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OPPOSITION PROTEST
DISRUPTS BOTH HOUSES,
ADJOURNED TILL AUGUST 11



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FAMINE KILLS NEARLY 200 IN
GAZA AMID 'APOCALYPTIC'
BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL



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VIRAT GEARING UP
FOR AUSTRALIA
ODIs?

MODI-PUTIN CALL PAVES WAY FOR ANNUAL SUMMIT

Prime Minister Modi spoke with President Putin on Friday, inviting him to India for the Annual Bilateral Summit.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said he had held a detailed telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin, inviting him to India later this year for the 23rd Annual Bilateral Summit.

"Had a very good and detailed conversation with my friend President Putin. I thanked him for sharing the latest developments on Ukraine. We also reviewed the progress in our bilateral agenda, and reaffirmed our commitment to further deepen the India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership," Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin. ANI

said in a post on X, adding he looked forward to host-

ing the Russian leader. The External Affairs Min-

istry said Putin briefed Modi on the latest developments in Ukraine during the call. The leaders also reviewed bilateral cooperation, with both reaffirming their commitment to strengthening the strategic relationship.

The invitation comes amid strained ties with the West over India's continued purchase of Russian oil, which recently prompted tariffs on Indian goods. The call followed Putin's meeting on Thursday with India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval at the Kremlin.

Modi last visited Russia in 2024, when both leaders lauded the "time-tested" partnership built on trust, mutual understanding, and strategic convergence.

Israel approves Gaza city occupation plan

TDG NETWORK
TEL AVIV

Israel's security cabinet has approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan for the military occupation of Gaza City, marking a significant escalation in the ongoing war on the Palestinian territory.

Netanyahu's office announced early on Friday that the Israel Defence Forces will prepare to "take control" of the northern city while providing humanitarian aid to civilians outside combat zones. The plan still requires approval from the full cabinet, which may not meet until Sunday.

The move is expected to force the displacement of tens of thousands of Gaza City residents, many already enduring famine conditions as Israel restricts humanitarian aid. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned the plan as "wrong", warn-



Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu. ANI

HAMAS OFFERS 'COMPREHENSIVE DEAL' FOR ISRAELI CAPTIVE RELEASE

The Palestinian group said it is ready, via Egyptian and Qatari mediation, to exchange all Israeli prisoners for a ceasefire and full troop withdrawal from Gaza. In a Telegram statement, Hamas warned that occupying Gaza City "will cost [Israel] a heavy price and will not be a picnic", vowing there would be no surrender. "Netanyahu's plans and illusions will fail," it added.

ing it would bring "more bloodshed" and hinder hostage release efforts.

According to Israeli media reports cited by Axios

journalist Barak Ravid, the operation will involve evacuating all Palestinian civilians from Gaza City to central camps by 7 October,

followed by a siege and a ground offensive against remaining Hamas fighters. Netanyahu told Fox News that Israel does not intend to govern Gaza permanently but seeks a security perimeter, transferring control to a third party.

Hamas accused Netanyahu of abandoning negotiations and prioritising personal and ideological goals, while opposition leader Yair Lapid warned the plan would be a "disaster" costing lives, money, and political stability.

The decision comes amid reports that over 61,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 2023. A ground offensive could further impede aid deliveries to the famine-stricken enclave, where nearly 200 people have died from starvation. "There is no Gaza left," resident Maysaa al-Heila said while reacting to news of the planned takeover.

INDIA bloc unites against 'vote theft', targets EC over Bihar voter roll purge

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Amid growing concerns over the unity of opposition parties, the INDIA bloc on Thursday evening showcased its strength as leaders met to discuss the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls in Bihar, alleged vote theft during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, and the upcoming vice-presidential election in a small group session.

The meeting took place at the new residence of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, at 5, Sunehri Bagh, and was attended by at least 50 leaders from 25 parties.

Among those present were Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, accompanied by his wife Dimple Yadav and uncle Ram Gopal Yadav; DMK leaders Kanimozhi and Tiruchi Siva; MNM chief Kamal Haasan; RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav; NCP-SP chief Sharad Pawar along with Supriya Sule; Shiv Sena (UBT) chief



Lok Sabha LoP and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi. ANI

Uddhav Thackeray with his wife Rashmi and son Aaditya Thackeray; and Trinamool Congress leaders Abhishek Banerjee and Derek O'Brien, among others.

According to party leaders, Rahul Gandhi gave a presentation to the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc leaders on the alleged vote theft during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Sources said all opposition leaders present took the matter seriously and resolved to raise it both inside and outside Parliament.

Gandhi also outlined how the SIR exercise being conducted by the Election

Commission aims to remove lakhs of eligible voters from the rolls. Congress leaders explained that he will launch the 'Matdata Adhikar Yatra' on August 17, which will continue for 15 days. The yatra will begin from Sasaram and cover at least 21 districts of Bihar, with several Mahagathbandhan allies expected to join.

The yatra aims to highlight how voting rights of backward classes, Dalits, and minorities are allegedly being targeted ahead of crucial polls, and how misinformation about the SIR exercise is being spread. Leaders agreed that the SIR exercise is being conducted just before the assembly elections to remove lakhs of voters in a move that would benefit the BJP.

It was also decided to consistently question the functioning of the Election Commission and make the issue a central part of the opposition's campaign. In a separate discussion

P3

Shah hits out at opposition over SIR, Operation Sindoor

TDG NETWORK
SITAMARHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a blistering attack on the Opposition, accusing the Congress party and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav's camp of "opposing" the government's anti-terror initiative, Operation Sindoor, as well as the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls in Bihar.

Addressing a rally in Sitamarhi, Bihar, Shah alleged



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addresses the gathering during a public meeting, in Sitamarhi on Friday. ANI

targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. He accused the Opposition of shielding "Bangladeshis who come

should stop this vote bank politics," he said, adding that the NDA would win the upcoming Bihar polls

SHAH'S SECURITY & DEVELOPMENT ATTACK

- Accuses Congress, RJD of "opposing" Operation Sindoor.
- Says NDA will not compromise on national security.
- Questions Tejashwi Yadav's record in developing Mithilanchal.
- Alleges past RJD rule marked by "hooliganism, gangs, and ransom."

with a clear majority.

Turning to Operation Sindoor, Shah questioned the Opposition's stance in Parliament. "Congress party and Lalu, Lalu and

company are opposing Operation Sindoor. Should we not reply to terrorists? No one has the right to mess with the security of the nation." P3

Govt withdraws Income-Tax Bill, new draft on Monday

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday withdrew the Income-Tax Bill, 2025, from the Lok Sabha, following recommendations from a 31-member Select Committee chaired by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Baijayant Panda. The House approved the withdrawal amid protests from Opposition members.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. ANI

A revised version, incorporating most of the panel's 566 recommendations, will be tabled on Monday, 11 Au-

P3

EC to Rahul: Put it in writing or retract your claims

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Friday hit back at Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over his allegations of vote theft, asking him to either sign a declaration or apologise to the nation.

The fresh jibe from the poll panel came after Rahul Gandhi continued his attack on the Election Commission, stating that he had taken an



oath inside Parliament on the Constitution, and yet the Commission was asking him to take an oath on the alleged vote theft.

Election Commission sources said it appeared that,

as in the past, Rahul Gandhi would submit his response on the Special Intensive Revision only after the Bihar Assembly polls.

Coming down heavily on the Congress leader, a source said, "If Rahul Gandhi believes in his analysis and stands by his allegations against the ECI, he should have no problem in signing the declaration. If he does not sign it, it would mean he does not believe in his own

P3

Tariffs & Nobel: Ex-diplomat links Trump's twin obsessions

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

After the United States imposed a 50% tariff on Indian goods—citing national security and foreign policy concerns, particularly India's ongoing imports of Russian oil—former Indian diplomat Rakesh Sood said that US President Donald Trump "loves tariffs" and the Nobel Peace Prize, "hinting that India's lack of recognition on the latter might be a reason for the former.

Speaking to ANI on Friday, Sood said, "There are two things that President Trump loves—one is tariffs,

and the second is the Nobel Peace Prize. He will do anything to get to the bottom of these two. He has repeatedly said how he stopped the war between India and Pakistan and prevented a nuclear war. We've not given him comfort on the Nobel, so I guess we are facing the tariffs. We'll see how we deal with it."

Trump's fondness for tariffs is evident in his protectionist trade policies. He believes tariffs are an effective tool to negotiate better trade deals and protect American industries. During his presidency, Trump imposed significant tariffs on various countries, including India,



President of the United States of America, Donald Trump.

GLOBAL SOUTH CONNECT

- Modi, Lula discuss trade & multilateralism
- Brazil, India eye deeper integration
- China calls US tariffs an "abuse"

citing national security and foreign policy concerns.

Trump has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize

multiple times. In 2024, he was nominated by Republican leader Buddy Carter for his efforts in brokering a ceasefire between Israel and Iran. Pakistan also nominated him for his alleged role in establishing peace between India and Pakistan during a cross-border crisis.

Trump has publicly expressed his desire for the Nobel Peace Prize, often comparing himself to past winners such as Barack Obama. He has repeatedly claimed credit for brokering peace deals, including the Abraham Accords, which normalised relations between Israel and several



"We've not given him comfort on the Nobel, so I guess we are facing the tariffs."

– Rakesh Sood

Arab countries. Trump has also claimed to have brokered a ceasefire be-



"We should not overreact to this situation and keep our heads down." – Shyam Saran

tween India and Pakistan, although this claim has been disputed by India.

Despite his efforts, Trump has not received the Nobel Peace Prize, which has only fuelled his desire for it. On Friday, the White House once again listed "securing a ceasefire between India and Pakistan" among US President Donald Trump's "foreign policy victories." Prime Minister Narendra Modi had informed Parliament that no world leader had told India to halt Operation Sindoor, which was carried out to retaliate against the Pahalgam terror attack.

Meanwhile, former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran reiterated the government's

P3

OPPOSITION PROTEST DISRUPTS BOTH HOUSES, ADJOURNED TILL AUGUST 11

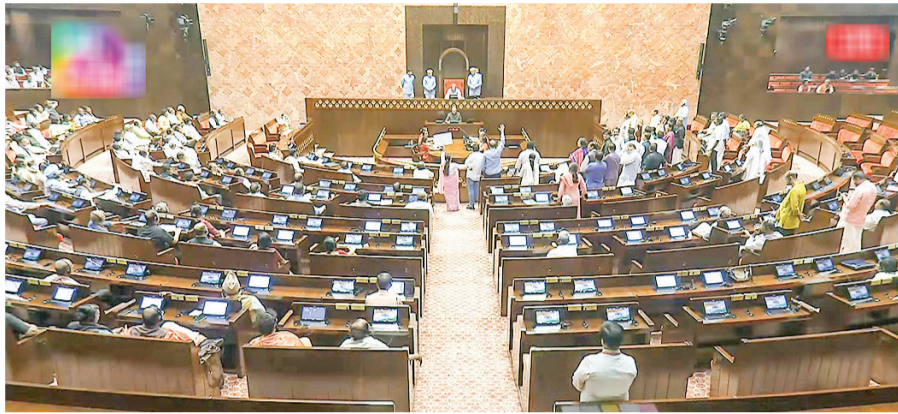
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman formally withdraws the Income Tax Bill 2025 as reported by the select committee

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A turbulent session in the Lok Sabha on Friday witnessed repeated appeals for order as Opposition members staged a protest in the well of the House, prompting the chair, presided over by Krishna Prasad Tenneti, to adjourn proceedings for the day.

Despite the disruption, the House transacted brief business, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman formally withdrawing the Income Tax Bill 2025 as reported by the select committee. The withdrawal was cleared through a voice vote amid ongoing commotion.

As the House resumed at 3 p.m. after being adjourned earlier due to an major din by the Opposition, Tenneti



made multiple appeals to protesting members to vacate the well, assuring them that their concerns would be heard.

His repeated requests went unheeded, forcing him to move to the next item of business.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju expressed dismay over the continued disruptions,

remarking, "Opposition members have the opportunity to raise issues of public interest — even during the discussion on private member bills. I am very sad."

His comments reflected growing frustration within the government benches over the impasse.

Several MPs voiced concern that their private member bills were being

sidelined due to the repeated stalling of proceedings.

The chair acknowledged these concerns, stating, "We want to raise important legislative proposals, but you do not want to run the House," addressing the Opposition benches directly.

With no signs of resolution, Tenneti adjourned the House until Monday, leav-

ing several legislative items pending and underscoring the deepening gridlock in Parliament.

The withdrawal of the Income Tax Bill 2025 marks a notable development in the government's fiscal agenda, while the continued disruption raises questions about the functioning of the House and the space available for individual members to introduce and debate private legislation.

As Parliament reconvenes next week, attention will turn to whether the Opposition and government can find common ground to restore order and resume legislative business.

Rajya Sabha adjourned for the day after Opposition MPs raised slogans in the House and will now reconvene at 11 am on August 11.

TMC says don't want to disrupt Parliament, but demand debate on SIR

TDG NETWORK
KOLKATA

TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Friday said neither the party nor any INDIA bloc member has any intentions of disrupting parliamentary proceedings, but insisted that a discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls must be undertaken immediately.

Speaking to reporters at NSC Bose International Airport upon his return from New Delhi, the Diamond Harbour MP expressed support for Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegations of voter roll manipulation in a Karnataka Assembly segment.

"His (Gandhi's) claims should be looked into," Banerjee said.

Banerjee, who was recently appointed as the TMC parliamentary party leader in the Lok Sabha,



TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee

said, "We want the House to function, but not without holding a discussion on SIR. The Supreme Court talks about anomalies in the electoral rolls, then how was the 2024 general elections conducted using the old rolls? Were the Prime Minister, Union Home Minister, and other cabinet ministers elected using a flawed mandate?"

With Bihar elections approaching and West Bengal

Assembly polls just months away, Banerjee questioned the feasibility of conducting a comprehensive SIR within a short time frame.

"How can a two-year exercise be completed in two months?" he asked.

Banerjee expressed concern that the SIR process could be manipulated to the BJP's advantage, especially in constituencies where margins were tight in previous elections.

"In past Lok Sabha results, BJP scraped through in places like Balurghat and Bishnupur by very slim margins. A flawed SIR could unfairly tilt results by eliminating genuine poor voters due to their economic vulnerability. We will not allow SIR in Bengal," he said. Continuing his attack, Banerjee also addressed the TMC's ongoing allegation about harassment of Bengali-speaking migrants in BJP-ruled states.

India prioritises energy security amid global tensions: Jaishankar

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The government considers energy security to be among its "top priorities" and has taken all necessary steps to ensure access to affordable energy for people, Lok Sabha was informed on Friday.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in a written response to a query also said the government pursues a "multi-pronged strategy" that includes diversifying supply sources, enhancing domestic production of oil and gas, expanding the adoption of alternate energy sources and advancing the energy transition.

He was asked details of the steps taken by the government to safeguard the country's strategic and energy interests amid global tension, and also whether the government has raised concerns with countries like the US regarding the "impact of sanctions" on



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar

India's petroleum imports from Russia and Iran.

Last week, US President Donald Trump had announced 25 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India that came into effect from August 7.

The US president on Wednesday also signed an executive order slapping an additional 25 per cent levy on India for New Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, bringing the total duties to 50 per cent, among the highest imposed by the US on any country in the world.

The additional 25 per cent duty will come into effect

after 21 days on August 27.

Jaishankar in his written response also said, "Government considers energy security to be among its top priorities and has taken all necessary steps to ensure access to affordable energy for the people of India."

"Government pursues a multi-pronged strategy that includes diversifying supply sources, enhancing domestic production of oil & gas, expanding the adoption of alternate energy sources and advancing the energy transition," the ministry said.

Cases of attack on Hindus, vandalism of temples noted in West UK, Canada, US: Govt

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Cases of attack on Hindus and vandalism of temples have been noted in the UK, Canada and the US, the government informed Parliament on Friday.

In a written response to a query in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh also said since last year, five cases of vandalism of Hindu temples in the US and four cases in Canada have taken place.

The Ministry of External Affairs was asked by Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Anil Yeshwant Desai whether the government has taken note of instances of "attack" on Hindus, "vandalisation" of their temples, and "discrimination" in some countries.

"Cases of attack on Hindus and vandalism of Hindu temples have been noted in UK, Canada and USA. However,



Canadian Hindus hold massive rally against attacks by Khalistani. File Photo

ever, no such case has come to notice specifically in Scotland (UK). Since last year, five cases of vandalization of Hindu temples in USA and four cases in Canada, have taken place," Singh said.

The MEA was also asked whether a motion against such "Hindu phobic attempts" is under consideration in Scottish Parliament.

"No motion against Hinduphobia is currently under consideration in Scottish Parliament," Singh said.

DRDO does not undertake any project under 'pilot project' category: LS told

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) "does not undertake" any project under the 'pilot project' category, it undertakes mission-mode projects to deliver state-of-the-art weapons systems and platform to the Indian armed forces, the government informed Lok Sabha on Friday.

The defence ministry was asked "the number of delayed defence pilot projects" along with the "total cost escalation due to such delays".

In a written response, Minister of State for Defence, Sanjay Seth, said, "DRDO does not undertake any project under the category of Pilot Project. DRDO undertakes Mission Mode (MM) projects to deliver state-of-the-art weapons systems and platform to the Indian Armed Forces."

In a separate query, the ministry was asked the de-



tails of the significant contributions of the DRDO and its associated labs to civilian technological advancements, scientific research and national innovation ecosystem.

"DRDO under the Ministry of Defence through the Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme provides grants-in-aid to private industries, especially MSMEs and startups for the development of cutting-edge defence technologies/systems/sub-systems/components up to the prototype level along with strong handholding, mentorship and support of the DRDO for the successful realisation of defence tech-

nologies against requirements of SHQs/DRDO/DDP," Seth said.

At present, 81 projects worth Rs 343.90 crore have been sanctioned to various industries under the TDF scheme. So far, 30 technologies have been successfully developed, he said.

Also, the DRDO-developed "dual use spin off" technologies are transferred to the industries. Till date, 637 Licensing Agreement for Transfer of Technology (LAToT) have been signed for the dual use (spin off) technologies for the benefit of the society at large, the minister said.

Over 2 lakh Indians renounced Indian citizenship in 2024: Govt

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

More than two lakh Indians renounced their citizenship in 2024, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said this in a written response to queries on the number of individuals who have renounced their Indian citizenship and taken citizenship of other countries during the last five years.

The minister was replying to queries by Congress MP K C Venugopal.

"As per the information available with the Ministry,



the number of Indians who gave up their Indian citizenship was 85,256 in 2020, 1,63,370 in 2021, 2,25,620 in 2022, 2,16,219 in 2023 and 2,06,378 in 2024, Singh said.

For reference, such cases were 1,22,819 in 2011, 1,20,923 in 2012, 1,31,405 in 2013 and 1,29,328 in 2014, he added. The reasons for re-

nouncing Indian citizenship or taking foreign citizenship are personal and known only to the individual, the government said.

"The government recognises the potential of the global workplace in an era of the knowledge economy. It has also brought about a transformational change in its engagement with the Indian diaspora," the MoS said.

A successful, prosperous and influential diaspora is an asset for India, which stands to gain a lot from tapping their networks and productive utilisation of the soft power that comes from having such a flourishing diaspora, he said.

Parliamentary panel raps govt over gaps in OBC representation fee

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A parliamentary panel has pulled up the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) for failing to act decisively on key recommendations aimed at strengthening OBC representation in recruitment and promotions, easing financial burdens on poorer candidates, and improving transparency in data reporting.

In its ninth report, presented to both Houses of Parliament on Friday, the Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes noted that while the government had accepted over half of its earlier suggestions, three crucial

proposals have not been adequately addressed.

These proposals are mandatory inclusion of an OBC member on all selection and promotion boards, complete exemption of application and entrance exam fees for OBC candidates, and public disclosure of representation data.

On the issue of selection panels, the committee expressed dissatisfaction with the DoPT's "lackadaisical and inconclusive" response, saying mandatory OBC representation should apply even when fewer than 10 vacancies are being filled.

The panel criticised the ministry for failing to provide any "convincing measure" or "definite timeline" for imple-

menting this change and said that simply citing recruitment statistics and backlog clearance "does not satisfy the recommendation of the committee". The committee also reiterated its call for a complete waiver of application fees for OBC candidates, arguing that many come from economically weaker backgrounds and face financial stress in seeking education or government jobs.

The DoPT maintained that fees for national-level exams are already nominal, but the panel pointed out the absence of any comment on entrance fees for educational institutions and urged action in consultation with other ministries.

'Lalu and Co' opposing Op Sindoor in Parliament: Amit Shah

TDG NETWORK
SITAMARHI

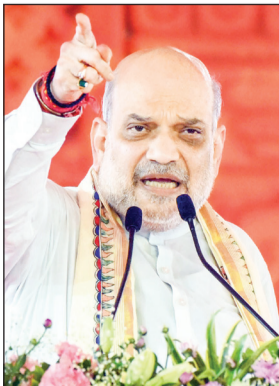
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday lashed out at the Opposition over their criticism of the government's handling of Operation Sindoor, accusing the Congress party and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav's camp of "opposing" the anti-terror operation.

Addressing a public rally in Bihar's Sitamarhi, the Union Minister asserted that no one has the right to mess with the security of the nation.

"Congress party and Lalu, Lalu and company are opposing Operation Sindoor in the Parliament. I want to ask should not we give reply to terrorists? Should not we do Operation Sindoor? Lalu

and company do not know that this is the government of Narendra Modi, the NDA government. No one has the right to mess with the security of the nation," Shah stated.

Targeting RJD and Tejashwi Yadav, Union Minister Shah asked what they had done for the development of Mithilanchal region of the state.



He said, "I want to ask Tejashwi Yadav, his father and mother were in power for a long time. Apart from hooliganism, running gangs, kidnapping, demanding ransom, what have you done for the development of Mithilanchal?..."

The Home Minister further congratulated the people of the State for the redevelopment of Janaki Mata

temple at Punaura Dham "...I congratulate the devotees of Lord Ram and Janaki Mata as the foundation stone has been laid for the redevelopment of Janaki Mata temple at Punaura Dham..." Shah said.

Earlier today, Shah laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of Janki Mata Temple at Punaura Dham in Sitamarhi.

Taken note of reports related to Lalmonirhat airbase in B'desh: Minister

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India has noted reports related to the Lalmonirhat airbase in Bangladesh, the government informed Parliament on Friday.

In a written response to a query in Lok Sabha, Minis-

ter of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said the government has also noted a press briefing on May 26 by the Director of Military Operations of Bangladesh Army, in which it has been stated that "there are no plans at present for the Lalmonirhat airfield to be used for military purposes".



The Ministry of External Affairs was asked whether Bangladesh has "authorised China to restart operations" at its Lalmonirhat Airbase, and if the government has "lodged its objections" with

Bangladesh in this regard. Singh in his response said, "The government of India has noted reports concerning the Lalmonirhat airbase in Bangladesh."

The government of India "continues to monitor" all developments having a bearing on national secu-

rity and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it, he said.

Recent reports and growing speculation around the redevelopment and potential militarisation of the Lalmonirhat airbase in Bangladesh, located close to the Indian border, have raised strategic concerns in New Delhi, particularly given the base's proximity to the Siliguri Corridor, a narrow but vital strip of Indian territory connecting the northeastern states with the rest of the country.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON RAHUL GANDHI POLL FRAUD

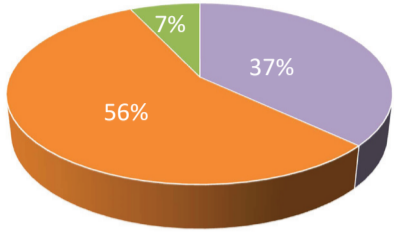
56% reject rigging claim, but want Rahul Gandhi to legally defend himself.

The Daily Guardian Survey conducted with a sample size of 312 respondents—95% male and 5% female—reveals a complex public response to the recent allegations against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. While 56% of participants disagreed with the accusation that he at-

tempted to influence voting via the Election Commission, 37% believed the charge to be valid. Despite the majority dismissing the allegation, a striking 69% supported the idea of Gandhi filing a defamation case, and 67% felt he should actively protect himself from such claims.

Q1.▶

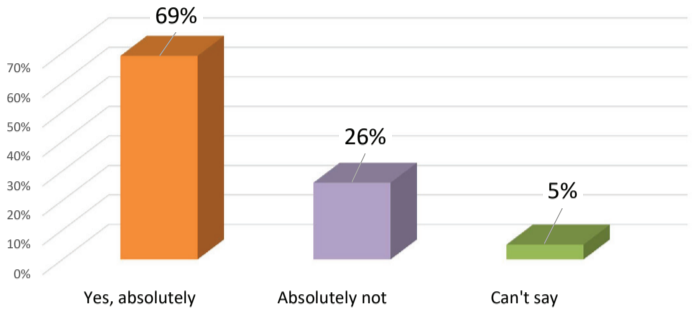
How do you see the accusation against Rahul Gandhi of influencing voting through rigging in the Election Commission?



Agree
Disagree
Can't say

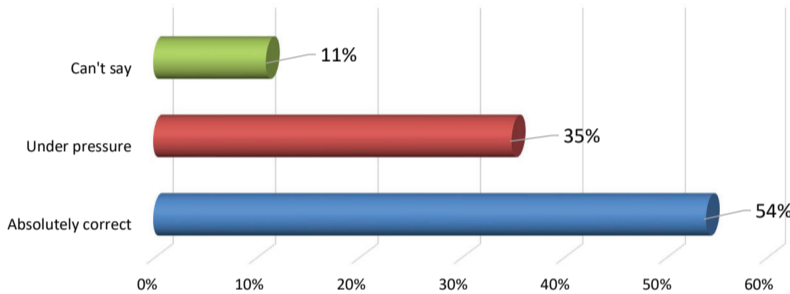
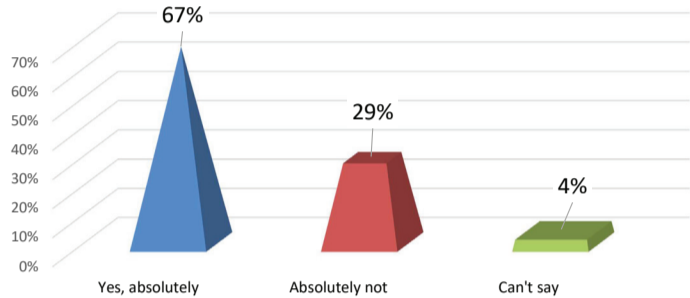
Q2.◀

Should Rahul Gandhi file a defamation case in connection with these allegations?



Q3.▶

Should Rahul Gandhi save himself from such allegations?



Q4.◀

How do you see the special intensive revision (SIR) of the voter list in Bihar?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON TRUMP PAKISTAN CONNECTION

87% believe that Trump administration's sheltering of terrorists affecting Pakistan's policies

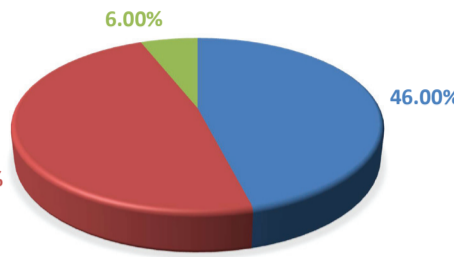
Congress leader Jairam Ramesh criticised PM Modi's "special relationship" claim with Donald Trump, citing Pakistan Army chief Asim Munir's repeated U.S. visits and Trump's praise for Pakistan. Munir, hosted by Trump

in June, is set to visit again, highlighting deepening U.S.-Pakistan ties post-Pahalgam terror attack and four-day India-Pakistan conflict.

Q1.▶

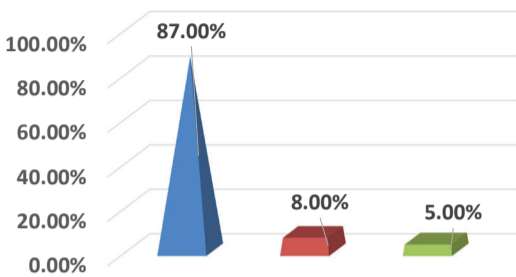
How do you view America's inclination towards Pakistan?

Anti-India US move
Could also harm America
Can't say



Q2.◀

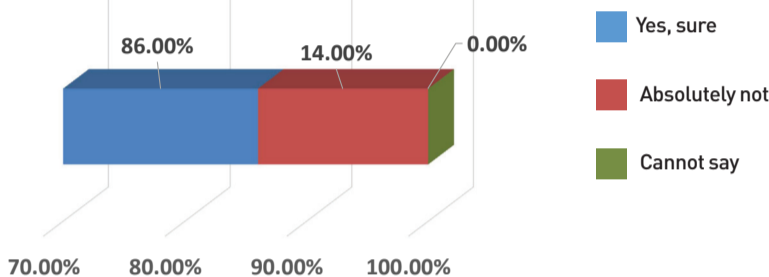
Is the Trump administration's sheltering of terrorists affecting Pakistan's policies?



Yes, sure
Absolutely not
Cannot say

Q3.▶

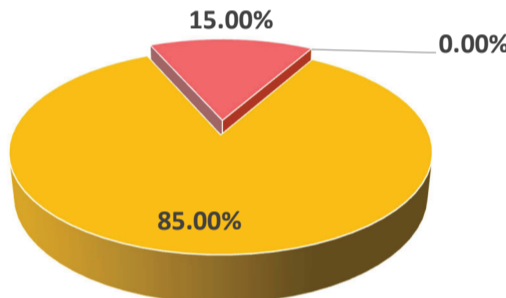
Is America's tilt towards Pakistan a betrayal of trust towards India?



Yes, sure
Absolutely not
Cannot say

Q4.◀

Should India take Trump-Munir friendship seriously?



Yes, sure
Absolutely not
Cannot say

INDIA bloc unites against 'vote theft', targets Election Commission

CONTINUED FROM P1

among top leaders of some parties, it was decided to field an opposition candidate for the vice-presidential election. Leaders opined that, given the BJP's conduct in recent years, there could be no joint candidate with the ruling party.

The Election Commission has announced September 9 as the polling date for the vice-presidential election, following the surprise resigna-

tion of Jagdeep Dhankhar on health grounds. Nominations opened on August 7, and the last date for filing is August 21. The INDIA bloc has now begun serious discussions on its candidate.

With Rahul Gandhi hosting the INDIA bloc meeting—attended by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, CPP chairperson Sonia Gandhi, KC Venugopal, and other senior party leaders—the Congress has signalled that the opposi-

tion is in no mood to accept the election results without challenge. Instead, it plans to intensify its demand for transparent and fair elections.

According to sources, the united INDIA bloc will focus on raising questions about the fairness of polls, the transparency of the electoral system, and the SIR exercise, which they allege is being used to disenfranchise voters ahead of crucial assembly elections.

Shah hits out at opposition over SIR, Operation Sindoor

CONTINUED FROM P1

SIR POLITICAL ROW IN BIHAR

- Opposition alleges voter roll revision may delete large numbers of voters.
- Shah says SIR aims to remove infiltrators from lists.
- Claims infiltrators form part of Opposition's vote bank.
- Notes SIR first introduced by Jawaharlal Nehru; conducted again in 2003.

liganism, running gangs, kidnapping, demanding ransom, what have you done for the development

of Mithilanchal?" Shah asked.

Earlier in the day, Shah, alongside Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of the Janaki Mata Temple at Punaura Dham, believed to be the birthplace of Goddess Sita. He congratulated devotees on the project, calling it a

landmark for the region's cultural heritage.

The political row over the SIR has dominated both Parliament and Bihar's political landscape in recent days, with the Opposition INDIA bloc warning that the exercise could lead to mass voter deletions, while the government insists it is a necessary step to ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

566 evacuated, 300 still stranded in flood-hit Uttarkashi



Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami comforts a victim rescued from the Dharali mudslide disaster, in Uttarkashi on Friday. ANI

TDG NETWORK
UTTARKASHI

The Uttarakhand government on Friday announced the restoration of mobile network services in Harsil Valley, Uttarkashi district, following disruptions caused by flash floods and landslides.

"Mobile network has been restored in Harsil Valley due to the tireless efforts of the state government on the instructions of the Chief Minister," the Chief Minis-

ter's Office (CMO) said.

In Chamoli, work is underway on a war footing to clear debris from the Badrinath National Highway near Bhanrepani, blocked since Thursday due to a landslide. "The work of opening the road by machines is going on a war footing," Chamoli Police said in a post on X.

State authorities confirmed the evacuation of 566 people from Dharali and Harsil till noon, with nearly 300 more stranded individ-

uals still being rescued. The Indian Army has deployed dog squads, drones, and ground-penetrating radar to aid the search and rescue operations.

Director General of Police (DGP) Deepam Seth visited Uttarkashi to inspect the disaster site, review relief efforts, and issue instructions to speed up operations. After meeting the Chief Minister at Matli helipad, Seth travelled to Harsil and held a review meeting with police officials.

Govt withdraws Income-Tax Bill

CONTINUED FROM P1

gust, to provide a consolidated and updated draft. Officials said the move was aimed at avoiding confusion caused by multiple versions of the Bill.

The Select Committee's 4,584-page report, presented in the Lok Sabha on 21 July, proposed tightening definitions, removing ambiguities, and aligning the legislation with existing legal frameworks. The suggested changes include permitting refunds even if tax returns are filed late, harmonising the definition of micro and small enterprises with the MSME Act, and clarifying rules for non-profits on terms such as 'income' versus 'receipts',

anonymous donations, and the deemed application concept.

Other recommendations address advance ruling fees, TDS on provident funds, low-tax certificates, and penalty powers. The panel stressed the need for drafting corrections based on stakeholder input to ensure clarity and minimise disputes.

The new legislation, first tabled by Sitharaman on 13 February, is intended to replace the complex Income-Tax Act of 1961, making the law more concise, reducing litigation, and offering significant relief to taxpayers. The government initiated the review during the July 2024 Budget to modernise and simplify India's direct tax regime.

Tariffs & Nobel: Ex-diplomat links Trump's twin obsessions

CONTINUED FROM P1

stance, emphasising the need for continued negotiations on the trade deal. Speaking to ANI, he said, "We hope that as we go forward, the negotiations on the trade deal may still be continued. We hope that over time, we can overcome this kind of hitch in the relationship. We have been through many ups and downs in India-US relations, so perhaps we should keep it in perspective and not panic."

He advised against overreacting, noting that India has navigated similar situations in the past. "We should not overreact to this situation and should keep our heads

down, hoping to overcome this obstacle as we have done in the past. But there is no denying that this is a severe development and could have major consequences for the Indian economy. The government and the people of India must be prepared for those consequences," said Saran.

On the reaction of the Global South to the US tariffs, he added, "There is no doubt that in facing this kind of new situation, cooperation among some of the major developing countries and emerging economies, like Brazil and India, will be very important."

Earlier on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra

Modi received a call from Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The two leaders exchanged views on various regional and global issues of mutual interest.

"We are committed to deepening our strategic partnership, including in trade, energy, tech, defence, health, and more. A strong, people-centric partnership between Global South nations benefits everyone," PM Modi said in a post on X.

The Brazilian President, in his own post on X, shared that India and Brazil had "reaffirmed the importance of defending multilateralism, the need to address the challenges of the current situation, and to explore

possibilities for greater integration between the two countries."

Earlier, China voiced its opposition to the US tariffs on India. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun, responding to media queries during a press briefing, called the move an "abuse of tariffs."

On Wednesday, the White House issued an Executive Order imposing an additional 25 percentage points in tariffs on Indian goods, raising the total levy to 50%. The administration cited national security and foreign policy concerns, pointing specifically to India's continued imports of Russian oil. On Thursday (US local

time), President Trump said there would be no trade negotiations with India until the tariff dispute was resolved, following his administration's decision to double tariffs on Indian imports.

The US State Department said on Thursday that "India is a strategic partner" and that Washington is engaging with New Delhi in "full and frank dialogue," even as relations remain tense amid the tariff dispute. When asked whether China and other BRICS nations are seeking to organise a pushback against US trade measures, the State Department said that dialogue with India "will continue."

RAHUL TO KICK OFF 15-DAY BIHAR YATRA TO PROTEST VOTER LIST REVISION

The party leader said the entire route of the yatra has been planned, which will go through 21 districts, starting August 17

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

With the opposition parties targeting the Election Commission over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls in Bihar, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will kick off 15 day yatra in the state over the issue from August 17, party leaders said.

According to party leaders, Rahul Gandhi will begin the yatra over SIR in Bihar from Sasaram district of the state.

The party leader said that the entire route of the yatra has been planned, which will go on for 15 days and pass from 21 districts.

The leader said that Rahul Gandhi along with the Mahagatbandhan leaders will also address several



public meetings during the yatra, which will be in hybrid mode just like that of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra model.

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav, VIP's Mukesh Sahni, Left parties leaders will also share the stage with

the Congress leader for addressing the public over the issue of the SIR.

He stated that the leaders will highlight that how the poll panel has been removing lakhs of eligible voters mainly from the backward and minority communities ahead of the crucial assem-

bly polls in the state.

The party leader also said that the yatra will start from Sasaram district on August 17 and move towards Aurangabad, and then reach Gaya and Wazirganj.

The yatra will then reach Nawada, Sheikhpura, Lakhisarai, Munger and Bhagalpur

districts.

The yatra will also cover the district of Katihari, Purnea, Araria, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Sitamarhi, East Champaran, West Champaran, Gopalganj, Siwan and Saran.

The yatra will then conclude at Ara district of the state.

The Congress leaders said that through this yatra the party wants to highlight the alleged malpractice in the state to remove lakhs of voters. The opposition has alleged the SIR issue as 'vote-bandi' and daylight dacoity of votes. The assembly polls in Bihar for the 243 seats will take place later this year in the month of October and November.

The Congress, RJD, VIP and Left parties have been targeting the Commission and accusing it of helping the ruling NDA in the state.

Stalin releases State Education Policy, remains firm on opposition to NEP

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday said that the State Education Policy (SEP) has been curated while keeping in mind the "unique character" of the state and announced that the state will only follow a two-language policy.

"Through this education policy, we don't want students just to mug up, but think and get educated. Physical education will be taught along with studies. Importantly, I want to say firmly that we will follow two two-language policy and it is our firm policy," Stalin said while addressing the gathering at Anna Centenary Library Auditorium.

The Chief Minister informed that smart classes will be introduced under the newly released SEP.

"We are going to make a change in education, our aim is to educate all. Nobody should

be left out," Stalin said while emphasising the need to teach rational thought in education.

"We will never allow anyone to stop education. We will not allow pirooku (reactionary thinking) in our education. Our state education policy aims to create samathuva kalvi (equality) and will be a pagutharivu kalvi (one with a rational thought). This will serve as a platform to compete with international standards of education," Stalin asserted.

He said that his government aims for a 100 per cent admission of school students in higher education, which now stands at 75 per cent.

"The government, based on the Dravidian model, needs all school students to join higher education. Mother feels happy to see her children study well. 75 per cent of school students joined higher education, and we target 100 per cent to join higher education," the CM said.

"When you finish school and join college life, it will give a new experience. This will be a way for your career. This year, 901 students joined premier institutions," Stalin added.

This move comes after months of protests by the DMK led government against the National Education Policy (NEP) promoted by the Centre. The DMK-led Tamil Nadu government has consistently opposed the NEP, calling it "against social justice" and an attempt to impose Hindi on the state. Tamil Nadu has refused to implement the NEP.

In May, the state government filed a plea in the Supreme Court over the alleged withholding of about Rs 2,200 crore in central funds, which it linked to its refusal to adopt the NEP. The plea asks the court to declare that the NEP 2020 and the PM SHRI Schools Scheme are not binding on the state unless it formally agrees to them.

INLD MLA Arjun Chautala under fire for remarks on Punjab CM

VIPIN PARMAR
CHANDIGARH

Arjun Chautala, an Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) MLA from Ranian assembly seat in Sirsa district in Haryana, made a controversial statement on Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

Arjun Chautala, who visited Bawankhedra in Bhiwani on Thursday night, said, "The Chief Minister of Punjab, Bhagwant Mann, is a Piyakkad crow. They should act consciously, because they don't believe how many sips they will come and say what."

Arjun Chautala further said: A bewada man is running the state. I pray to God that he should sit down in his senses, that is enough.

"AAP Punjab spokesperson Neil Garg hit back, saying, "This is a conspiracy to take the level of politics to the abyss by those who have neither tamiz,



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

knowledge of facts nor any record of public service.""" Arjun Chautala ji, first save your party's land in Haryana. INLD is on ventilator in Haryana itself. Leaders who could not even run a government school properly in their area are imparting knowledge to the Punjab Chief Minister.

Haryana AAP president Sushil Gup-

ta said his party leaders were in jail for corruption in jobs. They should question themselves.

Arjun Chautala said that SYL's water is Haryana's right and it will directly benefit Bhiwani district the most. The government should take this issue seriously. Many people have a habit of saying that they are doing politics. Everyone knows how much trouble it is when there is a shortage of water. Our government should take it seriously.

Chautala further said that Bhagwant Mann narrates a joke. They tell the story of the crow. The situation in Punjab has become the same. You must have heard the story of a thirsty crow, so the chief minister of Punjab is a drunkard crow. 'Once there was a crow, he was very-very thirsty ' Othe Pendi Si Ag, Lal Pari da Jag. In Lal Pari, Daru si Thoda, Mukhyamantri Katha Karda Roda, Roda Katha Kari, his Daru Uthe came up, then Mukhyamantri Paig

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA
HYDERABAD

In a sensational revelation, Union Minister and BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar has alleged that the previous BRS government, led by former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), tapped the phones of over 6,500 individuals, including politicians, judges, contractors, bureaucrats, film personalities, and even family members of BRS leaders.

Speaking to the media after appearing before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the phone tapping case, Bandi Sanjay expressed shock over the details shared by police during the inquiry.



"I am shocked to know that the KCR government tapped phones of more than 6,500 people. This includes myself, current CM Revanth Reddy, Harish Rao, ministers, MLAs, and even KCR's own daughter Kavitha," Sanjay said.

Bandi Sanjay further claimed that the phones of judges one of whom was

investigating the TSPSC Group-1 paper leak were also tapped.

"Even the judge probing the TSPSC leak was under illegal surveillance. This is nothing short of constitutional murder," he stated.

He said the KCR-led government used the SIB (Special Intelligence Bureau) as a tool for political espionage,

blackmail, and extortion.

"The SIB is meant to track Maoist and terrorist activities, but KCR misused it to spy on opposition leaders, contractors, and even BRS leaders. They intimidated people and collected crores in bribes," he alleged.

Bandi Sanjay also questioned why Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, whose phone was allegedly tapped as well, has not appeared before the SIT.

"Why hasn't the CM given his statement to SIT? Why is he silent? Is he trying to protect KCR and his family?" he asked.

He accused both Congress and BRS of colluding to delay justice.

HC extends bail of Asaram Bapu in rape case till August 21

TDG NETWORK
GANDHINAGAR

The Gujarat High Court on Thursday extended the bail of self-proclaimed godman Asaram Bapu in a rape case, till August 21, on medical grounds.

Asaram has been in jail since August 2013 for allegedly raping a schoolgirl and was arrested after the 16-year-old, whose parents were both devotees, lodged a complaint with police. Two months later, Asaram and his son Narayan Sai were booked for allegedly raping two sisters at their ashram in Surat, Gujarat.

Earlier in January, the Supreme Court granted interim bail to Asaram on medical grounds till the end of March in the 2013 rape case.

A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and Rajesh Bindal directed that Asaram shall not attempt to tamper with the evidence, and shall not meet his followers after he



is released on interim bail. Three policemen will escort Asaram, and they will not interfere in the treatment, the bench ordered.

The bench noted that Asaram has various age-related health conditions and had two heart attacks."We are inclined to grant bail to the petitioner on medical grounds by the end of March. The petitioner shall not make any attempt to tamper with the evidence, shall not meet his followers," the order stated.

Asaram is serving a life imprisonment sentence at Jodhpur Central Jail.

Approaching the apex court, Asaram has sought

bail citing deteriorating health and the need for advanced medical treatment.

Asaram also sought the suspension of the life imprisonment sentence imposed on him by a trial court in a rape case in Gujarat.

A sessions court in Gandhinagar, Gujarat in January 2023 convicted Asaram under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in a 2013 rape of a female disciple at a Surat Ashram. In August, while hearing an appeal against the trial court verdict, the Gujarat High Court declined to suspend his life imprisonment sentence.

SC deletes direction to remove Allahabad HC judge from handling criminal cases

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday recalled its recent order in which it had issued adverse observations against Allahabad High Court judge Justice Prashant Kumar for the latters' decision in having allowed criminal proceedings to continue in a civil money recovery dispute.

In its August 4 order, a bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan had asked the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court to remove Justice Prashant Kumar from the criminal roster -- meaning the judge will not be handling criminal matters until his retirement. The top-court had also directed the High Court Chief Justice to change Justice Kumar's roster and bench him along side a senior judge of the High Court.

However, following the

top-court's observation against Justice Kumar, at least thirteen Allahabad High Court judges wrote to the High Court's Chief Justice Arun Bhansali to convene a full-court meeting in defiance of the adverse observations made by the top-court against Justice Kumar.

Subsequently, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) B.R. Gavai wrote to Justice Pardiwala urging the top-court judge to reconsider the said directions against Allahabad HC judge Justice Kumar.

Therefore, the bench led by Justice Pardiwala decided to recall the said order and deleted the two paragraphs in which it had issued adverse directions against Justice Kumar.

The bench while dictating its order today, said "At the outset we must clarify our intention was not to cause embarrassment or aspersions on the concerned judge.

Assam: Injured tusker's 95-km forced march sparks outrage

NIBIR DEKA
NEW DELHI

A viral video showing an injured 48-year-old elephant named Maniki limping along a highway in Assam has triggered widespread condemnation from wildlife lovers and prompted immediate intervention by forest department officials. The elephant was being forced to walk nearly 95 km from Kakopathar in Tinsukia district to Dibrugarh for medical treatment, despite official instructions to transport the animal by truck.

The shocking footage revealed Maniki, suffering from a severely bent left foreleg, struggling to walk with a mahout (elephant handler) riding on her back. The elephant's owner, Ruchi Chetia from Jorhat, had defied forest department guidelines that specifically mandated vehicular transportation for the injured animal's welfare.

Assam: Citizens' meet in Sivasagar calls for communal harmony amid rising tension

NIBIR DEKA
NEW DELHI

A citizens' meet was convened in Sivasagar district of Assam on Friday, August 8. This has been convened amid the growing communal tensions in the region. The meeting, organised by the youth of Sivasagar, witnessed participation from conscious citizens as well as representatives of various national and community-based organisations.

Assam pressure group Bir Lachit Sena leader Shringkhal Chaliha delivered a speech that drew mixed reactions from a section of attendees. Chaliha has addressed political bias in the gathering and remarked that the event had turned into a political meeting rather than a neutral citizens' forum. Chaliha announced that a separate citizens' meeting would be organised in the future under the lead-

ership of Sivasagar's senior residents.

Reacting to his remarks, meeting organiser Ankuron Phukan dismissed Chaliha's allegations, asserting that the event did not favour any political party. "If we have shown bias, it is only towards indigenous Assamese," Phukan said.

Some of the speakers evoked about the syncretic traditions of the state.

Later in the session, several speakers appealed for preserving Sivasagar's centuries-old unity and harmony. The meeting passed a series of resolutions, including a warning against delivering inflammatory speeches in future.

The forum condemned statements made by Chitu Boruah, Shringkhal Chaliha, and Yunus Tamuli regarding the 'Miya' issue and resolved not to allow such provocative remarks at subsequent gatherings.

A sister's last Rakhi: Grief overwhelms Krishtapuram on Rakshabandhan

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA
HYDERABAD

What should have been a day of celebration and sibling bonding turned into an unforgettable tragedy in Krishtapuram village of Kusumanchi mandal, Khammam district.

On the morning of Raksha Bandhan, 25-year-old Pandiri Appireddy, a resi-

dent of the village, lost his battle with a severe viral fever. Despite receiving treatment over the past few days, his health deteriorated rapidly. His sudden death sent shockwaves through the community, leaving the family and villagers devastated.

As preparations were underway for his final rites, a heartbreak-

ing scene unfolded one that will forever remain etched in the minds of those who witnessed it.

In a moment filled with unimaginable grief, Appireddy's sister, dressed in a simple saree, approached her brother's bier. Her hands trembled. Tears streamed down her face. But with a deep breath and a heavy heart, she



fulfilled her Raksha Bandhan ritual tying a Rakhi to her deceased brother's wrist.

It was a powerful and painful gesture one that conveyed the essence of sibling love even in death. Those around were moved to tears. The silence was only broken by soft sobs and prayers. "Raksha Bandhan is meant to celebrate the

eternal bond between brothers and sisters," said a grieving elder from the village. "But today, it reminded us of the fragility of life."

Locals gathered in large numbers to offer their condolences to the family. The entire village, usually festive on this day, wore a mournful look. Shops remained closed, and homes kept their cel-

ebrations minimal out of respect.

For Appireddy's sister and family, Raksha Bandhan will never be the same again. It will be remembered not as a day of joy, but as the day they bid a final goodbye.

A sister's last Rakhi tied with love, grief, and unbreakable memory has left an entire village in tears.

CM REKHA GUPTA SAYS EDUCATION NOT A COMMERCIAL VENTURE

"It's for the first time that a government is openly standing alongside the parents of school children in Delhi"

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday said the broad message of the bill introduced by the Delhi government to regulate fee hikes by private schools was to underline that education was not a commercial enterprise.

"Its for the first time that a government is openly standing alongside the parents of school children in Delhi. The AAP is looking sideways now as the BJP government did what it could not do while being in power in Delhi," Gupta told reporters.

Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood tabled the 'Delhi School Education Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees Bill, 2025' on the first day of the

DELHI SCHOOL FEES BILL: TAKEAWAYS

- Bill aims to stop commercialisation of education and protect parents' interests.
- Covers all private, recognised unaided schools in Delhi without exceptions.
- Introduces three-tier assessment and approval system with penalties for violations.
- Requires prior government permission before any private school fee hike.



ongoing Monsoon session.

The bill is scheduled to be discussed and passed in the Assembly later in the day. Members of the House were also allowed to propose amendments to its provisions.

It seeks to regulate the fees

of all private, recognised unaided schools in Delhi through a three-tier system of assessment and approvals via committees set up for the purpose, with stiff penalties in case of violations.

On Thursday, Sood said all private and unaided schools

in Delhi, irrespective of where they are built, will now need prior permission from the government before raising their fees from now on.

Until now, only around 350 schools built on government-allotted land were

The bill is scheduled to be discussed and passed in the Assembly later in the day.

required to seek approval before hiking their fees, he said.

AAP leader Saurabh Bhavadwaj criticised the bill, saying it is designed to protect more than 350 private schools from high court and Supreme Court rulings that previously kept their fee structures under tight scrutiny.

Bharadwaj claimed that under existing laws and court directions, these schools were already required to seek permission from the director of education before increasing fees.

'Phansi Ghar' row: Kejriwal, Sisodia to be summoned

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

After the discussion in the house, Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta has referred the controversial 'Phansi Ghar' issue to the Assembly's Privileges Committee. The committee is set to summon former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia over their alleged involvement in the matter.

Speaker Gupta stated that, "Based on the sense of the House, a decision has been taken to restore this historical Assembly Building to its original form." He condemned the previous government's actions, calling them a "grave insult to history" and "a major fraud." "The fake 'Phansi ghar' and tunnel, along with the unauthorised alterations to a heritage building, are a betrayal of public sentiment and an affront to the dignity of the House. History will never forgive such misdeeds," Gupta said. The



Speaker added, "In an event held on August 9, 2022, to mark the anniversary of the Quit India Movement, a plaque bearing the names of Kejriwal and Sisodia was installed in the name of 'Phansi Ghar'. The House resolves that the inscription plaque will be removed."

Speaker Gupta informed the house that the Privileges Committee will also summon former Speaker Ram Niwas Goel and former Deputy Speaker Rakhi Birla, noting that the inauguration took place under their supervision. "The Assembly's dignity was compromised, and public emotion was manipulated. This is a serious matter of privilege and can-

not be ignored," he added.

On Wednesday, Delhi Minister and BJP leader Parvash Verma visited the British-era "phansi-ghar" and accused former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of distorting a significant part of history. While speaking to media persons, Verma said, "When this building was being constructed, this place was an elevator... Arvind Kejriwal has completely distorted such a significant history... Today, during the assembly session, all the facts were presented..." The minister further said that the photos, maps, and documents they have received prove that there were no gallows in the "phansi-ghar".

CM cites CAG report to attack AAP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday launched a scathing attack on the previous AAP government for allegedly neglecting the welfare of construction workers in the city, citing damning findings from a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report.

Speaking in the Assembly, she demanded that the CAG report on 'Welfare of Building and Other Construction Workers' be referred to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the House for investigation and necessary action.

Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta subsequently referred the report on construction workers, along with two other CAG reports on the Delhi government's finance ac-



counts and appropriation accounts for 2023-24 — presented in the House on August 4 by the chief minister — to the PAC.

Rekha Gupta alleged that despite court orders, the previous Kejriwal government in Delhi failed to release financial assistance to construction workers.

She further claimed that the former AAP administration "failed" to deliver benefits to workers under various schemes intended to provide loans for pur-

chasing tools, house loans, and assistance to pregnant women in cases of miscarriage.

The CAG report, covering a four-year period from 2019 to 2023, highlighted irregularities in the registration of construction workers and pointed to low expenditure on their welfare, despite the state government having a substantial fund exceeding Rs 3,500 crore.

Earlier in the discussion, AAP MLA Virendra

Kadian accused the BJP of selectively quoting portions of the report that criticised the previous Delhi government. He emphasised that the report covered a period heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, when large numbers of migrant workers had returned to their home states. According to Kadian, the former Kejriwal government had provided financial assistance of Rs 5,000 each to workers during the pandemic.

BJP MLAs Poonam Sharma and Neelam Pahalwan also criticised the previous AAP government, accusing it of neglecting construction workers' welfare.

Sharma charged that migrant workers were forced to leave Delhi because the then AAP government could not adequately address their needs.

Delhi to form enforcement team against illegal borewells, says water minister

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Water Minister Parvash Verma on Friday announced that the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) is forming an enforcement team to curb illegal borewells across the city.

The announcement came in response to growing concerns over depleting groundwater levels in the national capital raised by BJP MLA Jitendra Mahajan.

Speaking in the Delhi Assembly, Verma stated that while illegal borewells pose a serious issue, an abrupt shutdown of all borewells would lead to widespread disruption.

"We are trying to provide water to every household. So, borewells should be allowed under regulation. A policy is being formulated to regularise them. Seizing all borewells all of a sudden will cause problems," Verma said.

The new enforcement teams will inspect hotels and commercial establishments that either rely on ground-



water or procure water from tankers without availing DJB water connections, he added.

Hitting out at Leader of Opposition Atishi, the water minister further said, "In unauthorised colonies of Delhi the previous government used to carry out work of water and sewer lines without any planning and vision."

According to Verma, a water pipeline in Sangam Vihar area was laid but could not be commissioned because of multiple leakages.

"After initial Rs 7 crore was spent

on new line, additional Rs 4 crore were demanded to plug the leakages. Pipelines were laid so that rates were raised but the network was not connected to main supply," Verma added.

According to Verma, the water losses in the last 10 years increased from 30 per cent to 40 per cent.

"Since coming to power we have launched an app, GPS fitted water tankers and several other steps towards better facilities. If we cut the water loss from 40 per cent to 10-15 per cent, supply situation will improve," he said.

The water minister also said that Wazirabad water supply improvement project has been revived with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and alleged that previous government asked "commission" from the bank.

"Previous government demanded 6 per cent commission from ADB regarding Wazirabad water treatment plant. The ADB withdrew from the project saying it won't work with such a government," Verma said

Centre fixes subsidised tomato prices Rs 47-60 per kg

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday announced the subsidised retail sale price of tomatoes in the range of Rs 47-60 per kg in the national capital through the National Co-operative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF), to provide relief to buyers.

The NCCF, which has been procuring tomatoes from Azadpur mandi since August 4, is retailing them with minimal margins, the



consumer affairs ministry said.

"To date, NCCF has sold 27,307 kilograms of tomatoes at retail prices ranging from Rs 47 to Rs 60 per kg, depending on the procure-

ment cost," the ministry stated. Retail sales are being conducted through NCCF's stationary outlets at Nehru Place, Udyog Bhawan, Patel Chowk, and Rajiv Chowk, as well as through 6-7 mo-

bile vans operating at various locations across the city. A similar initiative was undertaken by NCCF in previous years as well.

The ministry said tomato prices have spiked temporarily in Delhi due to rains, but the all-India average remains stable. The current average retail price of tomatoes in Delhi at Rs 73 per kg is primarily due to heavy rainfall in northern and north-western regions since the last week of July.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has admitted that it has not conducted any research or study on pollution caused by diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years — the very category that forms the basis of the overage vehicle ban in Delhi-NCR.

The CAQM revealed this



in a reply to a Right to Information (RTI) application filed by environmentalist Amit Gupta. The commission confirmed that it has not

undertaken any pollution research or study regarding the impact of such vehicles. When asked if there was any other research that formed

the basis of the ban, the commission said the restrictions on "end-of-life" (EoL) vehicles stem entirely from the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) order in Vardhman Kaushik vs Union of India & Ors and the Supreme Court's order in M C Mehta vs Union of India & Ors. Last month, the CAQM deferred until October 31 the enforcement of its earlier directive that fuel stations in Delhi should not supply petrol or diesel to overage

Police rejects charges of communal angle in Asif Qureshi murder

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has rejected all the claims of a communal angle in the actor Huma Qureshi's cousin, Asif Qureshi, who was murdered in Delhi following a dispute over parking in the Bhogal area and has noted that the incident was the result of issues between the neighbours.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) South East, Hemant Tiwari, said to ANI, "Last night at 11:35 pm, we received a PCR call from National Heart Institute East of Kailash. We were told that one Mohd Asif Qureshi, aged 45 years, was brought dead to the hospital after an



altercation. Upon receiving information, our SHO and IO teams arrived at the hospital, while ACP and ADCP teams proceeded to the incident site. The deceased and the accused are neighbours."

DCP Tiwari recounted the events of last night and added, "Last night around 10:30 pm, one accused Ujjwal, who had returned from his music class, parked his

scooty in front of the victim's house, to which the victim objected, after which they got into an altercation. Ujjwal's brother Gautam also came downstairs, and one of them attacked the victim with a sharp poker. The victim fainted. He was taken to the hospital, where he was declared dead. The two accused have been arrested, and the murder weapon has been seized... The vic-

tim owns a butcher's house in the East district..."

Discarding the claims made by the victim's wife, the SHO said, "There is no communal angle to the incident, it is just an issue between two neighbours which led to the incident..."

Earlier, Shaina, the deceased's wife, alleged that the murder of his husband, Asif Qureshi, was pre-planned, highlighting that the whole conflict was religion-based and the accused had a problem with them staying in a Hindu area.

She said, "Asif was a Muslim boy, and all the other residents here are Hindus. They (both the accused) had a problem with how he is so friendly with the Hindus.

Why do they speak well of him? This was the whole issue. We do not even talk to them."

She also alleged that the accused's younger sibling had a criminal record and is involved in nefarious activities. She said, "Their younger child is involved in theft and does drugs. He has a criminal record. The elder brother is also like him and supports him."

She further added, "They attacked purposefully. If there is a fight, you can say what you have to. His sister is abusing me and Asif as well. She did not stop her brothers. This was a pre-planned murder. The girl kept saying 'maro maro' (beat them)."

Bharadwaj slams law and order situation in the city

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) president Saurabh Bharadwaj on Friday criticised the law and order situation in the national capital, alleging a sharp increase in street crimes and accusing the police of focusing on targeting AAP leaders instead of public safety.

His remarks came after Bollywood actor Huma Qureshi's cousin, Asif Qureshi, was stabbed to death in Jangpura on August 7 following an argument over scooter parking. Speaking to ANI, Bharadwaj said, "Crime is constantly increasing in Delhi. A few days ago, an MP's chain was snatched in Lutyen Zone's Chanakyapuri. Chain snatching, mobile snatching, and breaking into cars for theft have become so common



that people have now stopped registering complaints." "Murders, rapes, and robberies are constantly increasing. Delhi Police and other agencies have been given just one task, to falsely frame AAP leaders," he added. According to Delhi Police, Asif Qureshi, 42, was killed around 10:30 pm in the Bhogal area of Jangpura after an argument with two local youths.

BIHAR ELECTIONS

ECI ASKS TEJASHWI TO SURRENDER
'FAKE' EPIC CARD BY AUGUST 16AGENCIES
SITAMARHI

The Election Commission on Friday told RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav that it was a crime to forge and use a bogus government document and set a deadline for him to submit his "apparently fake" Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) by August 16.

A fresh letter was issued to the Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar assembly by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Patna (Sadar) cum Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for Digha assembly constituency in this regard.

The Official had last week written to the former Deputy CM, urging him to 'hand over for investigation' the voter card which he claimed to possess despite it having been 'not issued officially'.

In the latest letter, the ERO said that a perusal of the voters list for the past several years has led to

the conclusion that the EC had never issued the voter card with the EPIC number quoted by Yadav.

"It appears that the aforementioned EPIC card is fake. Forging and using a bogus government document in the eyes of the law is a crime. You are once again requested to surrender your apparently fake EPIC card by 16/08/2025 till 5 pm," the letter read.

Yadav had in a press conference on August 2 and said that a search conducted with his EPIC number was yielding the result 'no records found' in the draft electoral rolls prepared as part of Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

When the claim was rejected by the District Administration in Patna, Yadav alleged that his EPIC number had been 'changed'. Later, Yadav admitted that he did have the voter ID card with the EPIC number quoted by the officials, but sought to blame them for is-



Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Legislative Assembly and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav. ANI

suance of two EPIC cards in his favour.

Earlier, Janata Dal (United) MP Sanjay Kumar Jha alleged that Opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav holds multiple Election IDs, suggesting a similar practice among his supporters.

He further said there is no issue on the ground in Bihar regarding Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

"On the ground, there is no issue in Bihar. When the Opposition leader (Tejashwi

Yadav) kept two Election IDs, then we don't know how many IDs his supporters must be having. This is the reason SIR is being done," he said.

Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday said that the Election Commission of India (EC) should answer for "several voters who have been left out" in the draft electoral rolls in Bihar.

He also said that he will respond to EC's notice which was sent to him over a voter

ID he showed in a press conference. The EC had said that the voter ID was not officially issued.

"A response will be given. What is the big deal? Election Commission should tell us about several voters who have been left out," Tejashwi Yadav told reporters in Patna.

"Names of 50 people from the same household have been added. There are several such discrepancies by the Election Commission. We will send the same to the Election Commission and present our side before the Court," he said.

Amid the row over SIR, Union Minister and LJP (Ram Vilas) President Chirag Paswan accused Tejashwi Yadav, of involvement in "duplicitous of votes".

"... Who is giving rise to this situation of doubt? As an LoP in Bihar, he conducts a press conference and complains that his name is not there in the electoral roll," Paswan asked.

Will fight solo in Bihar if
NDA ties talks fail: RajbharAGENCIES
PATNA

Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) president and Uttar Pradesh Panchayati Raj Minister Om Prakash Rajbhar on Friday reiterated that if his party does not form an alliance with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Bihar, it will contest the elections independently by forming a separate front.

He asserted that such a move would not jeopardise his ministerial position in the BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government and added that he has no greed for holding office.

Speaking to reporters after a party review meeting in Nawanagar, Rajbhar said that even if the SBSP contests separately in Bihar, his position as a minister in Uttar Pradesh would remain unaffected.

"There is no threat to my ministerial post in Uttar Pradesh. We are not saying that we will definitely not form an alliance in Bihar. Our first preference is to



He asserted that such a move would not jeopardise his ministerial position in the BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government and added that he has no greed for holding office.

fight the elections together with the NDA," he said.

Recalling past experiences, Rajbhar remarked that in 2007 he was stopped from contesting elections and, in a later bypoll, his party's defeat was also cited as a reason to keep him out.

"If in 2025 no alliance happens in Bihar, then we will definitely fight the elections by forming our own front," he added.

When asked whether contesting separately in Bihar would strain relations with the NDA, Rajbhar replied that he was not attached to the perks of ministerialship.

"If we contest separately in Bihar, it will not affect our alliance in Uttar Pradesh. I am not tempted by the ministerial post — last time, I resigned and walked away, didn't I?" he said.

ECI explains 65 lakh gap in
draft voter list in BiharTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Enumeration Forms for 7.24 crore electors were collected out of about eight crore forms distributed and downloaded during the Enumeration Phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list in Bihar, the Election Commission of India (ECI) said in a press release on Friday.

Giving the reasoning behind the gap between the forms distributed and collected, the ECI stated, "BLO did not find these electors or did not get back their Enumeration Forms because they: Became electors in other States/UTs, or were not found in existence, or did not



submit the form till 25 July, or were not willing to register as an elector for some reason or other (Para iv of Enumeration Form at Page 17 of SIR order refers)."

The ECI released the cumulative data for the forms distributed, downloaded, collected, and digitised.

The press release also shared the graphical data for the Enumeration Forms distributed, collected and digitised daily. According to ECI's

graph, the gap of 65 lakh electors is attributed to 22 lakh deceased individuals, 36 lakh who have either permanently shifted from Bihar or were not found, and the remaining 7 lakh who were enrolled in multiple places.

According to the press note, the objective of SIR is to ensure that no eligible elector is left behind and no ineligible elector gets included. Any genuine electors can still be added back in the electoral rolls during the Claims and Objections period from 1st August to 1st September 2025.

Earlier today, ECI reiterated that no claim or objection has been submitted by any political party regarding the draft electoral rolls in Bihar.

BJP leaders in Bihar 'more corrupt
than Lalu', alleges Prashant KishorAGENCIES
PATNA

Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor on Friday flagged "serious irregularities" in the health department of Bihar, a portfolio held by the BJP all through the NDA rule, and alleged that leaders of the saffron party in the state are "more corrupt" than RJD president Lalu Prasad. Addressing a press conference, Kishor launched a frontal attack on state Health Minister Mangal Pandey, who is also a former Bihar BJP president, accusing him of "quid pro quo" with current state unit chief



Prashant Kishore

Dilip Jaiswal, whom the Jan Suraj Party founder has been targeting for some time. Kishor alleged that the health department had placed an order for "1,200 ambulances" priced at around Rs 28 lakh each, which was almost twice as what states like Odisha and Ut-

tar Pradesh were paying. He also claimed that in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pandey had purchased a flat in Delhi in his wife's name and Jaiswal helped him in the transaction. The BJP has rubbished the allegations. "Pandey showed his gratitude by granting the status of deemed university to a medical college in Kishanganj in which Jaiswal has huge stakes," said Kishor. "Jaiswal transferred Rs 25 lakh to the account of Pandey's father on August 6, 2019 and that money was used in the purchase of a flat in the name of the then health minister's wife.

Jaiswal even signed as a witness in the document of the flat purchased in Delhi's Dwarka," he claimed. Even if Pandey borrowed this amount from Jaiswal, why did he not mention it in his election affidavit in the 2020 assembly polls in the category of unsecured loan, Kishor said. "BJP leaders in Bihar claim to be unblemished, but in reality they are more corrupt than even RJD president Lalu Prasad, whom they like to attack over conviction in fodder scam cases and alleged involvement in railway scams like land for hotels and land for jobs," he asserted.

AGENCIES
BARABANKI

Five passengers, including four women, were killed on Friday after a tree fell on a running bus on Haidergarh-Harakh road in Barabanki district, police said.

The Uttar Pradesh roadways bus left for Haidergarh from the Barabanki bus stop with about 60 passengers at 10.30 am. As the bus reached near Harakh village, a cluster fig tree (gular) suddenly fell on it due to heavy rain, causing considerable damage to the vehicle, police said.

Six seriously injured persons were rushed to the district hospital, of which four women and the bus driver were declared dead, while another is undergoing treatment. Barabanki chief medical officer Awadhesh Kumar said.

Banke Bihari temple: SC
proposes to suspend operation
of panel under UP ordinanceTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said it will pass an order to suspend the operation of the Committee under the Uttar Pradesh Shri Bankey Bihari Ji Temple Trust Ordinance, 2025, which has been vested with the management of the Bankey Bihari temple in Vrindavan, Mathura. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi also said that it will refer the matter to the Allahabad High Court to challenge the constitutional validity of the Ordinance. Till the High Court decides the matter, the Committee will be kept in abeyance, it said. It further said that in the meantime, to ensure the



smooth administration of the temple, the apex court will constitute another Committee, which will be headed by a former Judge of the High Court. The Committee will also have certain government officers and the representatives of the Goswamis, who are the traditional caretakers of the temple, said the bench. The bench also orally proposed to recall the directions in the May 15 judgment, which allowed the government to use the temple funds for the corridor.

HC upholds charges against professors in
Beas river tragedy that killed 25 studentsTDG NETWORK
SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh High Court on Friday refused to discharge three faculty members of the VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Hyderabad, who are facing charges culpable negligence under Sections 336, 304-A read with Section 34 of the IPC, in connection with the 2014 Beas River tragedy that claimed the lives of 25 students and a tour manager near Thalout in Mandi district. Justice Virender Singh, while dismissing the revision plea (Cr. Revision No. 284 of 2024) filed by professors A. Aditya, C. Kiran, and Sumabala, upheld the trial court's February 8, 2024, order, which had denied their discharge un-

der Section 258 of the CrPC. The court noted that the petitioners, who were acting as tour guardians, had stopped the bus during a college trip and allowed students to venture down to the riverbed for photographs, despite being aware of the dangerous nature of mountain rivers and the possibility of sudden water surges from dam releases. "Faculty members were knowing that by not stopping the students from going to the river bed, they were likely to die, which is clear from the fact that while going into the river bed, the faculty member had not taken their own child along," the judgment stated. "This Court finds that the negligence was so gross that it is a criminal negligence punishable under Section

304 IPC," the Judge added, while rejecting the argument that Section 34 IPC (common intention) was not applicable. On June 8, 2014, 48 engineering students and faculty members were travelling from Shimla to Manali when they stopped near the Beas river at Shala-Nala for a photo session. With the river level appearing low, many students moved into the dry riverbed. Suddenly, water was released from the Larji Dam upstream without any prior hooter or warning system in place, sweeping away 25 students and a tour manager. The bodies were recovered over the following weeks from downstream, including Pandoh Dam. The postmortem reports confirmed drowning as the cause of death.

Why only Air
India? SC junks
PIL seeking
audit of airlineTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea for the constitution of a committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge to audit Air India's safety practices and maintenance procedures independently.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi questioned the petitioner why he was singling out Air India.

"Why just Air India? What about others?" they asked while rejecting the petition. That plea was filed in the wake of a recent crash of an Air India Boeing aircraft operating on the Ahmedabad - London route, which claimed 270 lives.

Indian Army, IAF seek 200
light helicopters to replace
ageing Chetak-Cheetah fleetTDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry has issued a Request for Information (RFI) to replace its fleet of Chetak and Cheetah helicopters with about 200 modern light helicopters classified as Reconnaissance and Surveillance Helicopters (RSH). The new helicopters will serve both the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force, with an expected requirement of 120 units for the Army and 80 for the Air Force. The RFI aims to finalise technical requirements, decide the procurement method, and identify potential suppliers, including Indian companies partnering with

original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), who can supply Reconnaissance and Surveillance Helicopters. These helicopters will have multiple roles, operating day and night. Their duties will include reconnaissance and surveillance, carrying small troops or Quick Reaction Teams for special missions, supporting ground operations with internal and external loads, scouting alongside attack helicopters, casualty evacuation including search and rescue, and aiding civil authorities when required. In March, the Indian Air Force had already planned to acquire more utility helicopters alongside other defence platforms.

World Lion Day 2025: Barda Sanctuary thrives with 17 lions, 25 leopards

TDG NETWORK
GANDHINAGAR

On the occasion of World Lion Day 2025, the State of Gujarat reaffirmed its position as a national leader in wildlife conservation by showcasing the ongoing ecological advancement of the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary into a robust secondary habitat for the Asiatic lion, a press release from the Gujarat CMO said on Friday.

As per the 2023 wildlife cen-

sus, Barda is now home to 17 Asiatic lions, including cubs, and a healthy population of 25 leopards.

According to the release, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, the Forest and Environment Department has undertaken a science-driven and community-inclusive approach to habitat development. The strategic transformation of Barda Sanctuary is the result

of focused efforts in ecological restoration, scientific habitat management, and participatory governance. Gujarat's sustained success in the conservation of the Asiatic lion stands as a model of balanced development. It reflects the guiding philosophy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi -- "Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi" -- where progress and preservation are pursued simultaneously and harmoniously. This



dual approach ensures that the protection of natural heritage goes hand in hand with sustainable development.

Comprehensive conservation measures -- including grassland restoration, prey base enhancement, and

technology-enabled wildlife tracking -- have significantly improved the sanctuary's carrying capacity. This progress aligns with the broader objectives of Project Lion, launched by Prime Minister Modi to expand lion habitats beyond Gir, ensure health security for wildlife, and promote long-term ecological sustainability. Located near Porbandar in coastal Saurashtra, Barda Wildlife Sanctuary has been

identified as a core landscape under Project Lion for habitat diversification. Unlike many protected areas, Barda records 100 per cent lion habitation within its boundaries, underscoring the success of habitat protection strategies. The use of advanced tools like radio-collars and real-time movement tracking has made lion monitoring more effective.

Efforts such as large-scale

grassland rejuvenation and prey species augmentation have created a robust ecological base capable of supporting apex predators. The co-existence of lions and leopards within the sanctuary signals the presence of a stable and functional ecosystem, positioning Barda as a replicable model for future rewilding and conservation projects, the press release said.

INDIA'S FUEL BILL TO RISE WITHOUT RUSSIAN OIL IMPORTS: REPORT

The bill could increase by \$9 billion to \$12 billion: SBI study

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's crude oil import bill could increase by USD 9 billion to USD 12 billion, if the country stops buying Russian crude oil, according to a report by the State Bank of India (SBI).

The report noted that if India halted oil imports from Russia for the rest of FY26, the fuel bill might increase by USD 9 billion in FY26 and USD 11.7 billion in FY27 due to increase in prices.

SBI stated "if India stopped oil imports from Russia during the rest of FY26, then India's fuel bill might increase by only USD 9 billion".

Russia currently accounts for 10 per cent of the global crude supply. If all countries stopped buying from Russia, crude oil prices could

FUEL BILL IMPACT WITHOUT RUSSIAN OIL

- SBI projects USD 9bn rise in FY26, USD 11.7bn in FY27.
- Russia supplies 35.1% of India's crude imports, up from 1.7% in FY20.
- Diversified imports from 40 nations could cushion impact but not avoid higher costs.
- Global crude prices may jump 10% if Russian exports face wider bans.



rise by around 10 per cent, provided no other countries increase their production.

India substantially increased purchasing of Russian oil since 2022, which was sold at a discount, capped at USD 60 per barrel, to ensure energy security after Western nations imposed sanctions on Moscow and avoided its supplies following the invasion

of Ukraine. As a result, Russia's share in India's total oil imports surged from just 1.7 per cent in FY20 to 35.1 per cent in FY25, making Russia India's largest oil supplier. In volume terms, India imported 88 million metric tonnes (MMT) of crude from Russia in FY25, out of its total oil imports of 245 MMT.

Before the Ukraine war,

Iraq was India's top crude supplier, followed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Indian refiners generally source oil from Middle Eastern producers through annual contracts, which allow flexibility to request additional supplies each month.

Since the imposition of sanctions on Russia, refiners have also turned to

crude suppliers in the United States, West Africa, and Azerbaijan.

India has further diversified its oil sources to about 40 countries. New supply options have emerged from Guyana, Brazil, and Canada, adding to the country's energy security.

If Russian supplies were cut off, India could shift back to its traditional Middle Eastern suppliers under existing annual deals, ensuring flexibility in meeting its import needs.

The SBI report highlighted that while the potential increase in the import bill is significant, India's diversified supply network and established contracts with other oil-producing nations may help cushion the impact.

However, a rise in global crude prices due to reduced Russian exports would still put upward pressure on costs.

US tariffs may slow India's economic growth: Morgan Stanley

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

If the recently announced US tariffs on Indian goods persist for a longer period, the impact on India's economic growth could be between 0.4 per cent and 0.8 per cent, Morgan Stanley has said in a report.

The US has increased tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent. According to the report, if tariffs remain at these high levels for 12 months, India's growth could see downside risks, assuming no mitigating factors.

"To assess the impact of tariffs on India's GDP, we use inferences from the input-output table modelled by our global team," the report said.

The report analyzed that assuming all goods exports are subject to a 50 per cent tariff rate, the direct impact on growth is likely to be 60bps (basis points), while the indirect impact could be of a similar magnitude over a 12-month period.

A similar sensitivity analysis for the 67 per cent of non-exempted goods suggests that the direct impact could be 40bps, while the indirect impact could be of the same magnitude, taking the total

impact to 80bps.

The sensitivity analysis is based on a linear impact from the external demand shock and does not consider mitigating factors such as domestic policy response or export market diversification.

The report also noted that policy support could step up to bolster domestic growth conditions if downside risks persist.

Breaking down the tariff impact, the report explained that the primary impacts account for the

mand causes global ripple effects in intermediate inputs linked to the goods initially impacted. Reduced output from these effects can lead to a decline in value-added production, which, if sustained, could result in falling wage bills or employment losses.

The report also shared that there is also a tertiary impact, arising from smaller operating profits and a weaker business environment, which could discourage investment.

"We will closely monitor geopolitical developments



decline in value-added GDP from lower demand, either in the sector or product that is tariffed, or in all goods from a country if it faces a blanket tariff.

The secondary impacts look at how lower initial de-

and high frequency growth data. On the trade side, the sixth round of negotiations between India and the US, currently slated for August 25, will be important to track," Morgan Stanley said.

Any tariff on pharma will hit India: SBI Research

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Imposing tariffs on the pharmaceutical Industry will significantly impact the earnings of Indian pharma companies, as nearly 40 per cent of India's total pharma exports are directed to the US market, according to a report by SBI Research.

The report highlighted that if the US President imposes 50 per cent tariffs on Indian pharma exports as well, the earnings of phar-



maceutical companies may decline by 5 to 10 per cent in FY26.

This is because many large

Indian pharma companies derive between 40 - 50 per cent of their total revenue from the US market.

Gold prices hit fresh record on stockist buying, tariffs

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed by Rs 800 to hit a fresh all-time high of Rs 1,03,420 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday due to persistent buying by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity added Rs 3,600 in the preceding



Sensex dives below 80k on tariff jitters

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Equity benchmark index Sensex tumbled nearly 1 per cent to slip below the 80,000 level on Friday as growing concerns over the impact of the additional US tariff and unabated foreign fund outflows unnerved investors.

Deep losses in market heavyweights Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel also added pressure on equities, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 765.47 points or 0.95 per cent to settle at 79,857.79. During the day, it tumbled 847.42 points or 1.05 per cent to 79,775.84.

As many as 2,507 stocks declined while 1,521 advanced and 145 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 232.85 points or 0.95 per cent to 24,363.30.

Extending losing streak for the sixth consecutive week, the BSE benchmark dropped 742.12 points or 0.92 per cent, and the Nifty declined 202.05 points or 0.82 per cent.

"The Indian equity market exhibited downward movement, closing at a three-



month low amid growing concerns over the impact of US tariffs on Indian exports.

"FIIs remained net sellers, intensifying the pressure on domestic indices. The pessimism was broad-based, with realty and metals bearing the biggest brunt," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

From the Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank and Reliance Industries were among the laggards.

"Selling intensified, with the Sensex ending below the psychological 80k mark, as analysts believe that once the

stiff tariff penalty on Indian goods by the Trump administration comes into effect, India's growth could be hit going ahead," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

However, NTPC, Titan, Trent, ITC and Bajaj Finserv managed to be in green territory.

The BSE midcap gauge tanked 1.56 per cent, and the smallcap index dropped 1.03 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended lower, realty dropped 2.09 per cent, telecommunication (1.83 per cent), metal (1.82 per cent), consumer durables (1.68 per cent), capital goods (1.62 per cent) and commodities (1.55 per cent).

SEBI chairman calls for modernising boardrooms

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The way the larger financial markets operate have changed over the years but Boardrooms in India haven't evolved at the same pace, SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey asserted on Friday, suggesting some changes that need to be incorporated as part of day-to-day practice.

Speaking at the 2025 Annual Directors' Conclave organised by Institute of Directors (IOD), SEBI chief said boardrooms in India are still equipping themselves with analog tools in a digital, decentralised, and high-stakes environment.

The boardroom of tomorrow will need different instincts, different questions, and different courage, he sets off as he went on to spell some of the changes the Boardrooms need to bring about.

First, he suggested that Boardrooms must shift from compliance to culture. "Governance is no longer

just about policies. It's about tone, about behaviour and about values in action. Does the board talk about succession planning - or only CEO compensation? Does it probe culture - or leave that to HR? Does it review whistle-blower trends with curiosity -- or with defensiveness?" he explained.

"We must begin treating culture as a board-level re-



sponsibility - just like financials, risk, or strategy," he supplemented.

In another suggestion, he called for redefining the role

of independent directors.

"We cannot continue to view them as honorary appointees, or friendly critics. They must be viewed - and treated - as stewards of accountability," the SEBI chief added.

Third, Boards must embrace governance technology, he opined.

"Let's stop viewing digital tools as burdens or threats. Today's boards can and should demand real-time dashboards that provide meaningful insights - not just volumes of PDF reports. Imagine dashboards that track red-flag employee exits, whistle-blower complaints, ESG trends, or vendor concentration risks -- and bring them to the board's attention before they hit the news," Pandey said.

Governance intelligence, according to him, must become as routine as financial intelligence.

Finally, he noted that Boardrooms need diversity that goes beyond demography.

India marches towards energy self-reliance, but imports still crucial: Hardeep Puri

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday highlighted India's strides in clean energy and domestic fuel production, while acknowledging that the country still relies heavily on imports to meet its growing energy needs.

"We already have 113 compressed biogas (CBG) plants

Pioneer Biofuels 360 Summit here in the national capital.

The Minister pointed to India's liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) distribution as another example of progress in energy access.

"Today, we are running against all statistics," he said. "We have 33.5 crore LPG connections in the country, including 10.5 crore under the Ujjwala Yojana, yet we still import about 60 per cent of our LPG."



operating and another 73 under construction," he said on the progress of bioenergy and natural gas space.

"If you look at the car models coming onto the market, many new ones are CNG-compatible. So that's a success story," the minister told reporters on the sidelines of

While acknowledging the import dependency, Puri reaffirmed that the country is taking decisive steps to increase domestic production.

"Our refineries are going to produce more. We are going to do more in exploration and production (E&P)," he said.

India needs adequate valuation mechanism for skilled workers: Jayant Chaudhary

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary urged businesses to step up by offering better pay for certified workers and shifting away from informal hiring practices, stating, "everyone understands our skill gap -- young people are graduating, but we cannot hire them".

Speaking at the 16th FICCI Global Skills Summit, the minister likened the current gap in valuing certified workers to the early days of carbon pricing, where the absence of clear mechanisms delayed meaningful climate action. He called for a shift in how India values skilled labour. "Currently, we don't have a price for employability, for skill," he said.

India is staring at a disconnect between formal education and employability, with



policymakers and industry leaders warning that without urgent reforms, the country risks turning its demographic dividend into a liability.

Reinforcing this sentiment, Jayant Chaudhary told ANI, "FICCI showed solidarity with the efforts the GoI is making to ensure national interest is kept supreme. Our Prime Minister also said that there is no way the interest of our farmers, fishermen, agricultural workers or rural artisans can be compromised."

EMPOWERING BHARAT'S FUTURE: THE SWADESHI APPROACH TO SELF-RELIANCE

OPINION

SHIVPRAKASH



The proposed 25% tariff proposed by the United States of America (USA), to presurise Bharat for a unfair trade deal is not only irrational but also a direct attack on Bharat's rural agricultural economy and self-reliance. In this context, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for "Swadeshi" (indigenous products) and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant Bharat) is no longer just an emotional appeal but a strategic response.

Bharat's rural economy is not limited to just farms and the dairy sector. It is a socio-economic structure that includes small farmers, women's self-help groups, cooperative societ-

ies, and traditional production chains. About 86% of Bhartiya farmers are small and marginal, with land holdings of less than two hectares. Over 8 crore rural families in the country are associated with the dairy sector, most of whom are women and landless farmers.

This entire group is highly vulnerable and relies heavily on government support for their livelihood. The entire structure involving such a vast population depends on Minimum Support Price (MSP), subsidies, and customs duties.

PM Modi has expressed his commitment to protect the interests of agriculture and dairy, which are the backbone of the rural economy. Safeguarding the tariff structure, strengthening local price structures, and empowering farmer producer organizations, cold storage facilities, and processing units are among the government's top priorities.

The government is fully committed in empowering women economically, ensuring nutritional security, preserving traditional

agricultural diversity, and safeguarding rural life and livelihoods in every possible way.

In light of these concerns, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his visit to Kashi, raised the slogan of *Swadeshi* (indigenous) to the people of the country. Referring to *Operation Sindoor*, he stated that the world has witnessed the strength of indigenous weapons. The Prime Minister described this as the power of self-reliance in Bharat's defence sector.

There is an atmosphere of uncertainty and instability in the global economy. To overcome this instability, all nations are adopting policies that protect their national interests. In such a scenario, how can Bharat remain an exception? We are on the path to becoming the world's third-largest economy. In this context, we must remain vigilant about our national interests, as well as the livelihoods of our farmers, small industries, and youth.

To achieve the goal of becoming the third-largest economy, all political parties, intellectuals, and society as a whole must rise above partisan lines and unite in proclaiming the mantra of *Swadeshi*. We must adopt *Swadeshi* and promote *Swadeshi*.

Over the past decade, Bharat's economy has steadily climbed to new



heights. In 2013-2014, Bharat was ranked as the 11th largest economy of the world. Today, it stands at the fourth position and is rapidly moving toward becoming the third largest. Our growth rate is progressing at a strong pace of 6.4%. Bharat's influence has expanded across all sectors, including defence and agriculture. Bharat's participation in the global market has also increased significantly.

Because of our poor welfare policies, more than 24 crore people have been elevated beyond the poverty line. Bharat has made progress in all areas, including infrastructure development. The standard of our basic amenities is reaching world-class levels.

Referring to the success of *Operation Sindoor*, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that while we worship Lord Bholenath, when the need arises, we also become *Kaal Bhairav* for our security.

Bharat's rising economic progress, robust security policy, and growing global influence are also generating envy toward India among some nations of the world.

The agricultural system in the United States is industrialised, subsidy-supported, and operates on a large scale. In contrast, Bharat's agricultural sector is composed mainly of small land-holding farmers. Around 55% of Bharat's population depends on agriculture, the majority of whom live in vil-

lages. Agriculture contributes about 15% to Bharat's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Farming in Bharat is highly dependent on unpredictable weather conditions. Rooted in a labor-intensive system, Bhartiya agriculture cannot be compared to that of the United States. Therefore, countries like the U.S. and Bharat cannot be expected to operate under similar tariff structures.

In Bharat, sectors like textiles, food grains, sugar, dairy, and fisheries are closely linked to agriculture. Forcing Bharat to open up sensitive sectors such as agriculture and dairy to the U.S. would be unreasonable.

If such a situation arises, Bharat's market will be

flooded with cheap American dairy products. Women's self-help groups and cooperative institutions like Amul will face economic distress. Bharat's farmers will be forced to sell their produce at throwaway prices in the market. This could trigger an economic crisis in rural areas, leading to unemployment, migration, and growing discontent.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has introduced numerous policies for agriculture and farmer welfare over the past decade. In the last ten years, the agriculture budget has increased more than fivefold — from 21,933 crore in 2013-2014 to 1.25 lakh crore in 2023-2024.

The cooperative sector in Bharat is also actively working to empower women and strengthen the rural economy. Supporting rural economies, agriculture and farmer welfare, women's safety, the dairy industry, and nurturing the cooperative movement is our national duty — a call that has been strongly voiced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Swadeshi is not just a temporary idea — it is the very soul of Bharat. It is the clarion call of Bharat's unity, patriotism, and collective aspirations. The spirit of *Swadeshi* has manifested itself in various forms throughout Bharat's history. During British co-

lonial rule, it emerged as a powerful tool of resistance — symbolised by the burning of foreign clothes and the slogan *Vande Mataram*, which helped uproot foreign domination.

Even during the tenure of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, when Bharat faced international sanctions after conducting nuclear tests, the country responded with the spirit of *Swadeshi*. The world was given a fitting reply, powered by the strength of indigenous resolve.

The mantra of *Swadeshi* awakens a sense of restraint and self-reliance, helping us resist unnecessary dependence on foreign capital. By embracing this principle, we can fuel the growth of our defence industry, increase agricultural productivity, and expand labor-intensive industries.

The expansion of public services and core industries under the *Swadeshi* vision will provide a solid foundation for our economy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for the practical adoption of *Swadeshi* based on these very principles. By truly integrating it into our lives, we can re-establish Bharat as an invincible force. This is the need of the hour.

Shivprakash is the National Jt.General Secretary (Organisation) of the Bhartiya Janta Party

US imposes 25% tariff on India: Trade, politics, and the bigger picture

OPINION

DR. AMAN KUMAR SHARMA & SHELU SHARMA



In a significant development that could reshape global trade dynamics, the United States has announced a 25% tariff on selected Indian goods. Alongside this, a new oil-related project and trade deal with Pakistan have emerged, adding layers to an already complex geopolitical and economic scenario.

WHAT IS A TARIFF AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A tariff is a kind of tax or duty imposed by one country on goods imported from another. For example, if an American car priced at 50 lakhs is imported into India and a 100% tariff is applied, the price effectively becomes 1 crore. The extra money goes to the Indian government, making imported products more expensive and less competitive compared to local alternatives.

In reverse, if Indian goods go to the US and are hit with a 25% tariff, those products



become costlier for American consumers. The US government earns revenue from these tariffs, but the higher cost discourages imports, impacting foreign exporters like Indian businesses.

THE TRADE DEFICIT TRIGGER

One of the main reasons the US has imposed this tariff is the growing trade imbalance between the two nations. India has consistently maintained a trade surplus with the US, meaning it exports far more than it imports. Last year alone, India had a trade surplus of around \$40 billion.

From the American perspective, this isn't ideal. The US wants to reduce this gap and balance the trade relationship. Many analysts believe that the tariff is a pressure tactic to push India into a bilateral trade agreement that would allow US companies more access and favorable conditions in the

Indian market.

INDIA: THE "TARIFF KING"?

Interestingly, the US argues that India itself imposes steep tariffs on imported goods, particularly American products. Items like luxury cars, watches, and electronic gadgets often face 30% to 100% tariffs when entering India. This significantly raises the price and makes them less attractive to Indian consumers, who might then choose similar items from other countries.

The US sees its own 25% tariff as a retaliatory or corrective measure. It's also a signal that India must be more flexible if it wants continued trade cooperation with Washington.

STRATEGIC MOTIVES BEHIND THE MOVE

While trade balance is one reason, there are deeper strategic motivations. India's growing proximity to Russia, especially its continued oil imports and defense ties despite Western sanctions, has been a sore point for the US. Additionally, India's participation in BRICS and discussions within the group to trade in local currencies rather than US dollars is another concern for Washington.

These developments could weaken the dollar's dominance in global trade, which the US naturally wants to prevent. Hence, the 25% tariff can also be interpreted as part of a broader geopolitical game to nudge India away from Russia and China.

IMPACT ON INDIAN INDUSTRIES

The tariff will primarily af-



Items like luxury cars, watches, and electronic gadgets often face 30% to 100% tariffs when entering India. This significantly raises the price and makes them less attractive to Indian consumers, who might then choose similar items from other countries.

fect some of India's largest export sectors:

1. Gems and Jewelry- India exports around \$10 billion worth of gems and jewelry to the US annually. With the new tariff, these products will become significantly more expensive in the US market, reducing demand and hurting Indian artisans and exporters.

2. Textiles and Garments- Another vital sector, textiles account for about \$2.5 billion in exports to the US. These products will also become costlier, potentially reducing India's competitiveness compared to countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh.

3. Auto Parts- Indian auto

component manufacturers export parts that are assembled or used for repairs in the US. A tariff will increase prices, affecting demand and eventually production back home.

4. Pharmaceuticals- While not directly targeted (yet), there's concern that Indian pharmaceutical exports, which form a large part of the healthcare ecosystem in the US, could face indirect pressure or future tariff extensions.

The cumulative effect of reduced exports could dent India's GDP, with estimates suggesting a potential impact of 0.2% to 0.5%, depending on how long the tariff remains in place and

how deep its effects run.

WHO PAYS THE PRICE IN THE US?

Though intended to target India, the tariffs will also affect American consumers and companies:

● **Apple and Tech Firms-** With iPhones now being manufactured in India, the tariff would increase their cost when re-imported into the US. That would raise retail prices for American consumers, causing dissatisfaction and potentially forcing Apple to reevaluate its supply chain strategies.

● **Jewelry Retailers-** As Indian diamonds and precious stones become pricier, US based jewelers may struggle to maintain margins or pass on the increased cost to consumers, which could reduce sales.

Overall, Americans will end up paying more for several products as a result of these tariffs.

US-PAKISTAN OIL DEAL: ADDING FUEL TO THE FIRE

In a parallel development, the US announced its inten-

tion to support Pakistan in a major oil infrastructure project, pledging technical and economic cooperation. Additionally, Pakistan may be granted tariff exemptions on certain exports to the US.

Some experts view this as a geopolitical strategy to strengthen ties with Pakistan and counter Chinese influence in the region, especially via CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor). It's also a message to India highlighting that the US has other partners in South Asia and that India must not take the US relationship for granted.

Cheaper Pakistani exports to the US could compete directly with Indian products, especially in textiles and garments. If Pakistani products become cheaper due to tariff exemptions, Indian products may lose market share, further intensifying the impact of the US tariff.

WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR INDIA?

India now faces a strategic crossroads. It must decide whether to:

1. Negotiate a Bilateral

Deal – The US clearly wants a trade agreement that gives its companies more market access and reduces India's high tariffs on American products. If both sides reach a compromise, some of the current tensions may ease.

2. Explore New Markets

– With a possible decline in US-bound exports, India must look for alternative markets. Opportunities exist in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia (e.g., Vietnam, Indonesia) where demand for Indian goods is growing.

3. Reform Tariff Policies

– India may consider recalibrating its own tariff structure, especially if it wants to be seen as a more open and cooperative trade partner globally.

CONCLUSION

The 25% tariff imposed by the US on Indian goods is not just about trade it's about leverage, influence, and geopolitics. While it may be seen as a penalty for trade imbalances or India's closeness to Russia, it also reflects America's shifting priorities in the South Asian region.

India must respond with a balanced mix of diplomacy, economic strategy, and policy reform. Whether it chooses negotiation, diversification, or both, the goal must be to protect its economic interests without compromising its geopolitical autonomy.

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THE ANATOMY OF DHARALI'S COLLAPSE

In two days, the Indian Army and Air Force airlifted nearly 355 people from cut-off areas like Harsil to safety in Matli, further downstream.

TDG EXPLAINER

On a quiet afternoon in early August, the people of Dharali – a small Himalayan village on the road to Gangotri temple – heard a deafening roar. “I heard a sound like boulders grinding,” recalls Sunita Devi of nearby Mukhba village. Within moments, a wall of muddy water and rock was upon Dharali. Witnesses saw the Kheer Ganga stream turn into a monster, a raging torrent tearing through the valley. In a video that later went viral, terrified villagers can be heard screaming “Everything is over!” as the floodwaters swallowed homes and hotels in seconds. What had been a picturesque pilgrim hamlet in Uttarkashi district was suddenly a scene of carnage and despair.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel search through deep mud and rubble in Dharali village after the flash flood. The once-bustling Himalayan stopover was left half-buried in debris.

A VILLAGE OBLITERATED

At 1:30 pm on August 5, 2025, the Himalayan village of Dharali in Uttarkashi was all but erased from the map. Without warning, a wall of water, rocks, and sludge roared down from the mountains, engulfing the bustling pilgrim hamlet. Locals had been attending a temple festival when the deluge struck. “People ran for their lives, but the flood came so fast that there was nothing anyone could do,” said Lokendra Bisht, a homestay owner and MLA.

Multi-story hotels and homes were flattened or swept into the Bhagirathi River. Satellite images later revealed a massive sediment deposit nearly 20 hectares wide, burying much of the village under layers of debris. “The whole of Dharali was wiped out,” Bisht said. At least five were confirmed dead, and around 100 were feared missing—many of them migrant workers or pilgrims. The floodwaters also struck an Army camp 4 km away in Harsil, where 11 soldiers vanished as barracks were washed away.

Dharali, at 2,700 metres, was a key stop for Gangotri pilgrims. Its riverside growth—marked by 20–25 hotels and shops—had made it a tourism hub. But

experts warn it sat “on a ticking time bomb,” built in an ecologically fragile zone vulnerable to both flash floods and glacial activity.

RESCUE ON WAR FOOTING

Rescue efforts began within hours. Despite heavy rain and unstable terrain, over 800 personnel—including the Army, ITBP, NDRF, SDRF, and local forces—launched a high-risk operation. “Rescue teams had been deployed on a war footing,” said Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who rushed to oversee relief on-site.

Reaching Dharali was a battle. With highways buried or broken, rescuers were forced to navigate landslides and waist-deep sludge. “More teams couldn’t reach due to continuous landslides,” said NDRF DIG Mohsen Shahedi. Yet soldiers pushed through 50-foot debris piles, aided by sniffer dogs and drones.

Improvisation saved lives. Army engineers built rope bridges and later a temporary span across the Bhagirathi, enabling access to the isolated side of the village. Airlifting was critical: Chinooks, Mi-17s, and state helicopters ferried food, equipment, and evacuees. Over two days, nearly 355 people were rescued from nearby Harsil, many airlifted on stretchers. By Day 4, 566 people had been evacuated—an extraordinary feat in such terrain.

Communication lines were down, but the Army enabled satellite and radio contact. Families were reunited by short calls from relief camps. “All affected people are being given medical assistance,” said Lt. Gen. D.G. Mishra. Still, dozens remained trapped. “The number of missing is unknown,” added Colonel Harshvardhan, vowing to continue through the night.

CM Dhami camped in Uttarkashi for days, directing efforts to restore roads and power. He pledged a month’s salary to the cause. Prime Minister Modi also offered full central assistance. For many soldiers digging through the wreckage, the mission was deeply personal—eleven of their own were among the missing.

CLOUDBURST OR GLACIER COLLAPSE?



Before-and-after satellite images of Dharali village in Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand. The left image (August 13, 2024), captured before the disaster, shows the original layout of Dharali near the confluence of the Bhagirathi and Kheer Ganga rivers. The right image (August 7, 2025), taken after the August 5, 2025 flash flood, reveals the massive deposition of sediments that buried much of the village. ISRO analysis suggests the flood was likely caused by a glacial lake outburst or landslide-induced debris flow, rather than a typical cloudburst.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRIGGER

As the immediate rescue operation continued, experts and officials began probing what exactly caused such a sudden and devastating flood. Early statements from state authorities blamed a “cloudburst” – a localized extreme downpour – high in the mountains. In fact, the India Meteorological Department reported extremely heavy rain (up to 21 cm in 24 hours) in parts of Uttarakhand around that time. Chief Minister Dhami initially attributed the disaster to a sudden cloudburst and termed the destruction “extremely sad and distressing”. Cloudbursts are not uncommon in these mountains: intense downpours over a small area can send deadly flash floods crashing through valleys with little warning. The phenomenon is a notorious monsoon-season threat across Uttarakhand and has caused many past Himalayan disasters.

Yet on closer look, the cloudburst explanation didn’t fully add up. Weather stations near Dharali showed very little rainfall on Tuesday – Harsil recorded only 6.5 mm that day, nowhere near cloudburst levels. “The area near Dharali village did not receive heavy rain in the hours preceding the calamity,” several scientists pointed out. This raised an ominous alternative theory: the flood might have been triggered by a glacial lake burst or a glacier collapse high above. “It may not have been heavy rain at all,” noted Dr. D.D. Chauniyal, a Himalayan geographer. He suspects one of the small glacial ponds upstream of the Kheer Ganga river suddenly breached. “There are several glacial ponds in the snow-covered area north of Dharali... I think one of these ponds

burst, and caused others to burst. Then water and debris flowed downstream with great force... and then it hit Dharali,” he explained. The torrent came down so fast and ended so quickly – essentially a single violent surge – that experts say it was characteristic of a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) rather than a prolonged cloudburst-fed flow. “The deluge lasted just for seconds, but created massive destruction,” Dr. Chauniyal noted, comparing it to the infamous 2013 Kedarnath disaster which was also caused by a sudden breaching of a natural lake.

Other scientists echoed this hypothesis. Safi Ahsan Rizvi, an advisor at the National Disaster Management Authority, revealed indications that part of a glacier’s snout at 6,700m altitude had detached days earlier, accumulating a huge mass of ice and rock in a valley. “Incessant rain over the past few days... led to loosening of the debris. Once critical mass was crossed, the massive collection of debris cascaded downstream with water in the Kheer Ganga, accelerating due to the steep gradient up to Dharali,” Rizvi explained. In simpler terms, a natural dam – whether ice, rock, or moraine – likely gave way in the upper watershed, releasing a violent pulse of water and sediment. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) bolstered this theory when it released before-and-after satellite images of Dharali. The images from August 7 clearly showed a newly-formed debris fan covering the village and significantly widened river channels compared to a month prior. ISRO analysts noted these are tell-tale signs of a sudden, high-energy flood. “Scientific analysis is being carried out to ascertain the cause of

the triggering event,” ISRO said, adding that the event highlights the increasing vulnerability of Himalayan settlements.

By all accounts, climate change is a big part of the story. Uttarakhand’s Himalayan glaciers are retreating, and unstable glacial lakes are growing in size and number. “Cloudbursts have increased in recent years partly due to climate change, while damage from storms has increased because of unplanned development,” experts say. In 2024, the World Meteorological Organization warned that more intense cloudbursts and flash floods in South Asia are a “distress signal” of the climate crisis. The monsoon rains themselves are becoming more erratic – long dry spells punctuated by bursts of extreme rainfall – which strains the mountains’ capacity to absorb water. Whether the trigger was cloudburst or GLOF (or a combination of both), the outcome was magnified by a warming climate that fuels extreme weather. As one Uttarakhand official put it, “the Himalayas are becoming monsoon graveyards” for villages caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

MOUNTAIN VULNERABILITIES AND PAST WARNINGS

The Dharali tragedy underscores how fragile the Himalayan terrain is – and how human actions have amplified the risks. Uttarkashi district is a steep, earthquake-prone zone sliced by fast-flowing rivers. Historically, villages were built on higher ledges or the more stable side of river bends. In Dharali’s case, the original settlement on the river’s right bank (when facing downstream) remained largely intact, ac-



The ITBP team, with the help of JCB clears debris at a road near Dharali after a cloudburst and landslides hit various places in Uttarkashi on Wednesday. (ITBP/ANI Photo)

ording to experts, whereas the newer constructions on the left bank – essentially the river’s floodplain – were obliterated. “Earlier, people carefully chose the safe area to build their homes,” Dr. Chauniyal noted. “The new settlements, built without planning for natural disasters, were razed. Earlier, this area was agricultural land, then hotels came up, roads were built,” he said, lamenting the short-sighted development. In recent decades, tourism and road-building in Uttarakhand have boomed, often with little regard for environmental precautions. Hillsides have been cut for highways, and riversides crowded with guesthouses – many of which lack sturdy engineering. Such construction can weaken slopes and block natural drainage, making landslides and flash floods more destructive.

Tragically, Uttarakhand has seen this pattern before. Twelve years ago in June 2013, intense cloudbursts and dam breaches around Kedarnath triggered massive floods and landslides that killed over 6,000 people across the state. That disaster wiped out entire villages and 4,500 roads, and was a wake-up call about the dangers of rampant development in a climate-stressed region. Two years later in 2015 (and apparently even as far back as 1864), similar cloudburst-induced floods hit the Uttarkashi area, including Dharali, though on a lesser scale. More recently, in February 2021 a chunk of a glacier broke off in Chamoli district, releasing

a torrent of water and rock that devastated two hydroelectric project sites. Over 200 workers were killed in that incident, which was later identified as a rare high-altitude rockslide and glacial ice avalanche. Investigations showed how a warming climate contributed to the instability of glaciers, while the presence of infrastructure in hazardous zones led to high casualties.

Despite these warnings, development has marched on in the name of progress and connectivity. Uttarakhand is building all-weather roads to its Char Dham pilgrimage sites, and hydroelectric dams continue to be planned on its rivers. But events like the Dharali mudslide are forcing a rethink. “The Dharali tragedy has yet again brought to spotlight the perils of unplanned construction in the ecologically sensitive Himalayas,” noted one report. Environmentalists have long argued that the region’s carrying capacity is limited, and that aggressive construction is a “recipe for disaster” in places like the Bhagirathi valley. Sure enough, in the Uttarakashi floods, concrete buildings and widened roads in vulnerable zones paid the price. Congress MP Ranjeet Ranjan called the calamity “man-made”, revealing that she had raised concerns in Parliament about the Char Dham road widening through areas “like Dharali... an eco-sensitive region near the Bhagirathi River”. Bringing heavy infrastructure into such landslide-prone

terrain, she warned, was courting disaster – and her words proved prescient.

AFTER THE DELUGE: POLICY, PREPARATION, AND THE ROAD AHEAD

As the floodwaters in Uttarakhand recede, the disaster in Dharali has left behind pressing questions for policymakers. How can remote mountain communities be better protected in an age of escalating climate extremes? While the India Meteorological Department had issued general rainfall warnings, they were too broad to help a small village like Dharali. Experts now urge the implementation of hyper-local early warning systems using dense rain-gauge networks and satellite surveillance of glacial lakes.

The calamity has also reignited debates over unchecked construction in fragile zones. Opposition leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra called for a comprehensive disaster prevention strategy, including tighter enforcement of building codes, no-build zones near rivers, and reforestation to restore natural buffers. The fact that “old” Dharali withstood the flood while newly developed areas were destroyed has prompted calls to prioritise traditional wisdom in reconstruction. Experts warn that rebuilding should not replicate past mistakes—tourist infrastructure must be shifted to safer ground, and climate-resilient systems must be prioritised.

Crucially, evacuation protocols and early alerts must be improved. In Dharali, residents had only minutes before disaster struck. Authorities are now considering upstream sensors that can detect landslides or glacial lake outbursts (GLOFs) and instantly alert downstream communities, potentially saving lives.

The tragedy has amplified calls for serious climate adaptation. Former CM Akhilesh Yadav urged unified action across India’s hill states to “Save the Himalayas.” The Centre has announced aid, and Prime Minister Modi has stressed better connectivity in border regions—but experts caution that the line between development and ecological collapse is thin.

Compiled by Ruchira Talapatra



Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami assures the victim of her safety during his visit to the Dharali mudslide disaster site, in Uttarkashi on Friday. (ANI Video Grab)



Indian Air Force rescues 226 civilians stranded and affected after a massive cloudburst at Dharali, in Uttarkashi on Friday. IAF deploys Chinook and Mi-17V5 helicopters, along with C-295 and AN-32 aircraft. (ISPOkespersonMoD X/ANI Photo)



Indian Air Force rescues 226 civilians stranded and affected after a massive cloudburst at Dharali, in Uttarkashi on Friday. IAF deploys Chinook and Mi-17V5 helicopters, along with C-295 and AN-32 aircraft. (ISPOkespersonMoD X/ANI Photo)

RAJASTHAN ADIVASIS: CULTURE, CHALLENGES, AND RESILIENCE



HEMANT SINGH

Adivasi Diwas, celebrated on August 9 every year, honors the rich culture, history, and contributions of the indigenous tribal communities across India. This day recognizes the unique identity and heritage of Adivasis while raising awareness about their rights, struggles, and the need for social and economic empowerment. It serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving tribal traditions and promoting inclusive development for these communities.

As the name suggests, Adivasi means resident on earth since the beginning. Adivasis are the original inhabitants of India. This community is also called local. This community still lives in the lap of nature. Shiva is the deity of this community which worships nature, sun, moon, trees, rivers, mountains and animals. According to Vedas, Rudra means one who lives in the forest. Adivasis worship Shiva. This proves that the history of the tribal community is the history of the

most ancient civilization.

KANHAIYA PAD DANGAL, LIVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Meena tribal community of Rajasthan has its own folk culture, singing-dancing style and clothing which differentiates them from other communities and gives them a unique identity. Kanhaiya Pad Dangal is such a unique singing and dancing style of Meena tribals of eastern Rajasthan which includes Sawai Madhopur, Dausa, Tonk and Dholpur districts. This folk dance is performed in groups throughout the year, especially on auspicious occasions, except during the rainy season.

CHANGE IN STYLE, INCLUSION OF FOLK MUSIC

Initially, this tradition was based on classical music with 16 maatra and three taals. But in the last 120 years, the style has changed and to make the pada gayan more simple and effective, it is especially done with naubat, ghera (big dhap), dholak, harmonium and manjiro. 10 to 100 men participate in a group. If there are more people, two or more groups are formed. In this dance, which is performed entirely by men, the Madia (artist) wears simple attire of dhoti kurta or kurta pyjama and the members of one group give the words to the other group. On one side the naubat is played and on the other



side the Madia beats the gera loudly. The members of the other group speak the words by connecting them to the story. The Madia dances by stamping their feet loudly on the ground and moving around with a towel in their hands. This folk dance is performed with full enthusiasm and zeal, which creates enthusiasm in the minds of the audience as well. The stories are based on characters from the mythological Ramayana and Mahabharata. At present, parties organize Kanhaiya Pad Dangal by creating stories based on Bhagwan Birsa Munda, Dr. Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Iron Man Sardar Vallabhbhai Pa-



tel, Indian Constitution and social evils, corruption, education etc. as per the time.

BIRSA MUNDA: TRIBAL HERO AND WARRIOR

Birsa Munda was a great



tribal leader born in Jharkhand, India. He is considered a hero and a

symbol of pride for the tribal community. Birsa fought bravely against the enemies who tried to take away the rights of his people. He is known as the warrior of the Dhol Jhanda and is deeply respected by many. Birsa grew up in the lap of Mother Kurmi, and his influence spread across India. Unlike others, he did not shout slogans but stood strong with his turban and shaved moustache, representing the unique identity of the tribal people, symbolized by the Dhol Jhanda. Parties like Kanhaiya Pad Dangal tell stories on the biography of Doctor Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. So before starting, how do they remember Baba Saheb. Bhawani Shankar Meena, Lakshpat Meena, and Ka-

mlesh Aasika shared that tribal communities once ruled from Ambagarh Fort to Ranthambore Fort. The Bunda Meena settled Bundi, and the Kothia Bhil settled Kota. Tribal Pad Dangal performances showcase mythology, great leaders, and social issues, promoting education and reform.

PARTICIPATION OF THE NEW GENERATION

The inclusion of political and social topics has increased the interest of the youth towards this tradition. Now young artists not only participate in singing, but have also started doing stage management and creative writing. The writer is, Deputy Director Information and Public Relations Office, Jaipur

Rajasthan education transforms through reforms, community support



NARENDRA SHARMA

In recent years, Rajasthan has witnessed a significant transformation in its education sector, with improvements not only in the quality of education but also in infrastructure. The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) has played a major role in driving innovation and modern learning approaches across the state. Government schools are being upgraded and developed in ways that rival private institutions, offering hi-tech classrooms, digital learning tools, and modern facilities.

The results of the Parakh National Survey 2024, recently released by the Ministry of Education, provide strong evidence of Rajasthan's remarkable progress. The survey assessed the reading, writing, and comprehension abilities of students in Classes 3, 6, and 9 in subjects such as Hindi, English, Mathematics, Sci-

ence, and Social Science. Rajasthan outperformed the national average in several categories. For instance, Class 3 students in the state scored an average of 70% in language knowledge, compared to the national average of 64%. In Mathematics, Rajasthan achieved an average score of 66%, outperforming the national score of 60%. Similar trends were observed in the higher classes as well.

A notable highlight of the survey was that students from rural areas outperformed their urban counterparts, with girls performing better overall—demonstrating growing educational inclusivity and effectiveness in remote regions.

These improvements are not a result of short-term changes but of consistent efforts and innovative strategies by the state government and the education department. Initiatives such as regular teacher training, introduction of smart classrooms, weekly assessments, ICT labs, and community participation have significantly enhanced both the learning environment and student interest in education.

In many villages, students who had never seen a computer are now learning through ICT labs. Teachers



are using digital tools and videos in smart classrooms to enhance understanding. For younger children, Activity-Based Learning (ABL) kits are making learning fun and interactive, encouraging better literacy from an early age.

Another key factor driving educational progress in Rajasthan is the strong partnership between the community and the education system, especially through the contributions of Bhamashahs (philanthropists). These contributors are playing a vital role in building infrastructure and supporting quality education across the state.

One such success story is the Shrimati Geeta Devi Bagdi Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Napasar, Bikaner, which has seen its enrollment double in the past six years due to the joint efforts of the CM Mundhra Trust and the

education department. Similarly, in Sisoda, Rajsamand, a higher secondary school was recently constructed with the support of local philanthropists at a cost of 15 crore rupees. Another new school building for the Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Deshnok, Bikaner, is being built with Rs 2 crore contributed by donors.

These examples are just a glimpse of the broader change taking place. With continued focus on innovation, community participation, and infrastructural development, Rajasthan is paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive educational future. The combined efforts of the government, educators, and citizens are transforming schools into spaces of real learning and empowerment, setting new benchmarks for public education in India.

India has emerged as an economic power, but recent reforms are superficial



PROF. S.S. SOMRA

Eleven years after the NDA government came to power, economic growth is strong, inflation is low, rupee is stable, external sector is strong, fiscal position is better and bad loan problem has also ended. Though there are many global constraints and uncertainties created by tariff barriers and worsening geopolitical tensions, India has emerged as an economic power, which is important. But we have failed to push forward quality employment, manufacturing and next-generation economic reforms.

The economic growth rate from 2000 to 2014 was driven more by private investment and the economic growth rate from 2014 to the present is driven more by government investment. But the common man did not get much benefit from these reforms. Certainly, GDP is growing, and we have moved ahead. Today we are a four trillion-dollar economy. In 2014, we were ranked 11th. Today we are the fourth largest economy in the world and in 2027 we will be the third largest. But GDP is just a measure. As we know, we are a big economy, we have a population of 1.4 billion.

But the truth is that in terms of per capita income, we are still a poor country, which is a measure of a country's well-being. With a per capita income of about

\$2,800 (US\$2,878), we are 136th (out of 196 countries) in this respect. We are the poorest in the BRICS. We are the poorest in the G-20. And we have more poor people than any other country in the world. It is worth noting that jobs are being created in the economy, but they are low-productivity, part-time jobs in the unorganised sector. There are not enough productive jobs being created in the organised sector, and this is one of the biggest failures of the current government. We should focus on manufacturing to create jobs. There should be more focus on small and medium industries in particular, they are employment intensive sectors. But the situation in the manufacturing sector has not improved much in the last 11 years.

According to the data, the contribution of the manufacturing sector to GDP has remained stagnant. In 2014, the contribution of the manufacturing sector to GDP was 16.7 percent which is currently around 17 percent. Another disappointing thing about the current government regarding next generation economic reforms is that it seems that they have retreated from reforms. Land reform, labor reform, taxation reform, foreign investment reform, governance reform, all these are important. But no one is talking about this now. It is worth mentioning that after coming to power in 2014, the government had taken steps to resolve the issue related to land acquisition but it was put on hold due to protests. The amendment in the agricultural law was also withdrawn due to protests. In the case of labor reform, the government has made a code of conduct, but



it has not been implemented yet. The Reserve Bank of India's latest Economic Review paints a mixed picture. On the surface, India's growth rate appears strong, among the highest globally, inflation is down and the agricultural sector is performing well. But behind this optimism lurks a more fragile reality. Urban demand remains weak, unemployment is rising and credit growth is slowing. The RBI has passed on recent rate cuts to banks to stimulate the economy, but structural issues such as rising inequality, stagnant wages and uneven recovery remain. Global risks, including rising geopolitical tensions and growing financial protectionism, are further clouding the outlook.

Amid this uncertainty, the RBI has moved to weaken priority sector lending, a key pillar of inclusive banking. Small finance banks, which were previously required to direct 75% of their lending to essential sectors such as

agriculture, education and small businesses, will now be required to allocate only 60%. This quiet rebalancing dilutes the social mandate of priority sector lending, shifting its purpose from empowerment to efficiency and from equity to profit. What was once a mechanism to enhance financial justice is now being hollowed out, percentage point by percentage.

The RBI's final project finance framework, which will come into effect in October 2025, is worrying. Despite persistent pressure from civil society to integrate climate safeguards, social audits and public consultation into lending rules, the RBI has chosen to ignore these calls. Instead, it has relaxed key provisions, such as reducing the construction-stage provision from 5% to 1%. This has opened the door to high-risk infrastructure lending with little public oversight. In the age of climate crisis, this signals a worrying regulatory drift, enabling opaque, unsustainable mega-projects at the expense of public interest and environmental integrity. Together, these policy decisions reflect a sweeping ideological shift from responsible growth to unregulated financial arrangement.

The writer is Director, Niti Aayog Chair, Univ. of Rajasthan, Jaipur



FAMINE KILLS NEARLY 200 IN GAZA AMID ‘APOCALYPTIC’ BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL

WHO director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that about 12,000 children younger than five are suffering from acute malnutrition

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

Gaza health authorities say nearly 200 people, including 96 children, have died of hunger in Gaza, as the starving population battles against the odds to get food from dangerous airdrops and deadly aid hubs run by the GHF.

As Israel's man-made famine under the ongoing blockade tightened its grip on the enclave, hospitals recorded four more deaths from "famine and malnutrition" on Thursday – two of them children – bringing the total to 197.

Amid the mounting death toll, World Health Organization (WHO) director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that about 12,000 children younger than five



were suffering from acute malnutrition in July – the highest monthly figure ever recorded.

The scenes in Gaza City are "apocalyptic", said Al Jazeera's Ibrahim al-Khalili, with hundreds of people scrambling for scraps from aid pallets airdropped among the rubble of destroyed buildings.

"Here the fight is not over food, but for survival," he said.

Mustafa Tanani, a dis-

placed Palestinian at the scene, said that some of the food had failed to land and was "hanging up high" between the buildings, making it "too risky" to try to reach. "It's like a battle here. We come from far away and end up with nothing," he said.

"Everyone is carrying bags of aid, and we don't even manage to get anything. The planes are dropping aid for nothing. Look where they threw it. Up there, between the buildings.

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE KILLS PALESTINIAN OFFICIAL AND BODYGUARD

BEIRUT: An Israeli airstrike on eastern Lebanon killed a number of people, including a senior member of a Palestinian group and his bodyguard as they were on their way to Syria, news reports and his group said Friday. The airstrike near the Lebanese border crossing of Masnaa on Thursday afternoon killed Mohammed Wishah, a member of the central committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, or PFLP, the group said in a statement. The Israeli army confirmed the airstrike, saying that Wishah was responsible for coordinating with other militant groups in the region and strengthening ties between the PFLP and Iran's so-called axis of resistance. The military said that Wishah was advancing attacks against Israel and took his job as the PFLP's top security official in Syria after his predecessor was killed in an airstrike in Beirut in September.

In a post on social media, senior PFLP official Marwan Abdel-Al mourned the death of Wishah and his bodyguard, Mufid Hussein. "We have lost two of the most loyal comrades who gave their precious souls to freedom," Abdel-Al wrote. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency, or NNA, said that the airstrike on east Lebanon killed six people and wounded 10 others, without identifying the victims.

10 killed and 33 missing in northern China flash flood

AGENCIES
BEIJING

At least 10 have been killed and 33 others are missing after flash floods in Yuzhong County in China's north-western Gansu province, state media reported on Friday.

Heavy rains since Thursday have triggered severe flooding and at least one landslide in mountainous areas near the city of Lanzhou, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

The downpour knocked out power and telecommunications services in the Xinglong Mountain area, stranding more than 4,000 people across four villages.

Three people are still missing after a landslide in the village of Maliantan in Yuzhong County, which happened late on Thursday.

Maximum rainfall in the area had reached 195 millimetres by early Friday, according to Lanzhou local authorities.

Chinese President Xi Jin-



ping urged all-out rescue and flood prevention efforts.

Several parts of China are being battered by heavy rains.

In the southern metropolis of Guangzhou, seven people died and seven others were injured after a flood-triggered landslide buried homes in the city's northern Baiyun district on Wednesday.

In Zhengzhou, the capital of the central Henan province, local authorities shut down schools, offices and factories and closed traffic in parts of the city, which saw catastrophic floods that killed at least 292 people in 2021.

While in late July, local officials said that 31 people had died at the Taishitun Town Elderly Care Centre in Beijing's Miyun district, which was one of the areas hardest hit areas by storms that dumped nearly a year's worth of rain in the area over a few days.

Officials offered a rare public apology when they announced the deaths.

"For a long time, this senior centre was in the town's centre and was safe, and as such was not included in the preparedness plans. This means that our prepared plans had holes," Miyun Party secretary Yu Weiguo said, calling the incident a "bitter lesson."

Xi and Putin discuss Ukraine war ahead of Russia-US summit

AGENCIES
BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday spoke with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin over the phone ahead of the latter's planned summit with Donald Trump to discuss the future course of the Ukraine war.

During the phone call, held at the request of Putin, the Russian leader briefed Moscow's views on the current situation of the Ukrainian crisis and recent contacts and communications between Russia and the US, a statement released by the Foreign Ministry here said.

Putin was under pressure from Trump to end the Ukraine war started by Russia in February 2024 to assert its territorial claims.

According to reports from the US, Trump wants Putin to agree to a ceasefire to be followed by a peace deal.



The summit plan came after Trump's special envoy Steven Witkoff travelled to Moscow, where he held a prolonged meeting with Putin.

Putin and Xi struck a personal friendship since 2013, adding a strategic dimension to Russia-China relations, forging close political and military ties, posing a major challenge to the global dominance of the US and European Union.

They met numerous times and established close trade ties under which China

has emerged as the largest buyer of Russian oil and gas.

China also maintained strategic ambiguity over Russia's invasion of Ukraine and denied allegations that it supplied arms to Moscow.

In his phone call, Putin, who is expected to visit China later this month to take part in the SCO summit in Tianjin, emphasised that the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination will remain unchanged under any circumstances, the statement said.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit is due to be held on Aug 31 and Sept 1.

After the summit, Putin is expected to stay back to witness the massive military parade of the Chinese military to be held in Beijing on Sept 3 to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

Congo reshuffles cabinet to bring onboard opposition members

AGENCIES
KINSHASA

The Congolese government has reshuffled its cabinet which now includes opposition members in an effort to cobble together support across the remaining regions where the government still retains control.

In a television address by the government spokesperson, Tina Salama, late Thursday, the government announced the 53 members of the new cabinet, including Adolphe Muzito, a former prime minister under former President Joseph Kabila as the vice prime minister in charge of the budget. More than 90% of the old cabinet members have been re-



tained.

The incumbent president, Felix Tshisekedi, defeated Kabila in 2019, putting an end to the latter's 18-year rule of the central African country.

Direct talks in Doha scheduled for Friday between the Congolese government and the M23 rebel group will

not take place as neither party has traveled there. On Thursday, the rebel group claimed it had not received an official invitation to the talks.

More than 100 different groups are fighting in the mineral-rich eastern region. Prominent among them is the M23 movement, which

now controls key cities in the region. The M23 group had said it would not be engaging in further talks if Kinshasa does not release approximately 700 members and sympathizers it has allegedly imprisoned. The government had committed to releasing the prisoners but no release has been recorded.

On Thursday, the government denounced the rebel group's violation of the peace agreement signed in June.

In February, the president announced wide-ranging political changes and a proposed "government of national unity" to forestall the conflict in the eastern part from spilling over into broader fighting.

Cambodia, Thailand agree to ceasefire with ASEAN as observers

AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR

Cambodia and Thailand agreed to allow the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to observe the ceasefire the two countries reached late last month to end fighting in a disputed border area, local media reported.

Malaysian state media Bernama said that an interim observer team comprising defence attaches from ASEAN countries, led by a Malaysian attache, will be assigned on both sides of the Thai-Cambodian border to monitor the ceasefire agreement on July 28.

Top officials of Thailand and Cambodia met on Thursday in Malaysia, the current ASEAN chair.

Thailand's Acting Minister of Defence Nattaphon Narkphanit met with his Cambodian counterpart Tea Seiha and concluded four days of talks.

Both continued to accuse



each other of cross-border attacks, even after their leaders agreed to a ceasefire ending five days of fighting that began on July 24 and left 32 dead in Thailand and at least 13 in Cambodia. The two countries had been quarrelling for decades over their 817km (508-mile) undemarcated land border with the recent dispute breaking out after a landmine explosion on the border injured five Thai soldiers last month, with the resulting fighting killing at least 43 people.

Both sides have agreed to a ceasefire involving all

types of weapons and any form of attacks on civilians and military objectives. All sides must avoid unprovoked firing towards the other side's positions or troop

The two countries resolved to maintain regular communications between all army areas and military regions along the border of both sides and strive to solve all issues peacefully.

They also agreed to convene the Regional Border Committee (RBC) Meeting within two weeks after the Extraordinary GBC Meeting on August 7, 2025.

MOBILE DATA SERVICES SUSPENDED IN BALOCHISTAN PROVINCE TILL AUGUST 31

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan authorities on Friday said they have suspended mobile data services in Balochistan province until August 31 due to unspecified security reasons.

An official from the state-run Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) told Geo News that mobile data services were suspended on the request of the Balochistan government.

A notification from the Balochistan Home Department on August 6 ordered the immediate suspension of data services until August 31 in view of the law and order situation in the province.

Balochistan government spokesman Shahid Rind confirmed the notification.

Pakistan celebrates its independence on August



14 and officials fear that terrorists may try to sabotage festivities by carrying out attacks.

Balochistan has been in the grip of violence perpetrated by Baloch nationalists who blame the federal government for robbing the province of its rich minerals, a charge rejected by the central government.

The nationalists have repeatedly attacked security forces and other targets and the officials believe that they use internet services to coordinate and communicate.

‘Diplomatic efforts initiated for search of 17 missing Nepalis in U’khand floods’

AGENCIES
KATHMANDU

Nepal has initiated diplomatic efforts requesting India to search for the 17 Nepali workers who have gone missing in Uttarakhand flood, Nepali Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli announced on Friday.

Oli, who is on his way back from Turkmenistan on Friday, took to Facebook to condole the tragic incident and request the Indian Government to search for Nepali workers in the tragic incident.

"I am deeply concerned by the tragic news of the huge loss of life and property due to floods in Uttarakhand, a neighbouring and friendly country in India. It has been reported that more than 17 Nepali citizens have also been affected by the floods. Immediate diplomatic discussions were held through the embassy for their rescue. I pay my respects to all those who lost their lives in the



floods and landslides and wish the bereaved families the strength to bear the loss," Oli wrote on Facebook.

Amongst those missing 17 are from Jajarkot District and four others from Bardiya district local officials has confirmed. As per the officials whereabouts of them is unknown since Tuesday afternoon after a devastating flood hit the Dharali area of Uttarkashi district in Uttarakhand, India.

"The missing locals have not been contacted since the flood, and their families are deeply worried. We also have requested the Min-

istry of Foreign Affairs to assist in search and rescue operations," Hari Chandra Basnet, Chairperson at Kushe Rural Municipality in Jajarkot District told ANI over phone.

In addition, the Bardiya District Administration Office has confirmed that four people from Bardiya are also missing due to the same flood. Reports indicate that dozens of Nepali have been injured in the disaster.

Chief District Officer of Jajarkot, Megh Bahadur Mangrati, said the local government is coordinating efforts to identify and locate the missing persons.

South African court backs Zambia in dispute over former President burial

AGENCIES
JOHANNESBURG

A South African court on Friday ruled in favor of the government of Zambia and ordered that it can repatriate the remains of its former president and bury him in his home country, against his family's wishes.

The Zambian government and the family of the late Edgar Lungu, Zambi-

an president from 2015 to 2021, have been embroiled in legal battle over his remains and burial.

Lungu died in June, aged 68, at a South African hospital following an undisclosed illness.

His family wanted him to be buried in South Africa and for the current President Hakainde Hichilema neither to attend his funeral nor be involved in

its arrangements.

The family said it was Lungu's final wish that Hichilema should not get anywhere near his burial, but the Zambian government went to court to stop him being buried in South Africa.

The court ruled on Friday that Zambia had the authority to hold a state funeral for its former leader.

"The court noted that the



Zambian courts have previously emphasized that a

state funeral is a matter of public interest and proto-

col for a person of national significance. "Such that even if a president has expressed a desire not to be given a state funeral, such a wish must be overridden by public interest," said Judge President Aubrey Ledwaba.

Lungu and Hichilema were sworn political rivals. Their conflict led to Hichilema's imprisonment in 2017, when Lungu

was president.

Last year, Lungu accused Hichilema's government of using police to harass him and restrict his movements. His family also said the government had initially prevented him from traveling to South Africa for treatment, a charge the government denied.

Zambia's Attorney General Mulilo Kabesha welcomed the judgment,

telling reporters that he hoped the ruling would bring the matter to a close even though the family still had a right to appeal.

"This is not winning. You don't win over a burial. It's just what makes good sense, that the former president of the Republic of Zambia should be buried in his own country, the country where he was president," said Kabesha.

INDIA, RUSSIA DISCUSS WAYS TO STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval held a meeting with Russia's Secretary of Security Council Sergey Shoigu on Thursday in Moscow and discussed ways to further strengthen strategic partnership, the Russian Embassy in India said

The Russian Embassy in India shared the update on X, "On August 7, Secretary of Russia's Security Council Sergey Shoigu held talks with #India's NSA Ajit Doval. The parties discussed ways to further strengthen the #Russia-India special & privileged strategic partnership," the embassy wrote.

Earlier, Russian President Vladimir Putin received Doval at the Kremlin, the Russian Embassy in India said in a post on X.

"Russia's President Vladimir Putin received India's



National Security Advisor Ajit Kumar Doval at the Kremlin," the Embassy wrote. Meanwhile, sources said NSA Ajit Doval, who is currently in Moscow, noted during his engagements that the dates of President Putin's visit to India are being worked out, although no specific date or time has been indicated.

The sources said the end of August being reported in a section of the media is incorrect. According to a video

posted by Sputnik News, Doval said in his remarks that India and Russia have a very special relationship.

"We have got a very special relationship, long relationship and we highly value our strategic partnership. We have had high-level engagements and these have contributed very substantially," he said. "We are very excited and delighted to learn about the visit of His Excellency, the President of Russia, President Putin, to

India. I think that the dates are almost finalized now. The more important thing is that the summit meetings have always been a watershed point," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Russia in July last year and he and President Vladimir Putin highly appreciated the special nature of this time-tested relationship, which is based on trust, mutual understanding and strategic convergence.

PM Carney moves to mend ties with Mexico after trade rift

AGENCIES
MEXICO CITY

Prime Minister Mark Carney is scrambling to save his country's relationship with Mexico after it disintegrated late last year when Canadian officials suggested they'd be better off negotiating a trade deal with the Trump administration alone.

Carney attempted to break the ice in a phone call with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum in July by complimenting an indigenous-made soccer ball she had gifted him at their last meeting and saying he hoped to visit Mexico soon.

The warm overture, relayed to Reuters by three people familiar with the call, highlights Canada's attempt to repair the damage after a string of public slights by Canadian officials, including Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who said in November that any comparison of Canada to Mexico was "the most insulting thing I've ever heard."

Mexico and Canada are in many ways natural allies. They've benefited from trilateral trade deals with the U.S. for 31 years: first the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994



and subsequently the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement that replaced it in 2020.

But the relationship between the two countries has been beset by allegations of betrayal on both sides and memories of fraught negotiations with Trump. Top officials virtually stopped talking in November after former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau mused about cutting a trade deal with the U.S. without Mexico, suggesting the U.S. and Canada were more aligned on issues like China.

A few days later, Trudeau flew to Mar-a-Lago for a surprise visit with U.S. President Donald Trump, stunning Mexican officials. It seemed as if Canada had already developed a strategy for dealing with Trump while Mexico was wringing its hands, one Mexican official said.

An infuriated Sheinbaum

directed her lieutenants to stop dealing with the Canadians, at least until Trudeau left office, according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Nine months later, Canada finds itself on the back foot with Trump while Mexico is reveling in its relative success. Last week, Trump gave Mexico a 90-day pause on new tariffs going into effect, keeping the rate at 25%, while raising tariffs on Canada to 35%.

Now, in a remarkable about-face, Canadian officials are on a campaign to win back Mexico's favor and save the trilateral trade deal. Trudeau suggested he was willing to ditch, according to two people with knowledge of the countries' tense relationship.

That treaty continues to shield a large number of Canadian and Mexican exports to the U.S. from Trump's latest rounds of tariffs.

Carney said on Tuesday that "it's important to preserve" the trilateral agreement while Canada's foreign minister and finance minister traveled this week to Mexico for a two-day visit with top officials.

US increases reward for arrest of Venezuela's Maduro to \$50 million

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The United States has doubled its reward for information leading to the arrest of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to \$50 million over allegations of drug trafficking and links to criminal groups, U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi announced on Thursday.

In a video posted to X, Bondi accused Maduro of collaborating with prominent criminal groups such as Tren de Aragua and the Sinaloa Cartel.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil said on Telegram that the announcement was "the most ridiculous smokescreen ever seen."

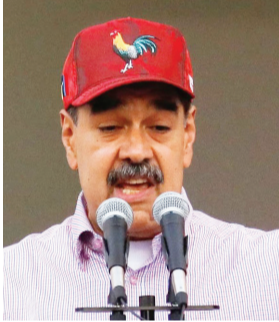
"While we're debunking the terrorist plots orchestrated from her country, this woman is coming out with a media circus to please the defeated far-right in Venezuela," Gil said.

"The dignity of our homeland is not for sale. We repudiate this crude political propaganda operation," he added.

The Venezuelan information ministry did not immediately respond to a

request for comment. According to a joint statement after a meeting between the two leaders, they positively assessed the multi-faceted, mutually beneficial India-Russia relations that span all possible areas of cooperation, including political and strategic, military and security, trade and investment, energy, science and technology, nuclear, space, cultural, education and humanitarian cooperation. It was noted with satisfaction that both sides are actively exploring new avenues for cooperation while further strengthening cooperation in the traditional areas.

The 11th Session of the India-Russia Working Group on Modernisation and Industrial Cooperation was held in the national capital on Wednesday under the framework of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation.



The reward was first set at \$15 million in 2020, when U.S. prosecutors charged Maduro with drug trafficking. It was increased to \$25 million in January 2025, as Maduro was sworn in for a third term, alongside new sanctions on top officials.

In February, the U.S. State Department formally designated the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua as a foreign terrorist organization, alongside MS-13 and several Mexican cartels. In July, it also designated Cartel de Los Soles as a global terrorist organization.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement late on Thursday that Maduro has been a leader of Cartel de los Soles for over a decade, which is responsible for trafficking drugs into the United States.

Germany halts arms exports that Israel can use in Gaza

AGENCIES
BERLIN

Germany is to suspend exports of weaponry that could be used in the Gaza Strip because of Israel's plan to expand its operations there - the first time united Germany has acknowledged denying military support to its long-time ally.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz's sudden about-turn on Friday followed mounting pressure from the public and his junior coalition partner over the manmade humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where Israel has severely restricted supplies of food and water.

In a statement, Merz acknowledged Israel's right to disarm Hamas and seek the release of Israeli hostages, but said the Israeli decision "makes it increasingly difficult to see how these goals can be achieved".

Germany is Israel's second biggest weapons supplier after the U.S., and has long been one of its staunchest supporters, principally because of historical guilt for the Nazi Holocaust - a policy known as the "Staatsraison". But an opinion poll in June indicated that 73% of Germans want tighter controls on arms exports, including 30% who favoured a total ban.

"This is the right decision. The humanitarian suffering



in Gaza is unbearable," said vice chancellor and finance minister Lars Klingbeil of the Social Democrats, who govern alongside Merz's conservatives.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office and the Israeli foreign and defence ministries did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"Politically and morally, this is certainly a hard blow for Netanyahu and his policies," said Meron Mendel, the director of the Anne Frank Education Centre in Frankfurt. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Germany provided 30% of Israel's major arms imports in 2019-2023, primarily naval equipment including Sa'ar 6-class frigates (MEKO A-100 Light Frigates), which have been used in the Gaza war.

Merz said the release of hostages and ceasefire nego-

tiations were Germany's top priorities, along with civilian suffering. He also urged the Israeli government not to take any further steps towards annexing parts of the West Bank. Far-right members of Netanyahu's coalition have been pushing for a total takeover of Gaza, though the military has warned this could jeopardise the lives of surviving hostages. Germany's parliament reported in June that export licences for 485 million euros (\$564 million) of military equipment for Israel had been granted between the day of the Hamas attack that triggered the Gaza war, October 7, 2023, and May 13, 2025. In the months after the Hamas attack, Germany increased its arms exports to Israel roughly tenfold.

Human rights groups launched legal challenges, saying the weapons could be used in the Gaza war, but none has succeeded so far.

Fast-growing brush fire forces thousands to evacuate north of Los Angeles

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES

A fast-growing brush fire has forced thousands of people to evacuate in a mountainous area north of Los Angeles.

The Canyon Fire ignited Thursday afternoon and grew to more than 7.6 square miles (19.7 square kilometers) by 11 p.m., according to the Ventura County Fire Department. At least 400 personnel were battling the blaze along with several planes and helicopters. It remained uncontained late Thursday and was spreading east into Los Angeles County, officials said. The fire is burning just south of Lake Piru, a reservoir located in the Los Padres National Forest. It's close by Lake Castaic, a popular recreation area burned by the Hughes Fire in January. That fire burned about 15 square miles (39 square kilometers) in six hours and put 50,000 people under evacuation orders or warnings.

Sunny, hot and dry con-



ditions were expected in the area where the Canyon Fire was burning on Friday, with the daytime high near 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) and minimum humidity in the mid-teens, according to the National Weather Service. Winds were expected to be light in the morning and grow from the south to southwest in the afternoon. In LA County, around 2,700 residents evacuated with 700 structures under an evacuation order, officials said late Thursday.

Another 14,000 residents and 5,000 structures were covered by an evacuation

warning. Areas within the Val Verde zone had been reduced from an order to a warning. The evacuation zones in nearby Ventura County were relatively unpopulated, Ventura County Fire Department spokesperson Andrew Dowd said Thursday. Fifty-six people were evacuated from the Lake Piru recreation area.

Dowd called the blaze a "very dynamic situation" caused by hot, dry weather, steep and rugged terrain and dry fuel.

LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, who represents the district, urged residents to evacuate.

TRUMP'S TARIFF GAME; WILL IT WORK OR FAIL?

This week, President Donald Trump imposed a hefty 50% tariff on imports from India, alleging that India is financing Russia's war against Ukraine through its ongoing oil purchases from Russia. This unexpected escalation, announced through an executive order, led to a strong backlash from India. The Indian government has labelled the decision as "unfair, unjustified, and unreasonable," with Indian PM promising to safeguard national interests. While Trump cites India's oil purchases from Russia as justification, he may be using these elevated tariffs to negotiate trade concessions, especially in agriculture, dairy, and pharmaceuticals sectors that India has always protected. Though the US and India established a robust strategic partnership during Trump's initial term, which

persisted through Biden's administration. However, that foundation is now under threat. Trump's imposition such a hefty tariff on Indian imports has also reverberated throughout the Indo-Pacific, not only due to its economic ramifications but also because it jeopardizes the integrity of the QUAD, the four-nation alliance comprising the US, India, Japan, and Australia, which was formed to counter China's expanding influence in the region. After Trump's announcement, Indian PM delivered a defiant address at a public conference in New Delhi. The statement was clearly directed at Trump's tariff demands and highlighted the politically sensitive nature of concessions regarding agriculture and dairy in India. PM Modi has unequivocally stated that India will not compromise on

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI

its national interests or the welfare of farmers, fishermen, and the dairy sector. He also expressed his willingness to 'pay a personal price for the same,' possibly alluding to his relationship with Trump and the political challenges he may face domestically. Trump's assertions are inconsistent with his behaviour. He cited India's oil purchases from Russia as the primary justification for imposing these substantial tariffs; however, China, the largest purchaser of Russian oil, has not encountered any new penalties. Additionally, Turkey, another significant importer, has been exempted. Al-

though Trump has mentioned that tariffs might be modified based on the progression of discussions, his declarations are perceived as a coercive tactic aimed at pressuring India to liberalize its markets for US dairy and agricultural products, which India has declined to do.

From multilateralism's point of view, Trump's decision is going to impact US' partnership with India in several groups like QUAD. This announcement has arrived several months prior to India's scheduled hosting of the QUAD Leaders' Summit. However, the future of the summit now appears to be in doubt. In-

dia participation in QUAD was perceived as a flexible arrangement that honored its independent foreign policy as it is not a military alliance. However, the future of QUAD seems to be in shadow as there may be serious repercussions on the group's trade, technology, defence collaboration, and infrastructure coordination. India ranks as the fourth-largest economy and serves as a centre for supply chain strategies linked to the QUAD. Trump's actions could undermine the QUAD's vision of a free, open, and resilient Indo-Pacific. Trump is perplexed as US companies, including Apple have invested billions in India with the aim of decreasing dependence on China. Previously, Trump had recommended that Apple manufacture its products in the US rather than in In-

dia. Also, his threat to impose duties of up to 250% on Indian pharmaceuticals would adversely affect a sector where India leads in global supply chains and significantly contributes to American healthcare. In the meantime, India is working to enhance its relationships with China and Russia, which directly contradicts the strategic goals of the QUAD. Trump may have overlooked India's crucial role in its Indo-Pacific strategy and its status as a key member of the QUAD. He has also undermined India's strong presence in BRICS. Additionally, he seems to have forgotten that India has a long-standing trusted partnership with Russia, which could positively influence India-China relations. Indian PM is set to visit China for the first time since 2018 to attend the SCO meeting. Also, Russian

President Putin is expected to visit India later this year. Additionally, discussions are ongoing to rejuvenate the Russia-India-China trilateral framework. This period presents an opportunity for China to stabilize its relations with India, although it remains a nation that cannot be fully trusted. Russia may also seek to take advantage of the discord by suggesting new collaborative projects across various sectors. Currently, US expenditures account for approximately 2.5% of India's GDP. India will undoubtedly explore alternatives and diversify its trade and trading partners. Furthermore, it has the chance to place greater emphasis on the 'Make in India' initiative and leverage its substantial domestic market. While India would be looking for the alternatives, the public in the US will have

to bear the consequences of the elevated tariffs that Trump has imposed on India, resulting in increased costs for medicines, medical equipment, gems, jewelry, and numerous other items that India sends to the US. Ultimately, Trump will have to face the repercussions of his choices aimed at maintaining his global authority. I have previously expressed similar sentiments regarding Trudeau, as I observed him leveraging his power for personal gain. Leaders who prioritize their nation's interests are celebrated for their leadership, whereas those who exploit their power to intimidate and protect their own interests are often forgotten or remembered as antagonists. It is crucial for Trump to decide how he wishes to be perceived in the future! The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

ADITI TO RECEIVE 'DIVERSITY IN CINEMA AWARD' AT IFFM 2025

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Actor Aditi Rao Hydari will be felicitated with the Diversity in Cinema Award at the upcoming edition of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), the organisers announced on Friday.

The actor will attend the festival as guest of honour. She will be recognised for her immense contribution to cinema and her impactful performances across mediums, a press release said.

"Aditi, who captured hearts with her unforgettable portrayal of Bibbo Jaan in 'Heeramandi', continues to mesmerize global audiences with her poise, talent, and effortless screen presence. Her participation



in IFFM 2025 is expected to elevate the excitement and add a regal charm to the gala celebration of Indian cinema on foreign shores," it added.

Hydari, known for her roles in films such as Padmaavat, Kaatru Veliyidai, Chekka Chivantha Vaanam, Sufiyum Sujatayum, and the series Jubilee, described the Diversity in Cinema Award as a "special honour." "Melbourne has always been warm and welcoming, and to be celebrated in a city that celebrates cinema with such passion is deeply humbling," the actor said in a statement.

Festival director Mitu Bhowmik Lange praised the actor's artistic achievements and said she is the "epitome of grace and excellence".

Param Sundari song 'Bheegi Saree' out

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Fans are still grooving to the first track, 'Pardesiya,' from the upcoming film 'Param Sundari' starring Sidharth Malhotra and Janhvi Kapoor, and now the makers have dropped another sizzling track that is sure to keep everyone hooked for a long time.

Sidharth and Janhvi shared the new track 'Bheegi Saree' on their Instagram accounts on Friday. With sensual choreography, rain-soaked visuals, and sizzling chemistry between the lead pair, the video has grabbed every-



one's attention.

The song opens with Janhvi and Sidharth dancing in the rain, adding a sensual vibe to the video. The retro-style visuals give the

song an old-school charm.

The track is sung by Adnan Sami and Shreya Ghoshal.

Take a look

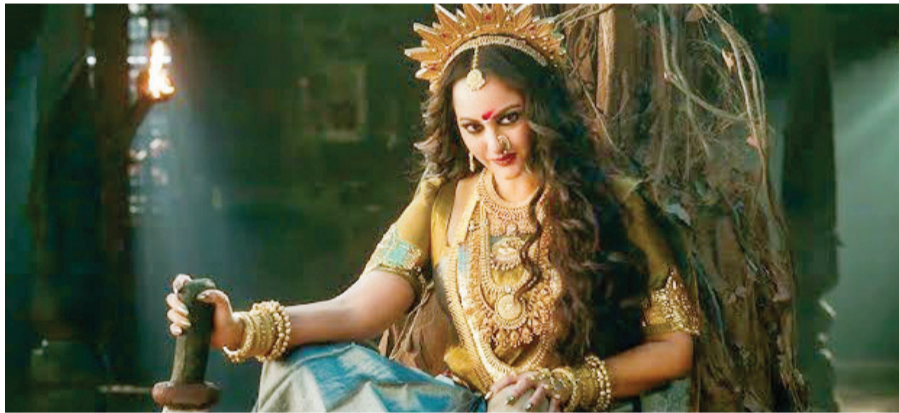
Fans, in no time, flooded the comments section with

heart emojis and praised the on-screen pairing.

Earlier, the first song from the film, 'Pardesiya,' was released and continues to keep fans hooked. It is a love song that features a sweet bond between Sidharth and Janhvi. From the scenic location to Sidharth's breathtaking looks, the song has all the qualities needed to become the love anthem of the year.

'Param Sundari' marks the first on-screen collaboration between Janhvi and Sidharth. The romantic comedy is directed by Tushar Jalota and produced by Dinesh Vijan's Maddock Films.

Sonakshi's Telugu debut 'Jatadhara' teaser out now



AGENCIES
MUMBAI

The teaser for 'Jatadhara', Sonakshi Sinha's first Telugu film, is finally out. The actress stars alongside Sudheer Babu in what looks like a dark, supernatural epic filled with mystery, magic, and drama.

In the one-minute-12-second teaser, Sudheer Babu appears as a powerful character "born from sacrifice," while Sonakshi Sinha is seen in a never-seen-before look as a mystical figure "created by greed." The teaser

hints at an intense face-off between the two.

Sonakshi's look has caught many by surprise; she appears in a dark, magical form, with long hair and detailed ornaments. The background score and visuals set the tone for a gripping supernatural tale. Jatadhara is directed by Venkat Kalyan and Abhishek Jaiswal. The film also stars Shilpa Shirodkar, Ravi Prakash, Indira Krishna, Naveen Neni, Shreya Sharma, Subhalekha Sudhakar, and Rajeev Kanakala.

Earlier this month, a new poster from the film was unveiled, which gave fans a glimpse of Sonakshi and Sudheer Babu's look.

Meanwhile, on the work front, the actress was recently seen in horror drama in 'Nikita Roy,' which hit theatres on July 18.

The film follows Nikita (Sonakshi Sinha), a determined author who delves into the mystery of her brother's death, convinced it was murder rather than the suicide the police insist it was.

BRAIN PICKING



Now that my father is no more, I understand that you should not take your parents for granted

— MOUNI ROY
(Indian Actress)

Huma Qureshi's cousin murdered in cold blood

BRYAN THOMAS
NEW DELHI

In a chilling case of neighbourhood violence, a man—identified as Asif Qureshi, cousin of actor Huma Qureshi—was brutally stabbed to death in Delhi's Nizamuddin area late Thursday night, allegedly by two men over a dispute as trivial as parking.

The fatal incident occurred around 11 PM in the Jangpura Bhogal market lane, when Asif reportedly asked his neighbour to move a scooter that was blocking

the entrance to his house. What began as a verbal spat soon turned deadly.

NewsX was on the ground and spoke exclusively to Asif Qureshi's wife, who categorically stated that this was no accident or heat-of-

the-moment act, but a "pre-meditated murder."

"They had been troubling us for a long time. This was a pre-planned attack. They meant to kill my husband," she said, fighting back tears.



'Love in Vietnam' to release on Sept 12

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

The release date of Shantanu Maheshwari and Avneet Kaur-starrer 'Love in Vietnam' has been locked.

The film will hit the theatres on September 12, 2025.

'Love in Vietnam' is touted to be a heart-wrenching love story inspired by the best-



selling novel 'Madonna in a Fur Coat'. Extensively shot in Vietnam, the movie also introduces Vietnamese actor

Kha Ngan, marking her Bollywood debut.

As per a press note, the film follows the journey of a young man and a girl diving through life and friendship. Raj Babbar, Gulshan Grover and Farida Jalal are also a part 'Love in Vietnam'.

Recently, Shantanu opened up about shooting for 'Bade Din Huye' song from the film.

REVIEW: MAHAVATAR NARSIMHA *****

MAHAVATAR NARSIMHA



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Indian animation film industry seems to have come of age now with the release of the latest offering, as Mahavatar Narsimha proves that animation is not just for children but also for grown-ups alike. While there have been few Indian animation films that have made their

presence in Indian cinema in the past decades, this one is with a difference, making a huge impact, proving that India can produce world-class animation from concept to delivery on the silver screen.

We have all grown up hearing the story of the demon king Hiranya Kashyap, his sister Holika, and son Prahlad, we have celebrated the festival of Holi every year, and all of this has been captured in cinematic stories time and again. However, Mahavatar Narsimha is a case apart where you see this story unfolding in an animated form at its best. The Indian ani-

mation industry, which has been traditionally working on delivering global content, has now set an example of producing truly world-class content for another Indian theme.

While in the opening sequences, the film begins with basic production values, it turns into an extremely immersive and high-quality animation as the story progresses further. Eventually, the last half an hour of the film is probably the most engaging, highlighting a super action sequence in all vividness of animated characters. Coming from Indian scriptures, the story is built around human beings, demons, and Gods, where the animated characters are created in a realistic manner and not like cartoon characters.

Creating surreal and realistic characters that blur the line between animation and live-action cinematic experience must have been quite a challenge for the artists working on this film. It is not just the immersive visual appeal but also the screenplay, the dialogues, the songs, and the Sanskrit renditions that set a tempo and make Mahavatar Narsimha, a superior cinematic delivery. It excels in almost every perspective, thereby bringing a wholesome cinema for the young and old together.

The visual effects and graphics bring alive the pompous and extravagant lifestyle of a demon king, the luxuriously grand citadels and castles, the flamboyance and splendour of megalomaniac rulers,

egos and eccentricities of devil kingdoms, and at the same time the cultural ethos and practices of Indian scriptures, which we treat as history.

There is a bit of modernized imagination too, such as you'd notice Star Wars-inspired space warships, creatively designed weapons combined with heart-thumping sound effects, making a great impact on the overall experience of watching the film. The script deals very well with the emotional aspects of father v/s son, mother v/s son, king v/s citizens, demons v/s angels, and good v/s bad, ensuring the film viewers connect and engage deeply with the characters.

Voice artist Aditya Raj Sharma brings a brilliant delivery for the demonic Hi-

ranya Kashyap, and Haripriya Matta delivers the innocence of a child for Prahlad, while Harjeet Walia as Lord Narsimha makes an equally authoritative and powerful presence. Mahavatar Narsimha is written and directed by Ashwin Kumar, and produced by Hombale Films and Shilpa Dhawan, Kleem Productions.

Interestingly, this also marks the beginning of an Indian animated franchise, the Mahavatar Cinematic Universe, which will chronicle the ten divine avatars of Lord Vishnu over the next decade, taking the Indian animation industry to a global panorama!

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals



INSTAGRAM VS REALITY: HOW GEN-Z CELEBRATES RAKHI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In the age of filters and hashtags, Raksha Bandhan has taken on a whole new avatar for Gen-Z. A festival once rooted in simple rituals and heartfelt emotions is now also a content opportunity. Instagram is flooded with picture-perfect sibling moments—coordinated outfits, aesthetic thalis, slow-motion rakhi tying videos, and heart-tugging captions that say more than ever spoken in real life.

But behind these curated posts lies a different reality. Not every Gen-Z sibling duo lives in the same city or even talks every day. Some send digital rakhis via apps, while others rely on last-minute Amazon deliveries. Many prefer a casual phone call or a witty meme exchange over traditional rituals. For some, Rakhi is just a quick photo-op before heading out with friends or logging into work.

Despite the contrast, what's heartening is how Gen-Z is redefining the essence of Raksha Bandhan in their own way. They may not always follow customs to the letter, but they find creative, often quirky ways to express love—be it a video montage, a shared playlist, or a reel full of childhood memories.

Yes, the Instagram ver-



sion of Rakhi may be filtered, but the emotion behind it is still real. Gen-Z may not always tie the thread, but they understand the bond—and that's

what truly keeps the spirit of Raksha Bandhan alive. In the end, Rakhi for Gen-Z is not about rejecting tradition but reimagining it to fit their fast-paced, hyper-

connected lives. And if that means celebrating with emojis instead of sweets, or stories instead of rituals—so be it. After all, love needs no format.



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Rakhi in the metaverse: A futuristic celebration of sibling bonds



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Imagine walking into a beautifully decorated virtual home, hand-in-hand with your sibling's avatar, thousands of miles away in the real world. The Metaverse, a digitally immersive universe, could soon redefine how we celebrate festivals like Raksha Bandhan.

In this futuristic world, siblings separated by geography can reunite in a custom-built virtual space—complete with a digital rakhi thali, festive music, and traditional décor. Sisters could tie animated rakhis to their brothers' avatars, while brothers send virtual gifts—from NFT jewellery to crypto gift cards—in return. All of this, without stepping out of their homes.

The Metaverse offers an exciting blend of tradition and technology. AI-powered memory walls could display



old childhood photos, while virtual chefs whip up family-favourite dishes that can be "tasted" through multisensory tech. You could even invite extended family and friends to join the celebration as their digital selves. While this may sound like science fiction, platforms are already experimenting with such possibilities. For Gen Alpha and Gen Z, who are growing up in a digital-first world, this could be the new

normal in a decade. Of course, no technology can truly replace the warmth of a real hug or the sweetness of a homemade laddoo. But in a world constantly evolving, Rakhi in the Metaverse offers a creative, inclusive way to keep the sibling bond alive—across timelines, terrains, and technologies. Because where there's love, even the virtual becomes deeply personal.

Why mithai remains the most adorable Rakhi present



Generations, and Raksha Bandhan is no different. A plate of sweets is placed on the thali, ready to symbolize the promise of love and protection, from the moment sisters tie rakhi to brothers' wrists. By selecting mithai as your gift, you're preserving the ties to our heritage and paying tribute to the traditions that give this festival its profound significance.

Both Mithai and Rakhi are deeply rooted in tradition. Our families have used mithai to commemorate celebrations and significant occasions for many generations, and Raksha Bandhan is no different.

Both Mithai and Rakhi are deeply rooted in tradition. Our families have used mithai to commemorate celebrations and significant occasions for many generations, and Raksha Bandhan is no different.

Even now, it still feels intimate to hand-pick a box of mithai for your sibling. It demonstrates that you took the time to choose something sweet and unique just for them, whether you order a carefully curated box online or visit the neighborhood halwai to choose the freshest candies. When you put their favorite items in the box and include a heartfelt note, your gift trans-

forms from a box of candy to a token of love that no gift card or device can match.

THE SWEETEST GIFT Mithai is a blessing rather than merely a treat. Sweets represent the wealth, luck, and joy that brothers and sisters hope for one another during Raksha Bandhan, when sisters pray for their brothers' welfare and brothers promise to protect their sisters. Saying "may your life always be as sweet as this" is equivalent to giving mithai. The simple yet delicious box of mithai remains unrivaled in its ability to make someone feel remembered, appreciated, and loved in a world that is becoming more and more digital and fast-paced.

Choose a box of mithai instead of the generic options this Raksha Bandhan when you're searching for the ideal present to honor your unique bond. Because nothing quite says "you're special to me," no matter how much things change.

The author is Strategic Director, Bhagat Halkai and Founder, Binge on Baked

A thread of love, a gift from the heart

Pink Knots by Arushi Kathuria Reimagines Raksha Bandhan Gifting with Soul and Style

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a world where messages are typed and emotions are often rushed, Pink Knots by Arushi Kathuria is bringing back the beauty of slow, intentional gifting—especially for moments that deserve to be felt deeply. And what better occasion than Raksha Bandhan—a festival rooted in love, nostalgia, and lifelong connection?

This year, Pink Knots invites you to rediscover the joy of giving with its Rakhi 2025 Collection: a curated edit of handcrafted hampers, keepsake boxes, and elegant rakhi sets designed to turn memories into mementos, and traditions into moments of true meaning.

MORE THAN A THREAD. A STORY. A BOND

At its core, Raksha Bandhan is not just a ritual—it is a feeling. A sibling's laughter. A shared secret. A fight over the last piece of cake. It is a bond that stretches across years, cities, and sometimes even silence.

Pink Knots captures this emotion through its thoughtful collection where every box tells a story. Whether it is a hand-woven rakhi crafted by artisans, a wellness hamper for the sister who never puts herself first, or a custom memory box filled with your childhood inside jokes, every piece is designed to say what words sometimes cannot.

"Raksha Bandhan is full



blends, grooming essentials, socks he'll laugh at but secretly love

- **Eco-Conscious Wraps**—Because a gift should feel good inside and out
- And for siblings separated by distance, same-day dispatch and pan-India delivery ensure your love arrives right on time.

GIFTING THAT FEELS LIKE A HUG

In a time when gifting can feel transactional, Pink Knots brings back the magic of thoughtful gestures. Every hamper is hand-packed with care, each card is written to feel personal, and every rakhi is tied with the hope that it will bring a smile—maybe even a happy tear.

Because from stealing the remote to sharing life advice, the bond between siblings is one of evolution, emotion, and everlasting love.

With the 2025 Raksha Bandhan Collection, Pink Knots offers you a way to celebrate that bond—not with just a gift, but with a feeling that lasts.



THE MIRROR WITHIN: A GUIDE TO GENTLE SELF-HONESTY



AASHISH PATEL

The journey to full spirituality is an exploration of the inner world. It requires honesty and the art of self-reflection. Reflection is clearer when we are in front of a mirror. It is only when we are able to see clearly that we can respond to what we see. Throughout the journey, even if it is sometimes difficult, the key is to hold the intention to be honest. This journey does not begin with finding what flaws we have but in understanding who we really are. Until we can embrace that understanding, it will be difficult to look inside. Therefore, the first step is appreciating who I really am and seeing the value of the self once more. When we elevate our consciousness and create powerful thoughts of truth,

in soul awareness, we can see our value and be able to observe what is going on with detachment. It is when we feel that we need to do the inner work on our own, that we struggle. This is where the metaphor of the mirror really begins to work. Our connection with the Divine, the Supreme source, is the key to our moving forwards. Instead of asking the self what I need to see, in meditation I ask the Divine to show me what I need to see in the mirror of my own heart. It is such a subtle but powerfully different approach that it relieves us from having to figure out what is going on in our own inner world. There are signals that let us know that we are not being honest with ourselves. They are like alarm bells of the heart. We have to understand that feelings like stress, procrastination, and sadness are not failures; they are loving calls from the heart, asking for attention. Here are some of the feelings that we need to notice.

1. Being highly emotional or overly sensitive
2. Feeling easily stressed by small things



The first step in the spiritual journey is appreciating who I really am and seeing the value of the self.

3. Constant circular thinking – getting nowhere

4. Procrastination

5. Inability to make clear decisions

6. Having a short fuse and being irritable with those closest to us
- There are deeper and louder signals.

1. Persistent internal heaviness

2. Depression

3. Lack of mental or physical energy

4. A desire to isolate the self

5. The desire to escape with distractions
6. Inner numbness

7. Being completely disengaged/loss of enjoyment

One thing to really understand is that God is genuinely really pleased with even the smallest amount of effort. His role is to be able to help us see what is going on in our inner world. And sometimes, when we are overly emotional and seek God's help, we cry out with this emotion. We are not detached enough to know what we are trying to articulate, but we think that God can help us in this approach, but He cannot. Our

responsibility is to separate from the emotion and become detached and find a space to accept the situation, not fix it, but accept it, because the moment we are able to accept, we have the possibility to detach. Detachment then means that God can step in. For example, if you are the boss of a business and someone comes to say what difficulties they are having but they are completely emotional and inarticulate – you cannot help them. Your advice would probably be to take some time to step away and allow the dust to settle and then come back and say what the problem really is. If we take that same approach with our relationship with God, then our honesty will allow God's help to really change situations that we face. This is the secret; to be detached, to step away and then allow the Divine to step in and resolve the situation in the way He needs to. Not in the way we would like it to be, but in the way it needs to be done. Do not do any inner work in pain – untangle the emotions, of attachment, fear and anger. Then we can

accept, detach, and talk to God. Q1. What am I feeling? – name it. Q2. What am I afraid of and why? Fear always has one emotional presence; there will be anger, guilt, resentment, or depression. Q3. What am I attached to? Then I have been truly completely honest with myself and can hand it over to God. When we find that the thought of doing this makes us feel really heavy, and do not want to do it, that is OK. All this tells us is that there is more power needed. We need more meditation, because a consistent practice of meditation brings the power of peace, and the power of peace brings the power to face the inner world with courage. With the power to face the inner world, there is the power to open the heart to God and let Him show the way. God sees us as lights to the world. Let our inner work be an act of love for ourselves and for all.

Aashish Patel works in IT and coordinates Brahma Kumaris activities at the Lighthouse Retreat Centre, Worthing, UK.

Rise above negativity, or are you stuck in the mud?



CHIRYA RISELY

The lotus symbolizes resilience, thriving in adversity, transformation, beauty, new beginnings, inner calm and harmony, perseverance, purity, and detachment. "Out of the mud of your fears, struggles, pain, and confusion, the lotus flower of your inner heart will spontaneously grow." - Anon Rise above the impure muddy waters and grow into something more beautiful. Yet, at the same time, be fully grounded. Just as

the muddy water sustains the lotus flower, in the same way the gritty realities of life help us to bloom and reach our potential. So, do not just look at the muddy water; appreciate the beautiful lotus that blooms totally unblemished and untouched by it. The journey of the lotus from muddy waters to a blossoming flower is a metaphor for the soul's journey from ignorance to spiritual awakening. The thoughts we place in our awareness eventually create our personal world and experience of life. All problems start in our awareness... and so do all solutions. "I am a soul. Peace is my nature". Peace is the inner nature of humankind. When you find it within yourself, you will find it everywhere. Consciously choose the quality of your thoughts – accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and clean up the waste. Ensure



The thoughts we place in our awareness eventually create our personal world.

The energy of our pure thoughts has the strength to heal the Earth. Just as renewable power sustains our planet, let the light of wisdom and unity sustain our world. When we uplift our consciousness, we uplift nature.

your thoughts are positive and your feelings towards others are filled with good wishes. Problems are exacerbated by a mind that has weak and negative thoughts. Without spiritual

power, we are unable to remove the problem at its root. It would be like trying to stop floodwaters with a box of tissues. Tiredness comes from thinking about everything I have to do. Stop thinking; just do it! The energy of our pure thoughts has the strength to heal the Earth. Just as renewable power sustains our planet, let the light of wisdom and unity sustain our world. When we uplift our consciousness, we uplift nature. You become whatever you think about deeply. Take time to find that quiet and peaceful place inside and happiness will stay in your heart forever. Think only about spiritual love and happiness. Feel these values as part of your life, leave the mud of body consciousness and become a true, spiritual, lotus flower. Chirya Risely is a Rajyoga meditation teacher based at the Brahma Kumaris Peace Village Retreat Center, USA.

The importance of silence



B.K. DR. SAVITA

When we set out on the path of self-improvement, the first thing we need is knowledge and guidance on what to do, what not to do, how to go about it, the likely hurdles on the way, and how to overcome them. A close friend, relative, or a mentor might give helpful advice, and there are hundreds of thousands of books and websites offering tips on how we can develop better focus, self-control, emotional maturity, and productivity. However, knowledge alone is not sufficient. It helps broaden our understanding of the world and the self, and gives us the tools to make informed decisions in order to improve ourselves. But without reflection and self-awareness, study can become an intellectual exercise. We may memorise all the

right points, and then fall into the trap of thinking that our work is done – "Now I know it all". Knowing what to do is easy; doing it appropriately and consistently is where most of us struggle. Self-improvement may require us to change our habits or mindset, which is much harder than just acquiring information. We need to apply knowledge, evaluate our progress, identify mistakes, and adjust our approach. Self-assessment and recalibration of our efforts is best done in silence. The practice of silence plays a powerful and often underappreciated role in self-improvement. In silence, distractions fade and we are left with our thoughts and emotions. Wisdom, which is the ability to apply knowledge in the right manner in different situations, arises from silent reflection, and from experience. Actually, even experience has to be reflected upon for it to yield valuable lessons – otherwise we may just label our experiences as good or bad, or hold others responsible for them. That is a superficial way of looking at our experiences. When we give time and attention, in silence, to examine whatever is going on in our life, we will discover the thought



The practice of silence plays a powerful and often underappreciated role in self-improvement.

patterns, fears, and desires that influence our actions and subtly determine the trajectory of our life. It is only after we have identified the underlying causes of our experiences that we can bring about meaningful change in the self and begin to see the desired results. Practising silence – especially in forms like meditation and mindful reflection – sharpens attention and strengthens mental clarity. Silently observing our emotions without reacting impulsively also improves our patience, reduces anxiety, and cultivates emotional intelligence. Moreover, creative thoughts and solutions emerge more naturally in quiet moments. In extended periods of silence, when the mind is still and there is no clutter of thoughts clouding the eye of the intellect, we can look into the deep recesses of the mind and see hitherto unseen facets of our character and personality. We become aware of the beliefs, prejudices, and social conditioning that have shaped our attitudes and behaviour unwittingly. There is also something beautiful to discover – it cannot be seen with the eyes but can be perceived by the intellect. When we 'see' the light of the soul, it

veritably lights up our life. Recognising the self, and others, as immortal, originally pure souls, changes the way we see ourselves and others. Contemplating our true identity makes us aware of the spiritual kinship that binds all souls together. Going a step further, in silence the soul comes to recognise and accept its connection with a higher power – the Supreme Soul. When we start believing in and trusting that Benevolent Being, we begin to experience His love and compassion. Regular communion with Him, through remembrance, fills us with His power and virtues, which heal, empower, and restore tired, broken souls to wholeness again. Souls realise that as children of the Almighty, they are strong, not weak, and they have nothing to fear as He is with them. The feeling of being whole, of belonging to Him, and knowing that He is always there for us, brings peace, contentment, joy, and confidence, all of which generate the pure wish to help others connect with the Father, so that they too can benefit like us, by walking the path of silence.

B.K. Dr. Savita is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan.

A
THOUGHT
FOR TODAY

Bloom where you are planted. Life has a way of planting me in situations that are beneficial for my growth. Some situations prune me back where I am expanding in a way that disperses my life energy. Other situations nourish me deeply, enabling me to express the colour of my inner beauty. When I appreciate the gift each situation offers for my growth, I relax into the simple task of blossoming. This is my only task - to bloom. Today let me enjoy life in my inner garden.

VIRAT GEARS UP FOR AUSTRALIA ODIS?

Batter posts picture with a coach in nets ahead of ODI in Australia

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

In what seems to be an exciting development for fans, legendary Indian batter Virat Kohli posted a picture with Naeem Amin, a coach, who is also associated with the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Gujarat Titans (GT) as an assistant coach, after what seemed be like a practice session.

Virat took to his Instagram to post a picture with Naeem and captioned it, “Thanks for helping out with the hit brother. Always lovely to see you.”

This could very well be a sign that Virat, retired from Tests and T20Is, is gearing up for a season of ODI cricket. From October 19 onwards, India will tour Australia for a three-ODI and five-T20I series. Fans could get to see the ‘King’ back in action from October 19 onwards at Perth’s Optus Stadium, with two more matches scheduled for Adelaide (October 23) and Sydney (October 25).

Back in May, Virat sent a huge wave of shock and grief



among the cricketing fraternity, announcing his retirement from Tests ahead of India’s tour of England, which kick-started the team’s ICC World Test Championship (WTC) 2025-27 campaign.

In 123 Tests, Virat scored 9,230 runs at an average of 46.85, with 30 centuries and 31 fifties and a best score of 254*.

He ended as India’s fourth-highest run-getter in Tests. He also ended his ca-

reer as India’s most successful Test captain, with 40 wins in 68 Tests, including memorable wins in England, Australia and South Africa and a series win in Australia.

Virat’s final image in whites was helplessly edging a Scott Boland delivery to the slips in the final fifth Test at Sydney. He ended the horrific Australia tour with just 190 runs in nine innings under his belt, at an average of 23.75, despite



a century at Perth during the first Test. His struggles with deliveries outside the off-stump channel and poor performances against Boland marked his final outing in white clothing. Virat and more than him, his fans would be hoping that he scores in heaps during the ODI tour to Australia. He has an outstanding record in the country in ODIs, having made 1,327 runs in 29 matches and innings at an

average of 51.03, with five centuries and six fifties. His best score is 133*. Notably, in his previous ODI outing, he won the ICC Champions Trophy for India back in March, scoring 218 runs in five innings at an average of 54.50, with a century and fifty each. In seven ODIs this year, he has been in a solid form, with 275 runs in seven innings at an average of 45.83, a century and two fifties.

Australia’s T20I opening pair locked in: Captain Marsh as T20I WC nears

AGENCIES
CANBERRA

Australia T20I captain Mitchell Marsh confirmed that they have locked in the opening pair in the lead up to next year’s T20I World Cup, set to be held in India and Sri Lanka.

Australia will begin its preparations for the marquee event with a three-match T20I series against South Africa, scheduled to kick off on Sunday. Marsh confirmed that he will take the mantle to open Australia’s batting order and will form a formidable pair with Travis Head.

During the 2021 T20 World Cup, Marsh featured in the number three spot, a move that proved to be a masterstroke.

The burly all-rounder orchestrated a Player of the Match performance in the final to steer the Baggy Greens to their first T20 World Cup title.

But now, the 33-year-old



declared that he will retain his spot at the top after opening the five consecutive games against the West Indies last month. Marsh and Head have never opened in the shortest format together.

“It’ll be myself and Head up the top for the foreseeable future. Obviously, we’ve played a lot together, (we’ve) got a great relationship, so (we’ll) start there,” Marsh told reporters in Darwin on Friday as quoted from cricket.com.au.

Including Marsh and Head, Australia have tried and tested five openers in the format since David Warner had his last dance after last year’s Caribbean World Cup. Marsh remained tight-lipped about the appearance of the rest of the batting unit but confirmed there were discussions about Tim David’s place.

Last month, David unleashed havoc with his blistering strokeplay in the third T20I against the Caribbean side.

World number one Jannik Sinner qualifies for Nitto ATP finals

AGENCIES
TURIN

World number one Jannik Sinner qualified for the Nitto ATP Finals and will join his arch-rival Carlos Alcaraz at the season final in Turin.

The Italian star will return to his country to defend his year-end championships title. Sinner clinched the title last year without dropping a set against Taylor Fritz. The Nitto ATP Finals will take place from November 9 to 16. The 23-year-old will compete for the title for the third time in a row and fourth overall. He boasts a 10-2 record in the tournament. In the last two editions of the tournament, he has floundered against Novak Djokovic in the 2023 final. Sinner made his debut in the Nitto ATP Finals in 2021 as an alternate. He replaced



fellow Italian Matteo Berrettini, pushed Daniil Medvedev to a final-set tie-break and ousted Hubert Hurkacz. Sinner has savoured success in what turned out to be a standout year for him. He lifted two major titles for the second straight season. He defended his crown at the Australian Open and expe-

rienced euphoria after lifting his maiden Wimbledon title. He made it all the way to the French Open final but fell short against Alcaraz. Sinner avenged his heartbreaking French Open final loss as he outclassed his rival and Spanish sensation Carlos Alcaraz to secure his maiden Wimbledon title.

Bowls better under pressure: Clarke hails Siraj for The Oval heroics

AGENCIES
MELBOURNE

Following India’s well-fought series draw against England, former Australian captain hailed Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj for stepping up in the absence of pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, saying that he is a much better bowler with “more expectations and pressure on his shoulders”.

Siraj emerged as the leading wicket-taker in the series, taking 23 wickets at an average of over 32, with two five-wicket hauls and a four-fer to his name. He also bowled around 185 overs, the most by a bowler in the series. At The Oval, it was Siraj who delivered a comeback spell, reducing England from a dominant position of 301/4 to 367 all out while chasing 374, bowling brilliantly and



relentlessly in tandem with Prasidh Krishna.

Speaking on his Beyond23 Cricket Podcast, Clarke said, “To win the last match and level the series. Wow! Phenomenal, absolutely brilliant. And the other thing as well. In the two Test matches that India won, the best bowler in the world didn’t play in (Jasprit) Bumrah. Bum-

rah didn’t play the two Test matches that India won. So, to the other bowlers in the Indian squad, they deserve a lot of credit for being able to step up.”

Continuing further on Siraj, Clarke said that without Bumrah, Siraj gets his ‘I’ve got to stand up’ mindset and attitude, doing the hard yards with the ball under pressure.

Madhura-Abhishek bow out at quarter-finals at World Games 2025

AGENCIES
CHENGDU

India’s Madhura Dhamangaonkar and Abhishek Verma crashed out in the quarter-finals of the mixed team compound archery event at the World Games 2025 in Chengdu. The Indian pair surrendered to a defeat against the Republic of Korea’s Moon Yeeun and Lee Eun Ho by a 154-151 scoreline, in the mixed team compound category. This event will make its Olympic debut at LA 2028.

In a closely contested contest, the Indians trail 38-37 after the opening game. The South Koreans upped the ante and opened up a four-point lead in the second with a perfect 40 in response to another 37

from the Indian duo. The Indian archers continued their pursuit to reduce the four-point deficit in the final two rounds, but failed to conjure a way. Earlier in the tournament, Dhamangaonkar and Abhishek earned top seeding for the mixed team event after topping the qualification round with a combined score of 1415. On the other hand, the Korean team, with 1392, were seeded eighth. Abhishek and Dhamangaonkar clinched the bronze medal in mixed team compound archery at the last edition of the World Games held in Birmingham back in 2022. Meanwhile, four of the five Indian archers qualified for the quarter-finals and will be in contention for a medal.

Kerala, Bengal crowned champions of 51st Junior Waterpolo Championship 2025

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

The 51st Junior Waterpolo Championship 2025 came to a close on Friday, at the Basavangudi Aquatic Centre, with Bengal emerging victorious over Maharashtra in the Boys category while Kerala overcame hosts Karnataka to win the Final in the Girls category.

The 41st Sub Junior & 51st Junior National Aquatic Championship (Diving) also wrapped up at the Kensington Swimming Pool in Ulsoor today, with Skandan Prasad T securing the only medal for Karnataka after finishing



third in the Boys Junior 3MT SB with a score of 264.45, as per a press release from Karnataka Swimming Association (KSA). In the 51st Junior

Waterpolo Championship Boys Final, Bengal edged Maharashtra 16-15. Bengal were powered by Joy Mondal with five goals, Rajesh Naskar

with four goals, Arnab Shaw with three goals, Sanjib Sardar with two goals, and single goals from Sourasish Karmakar and Tushar Haldar.

Maharashtra fought back through Manthan Lomharsh Shivanikar with seven goals, Samrat Ravindra Bodke with five goals, Swayam Pardeshi with two goals and Swarnim Milind Chepe with one goal.

The Girls title match saw Kerala overpower Karnataka 14-8 in a dominant display. Karnataka were led by Roshini S with five goals and Nithya C with three goals. Kerala’s attack saw Safwa Saker score two goals, Ardra S score three goals, Anjali S Sathya score one goal, Karthika Satheesh score two goals, Abhinanda V score two goals and Nivya M score four goals.

Squash India tour Jaipur 2025: Tanvi falls short in final against Egypt’s Khafagy

AGENCIES
JAIPUR

Asian Games medalist Tanvi Khanna fell short in the final of the women’s singles event of the Squash India Tour Jaipur 2025, ending as a runner-up in a well-fought contest at Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Friday.

At Jaipur, she was in the battle with top-seed, Egypt’s Nour Khafagy and Tanvi lost 3-1 (11-3, 5-11, 11-5, 12-10) despite a spirited effort, as per Olympics.com.

Tanvi lost the opening game, but was leading in the second, which she ended up winning. She lost the third game as well, with the battle moving to the fourth game.

Ultimately, she fell short of world number 94, who held the title.

The 29-year-old started her campaign with a first-round bye and then proceeded to outclass compatriot Rathika Suthanthira Seelan 3-0 (11-5, 11-3, 11-1) in a brilliant round of 16 outing.

In the quarterfinals, Tanvi pulled off an upset against the second-seeded Menna Walid of Egypt, pulling a 3-2 (11-8, 8-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-6) upset win in 54 minutes. This turned out to be the longest match of the tournament.

In the semis, Tanvi eliminated the Malaysian challenge, the fourth-seeded Goh Zhi Xuan, 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-4) to secure a ticket in the final.

Anahat Singh did not participate in the tournament. The Squash Tour Jaipur, sponsored by HCL, is one of the two Professional Squash Association (PSA) Challenger 9K events that India will host this year, with the second one lined up for Mumbai next month.

The tour has been extended to six Indian cities in total, with all-important PSA ranking points on offer. Apart from Jaipur, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Delhi are also supposed to host events as a part of the tour.

This tour plays a vital role for India as Squash makes its Olympics debut during the Los Angeles 2028 edition.

BWF World Junior 2025: India to face Hong Kong, China, Nepal, Ghana in Group H

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Friday announced the draw for the BWF World Junior Championships 2025 - Suhandinata Cup (Mixed Team Event), to be held at the National Centre of Excellence, Amingon, Guwahati, from 6 to 11 October 2025, according to a release from BWF. Second-seeded India will compete in Group H alongside Hong Kong China,

Nepal, and Ghana. This prestigious global junior team event returns to India for the first time since 2008 and will feature 37 teams from across the world. The tournament format will see the winner from each group advance to the quarter-finals.

Top seeds Thailand are drawn in Group A with Denmark, Slovenia, and Cook Islands. Defending champions Indonesia are placed in Group C with Turkiye, Romania, and the



Netherlands, while 14-time champions China will face Japan, Singapore, Brazil, and Bhutan in Group E. This year, a new relay format will be tested in the competition. In the new format, there will be best-of-three sets, where a team reaching 45 points in a relay format wins a set. A set will have each of men’s singles, women’s singles, men’s doubles, women’s doubles and mixed doubles matches, with the first match ending after one team reaching nine

points, and the next match will start.

Earlier, the relay format consisted of a single set with a race to 110 points in 10 matches. For the Indian team, medal winners from the Badminton Asia Junior Championships 2025 will gain direct entry, while the remaining spots will be decided through a selection trial from 9th to 13th August 2025 at the same venue. Players eligible for the trials include those meeting the BAI ranking cut-offs,

Indian shuttlers ranked in the BWF World Junior Top 20, and juniors ranked in the BWF Senior Top 50 as of 29 July 2025. All players selected in the Indian team for the WONDR Badminton Asia Junior Championships 2025 are also invited for the trials, except the medalists who already have direct entry. Following the Suhandinata Cup, the individual events will also be staged in Guwahati from 13 to 19 October 2025 at the National Centre of Excellence.