroughs, including Bumrah dismissing Smith and Siraj cleaning up Woakes. Despite the fall of wickets, England maintained a solid run rate. Stokes' retirement added a twist late in the day, as he appeared to be struggling after a brief flurry of short-ball exchanges.

Meanwhile, England veteran batter Joe Root surpassed former Australian skipper Ricky Ponting to become the second-highest run scorer in Test cricket history, as his partnership with England skipper Ben Stokes helped his side to take a healthy lead over India at the end of second session on day third in the fourth Test against India at Manchester on Friday.

Root and Stokes added 84 off 131 balls at tea; the visitors were at 433/4, leading by 75 runs with Root on 121* and Ben Stokes on 36* unbeaten on the crease.

England started the second session on 332/2, with Pope



England veteran batter Joe Root

ond session on day third in the fourth Test against India at Manchester on Friday.

Root and Stokes added 84 off 131 balls at tea; the visitors were at 433/4, leading by 75 runs with Root on 121* and Ben Stokes on 36* unbeaten on the crease.

England started the second session on 332/2, with Pope

(70*) and Root (63*) unbeaten, trailing by 26 runs.

Washington Sundar was introduced into the attack after Lunch, and immediately delivered two wickets, dismissing Ollie Pope and Harry Brook.

Ben Stokes joined Stokes on the crease. The duo completed 50 runs, standing for

the fifth wicket in the 94th over, and in the same over, the hosts crossed the 400 runs mark. Root slammed his 38th Test hundred after pushing the ball towards fine leg for a four off Anshul Kamboj in the 96th over. This was the 23rd Test hundred for Root in England, the joint-most for anyone in home Tests alongside

BRIEF SCORE

England: 538/7 (Joe Root 121*, Ben Duckett 94; Washington Sundar 2/30) vs **India:** 358 (Sai Sudhar-san 61, Rishabh Pant 58, Ben Stokes 5/72).

Ricky Ponting, Jacques Kallis and Mahela Jayawardene.

He continues to show his love for scoring against India, as he surpassed Steve Smith to slam the most centuries against them in Test cricket. Root now has 12 hundreds against the Men in Blue.

Earlier in the match, a century partnership between Ollie Pope and Joe Root brought England within touching distance of India's first innings score as the Three Lions finished the first session with a score in excess of 300 runs on day three of the fourth Manchester Test on Friday.

At the start of the first session, England was 225/2, with Pope (20*) and Root (11*) unbeaten.

Satwik-Chirag breeze into semis, Unnati bows out of China Open

AGENCIES
CHANGZHOU (CHINA)

Premier Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty booked their spot in the semifinals but rising badminton star Unnati Hooda's dream run ended at the China Open Super 1000 here on Friday.

The reigning Asian Games champions picked a comfortable 21-18, 21-14 win over familiar foes Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi of Malaysia in 40 minutes.

The win improved Satwik-Chirag's head-to-head record against the Malaysians to 7-3. They will take on the world number two pair of Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia in the last four stage.

Hooda, on the other hand, lost to world number 4 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan 16-21, 12-21 in the women's singles quarterfinal that lasted 33 minutes.

The 17-year-old had scripted her biggest career win against 'idol' and two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu.

With Hooda's exit, India's



singles campaign in the tournament came to an end.

In the opening game, Hooda kept pace with Yamaguchi early on but failed to sustain the momentum, with the Japanese star reeling off five consecutive points at one stage to take it 21-16.

Hooda's best run was tak-

ing three points in a row.

The second game followed a similar script. Despite a brief fightback where she won four straight points, Hooda fell behind as Yamaguchi strung together six consecutive points and wrapped up the second game 21-12.

WORLD JUNIOR SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP

Anahat Singh wins bronze

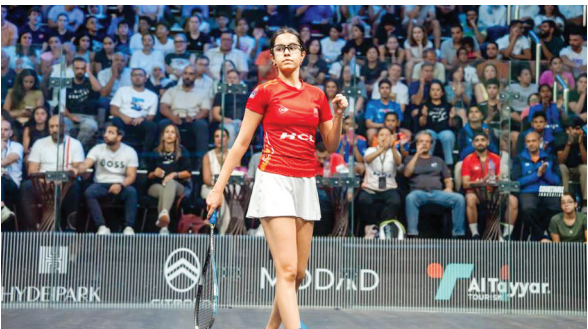
AGENCIES
CAIRO

Anahat Singh clinched her maiden World Junior Squash Championships medal, a bronze, after she lost 0-3 to Egypt's Nadien Elhammamy in straight games in the semifinals of the 2025 edition on Friday in New Cairo.

The 17-year-old Indian was no match for the local player as Anahat lost 6-11, 12-14, 10-12.

Anahat had become the first Indian girl to reach the semifinals since Dipika Pallikal in 2010, and would have become only the second Indian to reach the final in the women's individual category — Joshna Chinappa reached the summit clash in 2005 — had she beaten Elhammamy.

In the quarterfinals, Anahat beat Egypt's Malika



Elkaraksy 11-6, 13-11, 11-5. "I'm really, really happy right now.

The World Juniors is something really special to me, but I'd lost in the quarters for three years in a row and I'm really glad I was able to reach the semi-finals this time. Egyptians are dominating right now, and even though [Elkaraksy] is still really young, she's such a good player," she said after the match. Earlier in the month, Anahat won the gold medal in the

Girls Under-19 category at the Asian Junior Individual Championships. In June, she partnered with Joshna to clinch gold in the women's doubles at the Asian Squash Doubles Championships.

In May, the teenager also made her debut at the senior World Championships where she beat USA's Marina Stefanoni in the first round before bowing out in the second round with a loss against Egypt's Fayrouz Aboelkheir.

Indian men's hockey team set to tour Australia for four-match series

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Indian men's hockey team is set to tour Australia in August for a four-match series, set to be held at the Perth Hockey Stadium from August 15 to 21. The series promises to be a highly competitive contest, featuring eighth-ranked India taking on sixth-ranked Australia. The matches will be played on August 15, 16, 19, and 21.

The two sides recently faced each other in the FIH Pro League 2024-25 in Europe, where Australia edged India 3-2 in both legs. However, India had earlier scripted a memorable 3-2 victory over the Kookaburras at the 2024 Paris Olympics -- their first Olympic win over Australia since the 1972 Munich Games. While recent encounters have been closely fought, Australia have historically held the



edge in the rivalry, winning 35 of the 51 matches played between the two teams since 2013. India have won nine times, with seven matches ending in draws.

The series will serve as important preparation for India ahead of the Hero Asia Cup 2025, set to be held in Rajgir, Bihar, from August 29 to September 7. The tournament offers a direct qualification spot for the FIH Hockey Men's World Cup 2026, making the Australia tour a key milestone in India's buildup.

Speaking on the tour, Indian men's hockey team chief coach Craig Fulton said, as quoted from a press release by Hockey India, "This tour comes at a crucial time for us, just ahead of the Hero Asia Cup in Bihar. While these are technically friendly matches, they form a very important part of our preparation phase. Playing against a team like Australia will test us in all aspects -- both on the ball and off it -- and that is exactly what we need to sharpen up before a major tournament."

Koneru Humpy vs Divya Deshmukh: First all-Indian final at FIDE Women's Chess World Cup

AGENCIES
BATUMI (GEORGIA):

In a first for Indian chess, the FIDE Women's World Cup will have a winner from the country with Koneru Humpy and Divya Deshmukh set to fight it out in what could be anybody's game in the grand finale here on Saturday. It's the first in the event's history that two Indians are facing each other in the final. Both Humpy and Deshmukh have qualified for the Women's candidates' tournament next year after reaching the final here. On pure experience of playing big games, Humpy goes in the final as the favourite against compatriot Deshmukh.

Humpy held her nerves to score a come-from-behind victory in the semifinals over Tingjie Lei of China in the tie-breaker on Thursday, while



Deshmukh defeated former world champion Zhongyi Tan -- also of China -- in the second game of the last-four stage match.

Grandmaster Humpy, 38, was the winner of the world women's rapid tournament and also tied for first at the women's grand prix in recent times and she has proved yet again that age is just a number. Her grit and determina-

tion has not faded one bit in the past many years.

"It's one of the happiest moments for chess fans because now the title will go to India for sure. But of course, as a player, tomorrow will be quite a tough game as well -- Divya has played tremendously well in this whole tournament," Humpy told FIDE website.

At half the age of Humpy, International Master

Deshmukh has already stunned as many as three players ranked in top ten in the event. Her first victim was second seed Jiner Zhu of China, before ousting D Harika.

The 19-year-old Nagpur-based Deshmukh then beat former women's world champion Zhongyi Tan of China in the semifinals.

"I just need some sleep and some food, these days have been so anxious for me," Deshmukh said after entering the final.

"I think I could have played much better. I was winning at a certain point and then it got complicated. I think I messed up in the middle-game and that I should have had a much smoother win," she said about her semifinal match.

"She put up such a great fight at a certain point. I was

just doubting if it was just a draw -- I think I got lucky in the end."

Humpy was stretched to the tiebreaker in the pre quarter-finals by former world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk of Switzerland and she followed it up with a clinical performance against Yuxin Song.

Her best, thus far, was reserved for the semifinals as she outclassed top seed Tingjie Lei of China in the five minutes' games after the players had reached a 3-3 deadlock.

"I played a bit shaky in the rapid, but she also gave a very good fight. It could have gone either way," Humpy said about her semifinal opponent.

"It was a very tough match. Initially, I played quite badly with the Black pieces and she always had the advantage.

AQUATICS



Xanthea Pennisi of Australia competes in the women's 20m platform semifinal at the World Aquatics Championships, in Singapore. Agencies

Ridhima ends long title drought by winning 10th leg of WPGT

AGENCIES
KOLAR

Ridhima Dilawari, who has not won since 2022, produced a round with seven birdies to take a four-shot lead into the final round of the 10th leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Thursday.

It was a roller coaster of a ride for her with seven birdies, three bogeys and a double bogey in a card of 2-under 70.

Lying third after the first round, Ridhima was three under through the first five holes, but she gave away four shots over the next four holes with back-to-back

bogeys on the sixth and the seventh and a double bogey on the ninth for a 1-over 37.

Birdies on the 10th and the 12th were followed by a bogey on the 13th. Birdies on the 14th and the 16th ensured a solid 2-under round as she finished with pars on the last two holes.

Overnight leader Neha



Tripathi (69-77) slipped in the second round with one birdie, four bogeys and a double bogey, while Amandeep Drall made a big move up with a second straight round of 73.

Amandeep had four birdies, three of which came between the 10th and the 13th, besides three bogeys and a

double bogey. Amandeep and Neha were tied second at 2-over 146.

Amateur Saanvi Somu carded one of the three under par rounds with a 71 that had four birdies against three bogeys.

Oviya Reddi (73) and Seher Atwal (75) were tied fifth at 4-over 148.

Vani Kapoor made a big improvement on her first round score with a 2-under 70 that took her to tied-seventh place alongside Heena Kang (72), Gauri Karhade (73) and Durga Nittur (79) as they completed the top-10 at 5-over 149.

A total of 27 players made the cut for the final round.