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SIX PILLARS FOR 2047: PM MODI'S I-DAY SPEECH SPANS CHIPS TO JET ENGINES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 79th Independence Day address laid out six strategic pillars to drive India's transformation into a developed nation by 2047.

ABHINANDAN MISHRA
NEW DELHI

From the iconic Red Fort on the 79th Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered one of his most forward-looking speeches, outlining a series of strategic commitments that he said would anchor India's transformation into a Viksit Bharat (developed nation) by the centenary of independence in 2047.

Marking his 12th Independence Day address — the most by any Indian Prime Minister — the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi salutes during address to the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort on 79th Independence Day, in New Delhi

105-minute speech, his longest from this platform, laid out concrete deliverables with measurable

timelines and long-term structural impact. Recounting how earlier attempts to set up

semiconductor plants had been "killed at birth" decades ago while other

P3

ONE HOUR, FORTY THREE MINUTES: PM'S LONGEST ADDRESS YET

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi not only broke his own record for the longest Independence Day address from the Red Fort on Thursday but also delivered a speech packed with strong political messages aimed at America, Pakistan, and the opposition. Without naming anyone, he declared that India has changed and "will not bow down." Operation Sindoor, he said, was proof of this resolve.

Breaking his 2024 record of 98 minutes, PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort on 79th Independence Day, in New Delhi

Modi spoke for nearly 103 minutes. After hoisting the flag for a record 12th time, he began his address

with visible enthusiasm, saluting the armed forces and sending a clear warning to Pakistan. His energy

remained high until the end, reflecting both confidence and determination. From border

P3

Congress pays tribute to freedom fighters on 79th Independence Day

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leaders, including party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on Thursday extended heartfelt greetings to the nation on the occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, saluting the sacrifices of freedom fighters and reaffirming their commitment to protecting constitutional values.

In a message on X, Kharge



Lok Sabha LoP and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, during the 79th Independence Day celebrations, at party headquarters, Indira Bhawan, in New Delhi

urged citizens to honour the legacy of the national movement by continuing

the struggle for constitutional rights, social justice, economic empower-

ment, and national unity. "Heartfelt greetings and congratulations to all countrymen on Independence Day. We pay humble tribute to the countless great freedom fighters, remembering their sacrifices and invaluable contributions to the national movement. This day is significant because we, the people of India, are now fighting for our rights, the protection of constitutional institutions, social justice, economic empowerment,

P3

Opposition criticises PM over RSS praise in I-Day speech

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Senior opposition leaders on Friday launched a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for praising the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) during his 79th Independence Day address from the Red Fort, describing the organisation as the "biggest NGO in the world" and hailing its century-long contribution to nation-building.

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh termed the speech "stale, hypocritical, insipid, and troubling," accusing the Prime Minister of "blatantly" breaching the spirit of a secular republic by naming the RSS from the Red Fort. He claimed Modi was "now at their complete mercy and reliant on Mohan Bhagwat's good offices" for an extension of his

P3

Centre plans GST revamp; daily-use items in 5% slab

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a landmark move to simplify the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, the Central Government has proposed scrapping the existing 12 per cent and 28 per cent slabs, retaining only 5 per cent and 18 per cent rates, government sources said on Friday. A new 40 per cent slab is also proposed for "sin goods" such as tobacco and pan masala.

Under the proposal, 99 per cent of items currently in the 12 per cent slab would shift to 5 per cent, while 90 per cent of items in the 28

per cent slab would move to 18 per cent. Consumer goods in the 28 per cent category are among those set to be reduced to 18 per cent.

Most "common man items" — including food products and daily-use goods — are proposed to fall under the 5 per cent slab, which, if implemented, is expected to boost consumption and positively impact GDP. The government does not require legislative changes to roll out these reforms.

The plan rests on three pillars: structural reforms, rate rationalisation, and

ease of living. Structural reforms would address inverted duty structures, align input and output taxes in key sectors, and improve liquidity for MSMEs. Classification issues — including tax rates on namkeen and savouries — would be resolved, while rates on farm equipment would be reduced to aid agricultural productivity.

Rate rationalisation aims to simplify the structure to just two rates — merit goods at 5 per cent and standard goods at 18 per cent — with a focus on items for the common man and students.

Lavrov arrives in Alaska for high-stakes Russia-US peace talks

TDG NETWORK
ALASKA

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived in Alaska on Thursday for high-level talks with the United States, aimed at finding common ground over the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The summit, scheduled

for 15 August at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, will bring together US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in their first in-person meeting in over four years.

Lavrov drew attention upon arrival by wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with "CCCP", the Russian abbrevi-



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

viation for the Soviet Union. The choice of attire — with Ukraine having once been part of the USSR — was widely interpreted as a nod to his nationalist and nostalgic leanings, signalling Moscow's determination to engage in negotiations on its own terms without compro-

P3

IAF on standby as Kishtwar cloudburst toll rises

TDG NETWORK
SRINAGAR

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is preparing to join relief and rescue operations in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, where a massive cloudburst on 14 August triggered devastating flash floods, claiming more than 45 lives and leaving over 100 injured. Two Mi-17 helicopters and one Advanced Light Helicopter are currently on standby at Jammu and Udhampur, ready to deploy once weather conditions

improve, sources said.

Rescue teams, including the J&K Police, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), are working round the clock to locate survivors and recover bodies. The local community has stepped in to provide shelter, food, and medical aid to those affected. Officials fear many victims may still be trapped under debris, with witnesses reporting at least 60-70 people missing.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will leave for



A search and rescue operation is underway after a cloudburst occurred, in Kishtwar on Friday.

Kishtwar on Friday and visit the disaster site early Saturday to assess the damage and review ongoing relief measures. "I will

see, first hand, the extent of the damage, review the rescue operation, and assess what further help is required," he posted on X.

Survivors receiving treatment at the district hospital have shared harrowing accounts of the tragedy. Putul, an injured resident, recalled, "The entire mountain collapsed... I can't find many of my family members. I'm still trying to locate them." Another victim, Rakesh Sharma, described being buried under debris while trying to shield his child: "We were saved because a large piece of wood fell on us. Kishtwar people are very kind; they helped me

P3

'Far better to be recalcitrant': Tharoor fires back at US Treasury Secretary

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Thursday took a dig at US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's "India a bit recalcitrant" remark, saying it was better than being "tractable, submissive, or acquiescent to injustice."

"I hear some people are accusing India of being 'recalcitrant'. I say, far better to be recalcitrant than to be tractable, submissive, or acquiescent to injustice," Tharoor posted on X.

His remarks came after Bessent recently described India as headstrong in trade negotiations with the US, noting that New Delhi had been "a bit recalcitrant." The comment followed US President Donald Trump's announcement of an additional 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports, citing the country's oil purchases from Russia.

Speaking to Fox Business Network's Kudlow, Bessent



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor

said there were still "big trade deals" to be finalised, including with Switzerland and India, and expressed hope of concluding tariff negotiations by October. "There are big trade deals that aren't done and aren't agreed upon. Switzerland is still around; India has been a bit recalcitrant. I think we have agreed on substantial terms with all the substantial countries," the US Treasury Secretary said. When asked if an October deadline was possible, he added: "That's aspirational. I think we're in

a good position."

On August 6, Trump signed an Executive Order imposing an additional 25 per cent tariff on imports from India, raising the total tariff to 50 per cent. The White House cited national security and foreign policy concerns, claiming that India's imports of Russian oil, directly or indirectly, pose an "unusual and extraordinary threat" to the United States. The new tariffs will take effect on August 27.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has condemned the US decision, calling it "unfair, unjustified, and unreasonable," and said New Delhi would take "all actions necessary to protect its national interests."

The announcement came just days after a separate 25 per cent reciprocal tariff imposed by the US on India took effect on August 7. Trump has also ruled out trade talks with India until the dispute over tariffs is resolved.

DHAMI HOISTS TRICOLOUR, VOWS REHABILITATION FOR DHARALI AND OTHER DISASTER-HIT AREAS

TDG NETWORK
DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami hoisted the National Flag at his residence in Dehradun on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day and administered the oath of national unity.

CM Dhami extended his Independence Day greetings to the people of the state, recalling the valour and supreme sacrifices of the great heroes who fought for the country's freedom and safeguarded Mother India. Paying homage to those who lost their lives in the recent disaster in Dharali and other affected areas, he expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The Chief Minister assured that comprehensive rehabilitation arrangements would be made for the disaster-hit regions.

"India's acceptance has increased globally under



Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami hoists the national flag on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day, at the state BJP office in Dehradun on Friday. ANI

the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to take the country forward by the dreams of the immortal martyrs.

Many historic decisions have been taken in the country under his leadership. The work of reconstruction and redevelopment is going on

rapidly in Uttarakhand," Uttarakhand CM said. The Chief Minister said that the state government is

working with determination for the overall development of Uttarakhand. Work is being done on plans for the next 25 years. With public support, efforts are underway to make Uttarakhand the best state in the country.

Earlier today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the tricolour at the Red Fort on the 79th Independence Day.

Paying homage to those who lost their lives in the recent disaster in affected areas, he expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

PM Modi also extended his heartfelt wishes to the nation on Independence Day, urging people to work harder, fulfil the dreams of freedom fighters, and contribute to building towards a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India).

"Wishing everyone a very happy Independence Day. May this day inspire us to keep working even harder to realise the dreams of our freedom fighters and build a Viksit Bharat.

Jai Hind!" PM Modi wrote in a post on X.

India becoming leading economy under PM: Nadda

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister and BJP National President JP Nadda unfurled the National Flag at the party headquarters in the national capital on the occasion of India's 76th Independence Day.

Union Minister JP Nadda highlighted the country's economic progress in the past 11 years under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said, "In the last 11 years, under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, the country is advancing towards becoming a leading economy, towards becoming a strong economy."

He also underlined India's continuous economic growth and added, "When there is instability in the world and there is economic difficulty, besides a strong economy, India is leading as a leading economy."

Meanwhile, in his 12th



JP Nadda on Thursday hoisted the party flag at the party's headquarters (Photo: ANI)

He also underlined India's continuous economic growth and added, "When there is instability in the world and there is economic difficulty, besides a strong economy,

Independence Day address to the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered bold announcements that indicated India's commitment to making significant progress in the future. PM Modi outlined plans for various

initiatives, including the production of India's first semiconductor chip, the development of jet engines, the creation of Rs 1 lakh crore in youth employment opportunities, and a tenfold expansion of the nuclear program.

UP CM lauds Indian Army's valour in Op Sindoor

TDG NETWORK
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath hoisted the national flag at his official residence here on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day.

In his address, the Chief Minister paid tribute to the soldiers who have safeguarded India's borders and bolstered internal security since independence.

Highlighting the bravery and prowess of the Indian Army, CM Yogi Adityanath said, "This is an opportunity to pay our tribute to our soldiers who have protected the country's borders and enhanced internal security since independence. Recently, we have all witnessed the valour and courage of the Indian Army, along with its capability and strength."

He further emphasized the uniqueness of Operation Sindoor, noting, "Dur-



ing Operation Sindoor, the Indian Army soldiers demonstrated India's capabilities through the successful execution of the entire operation.

Every Indian understands that Operation Sindoor is unique in this sense because the weapons used by our soldiers—such as missiles and drones—are indigenous...."

Earlier today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the tricolour at the Red Fort on the 79th Independence Day. PM Modi also extended his heartfelt

wishes to the nation on Independence Day, urging people to work harder, fulfil the dreams of freedom fighters, and contribute to building towards a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India).

"Wishing everyone a very happy Independence Day. May this day inspire us to keep working even harder to realise the dreams of our freedom fighters and build a Viksit Bharat.

Jai Hind!" PM Modi wrote in a post on X. PM Modi was received by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, MoS Sanjay Seth, and the Chiefs of the three services.

The Prime Minister also received the ceremonial guard of honour by the National Flag Guard, the Indian Air Force, Army, Navy, and Delhi Police, totaling upto 128 people. Wing Commander Arun Nagar led the interservices guard of honour.

Overseas Indians mark I-Day with fervour



India Day Parade at Boston, US.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

For Indians living far from home, Independence Day often brings a bittersweet wave of nostalgia. While pride for their nation burns brightly in their hearts, many find themselves longing for the familiar sights, sounds, and colours of the celebrations back in India.

For desis living abroad, Independence Day is more than just a date on the calendar. It's a heartfelt reminder of home and a moment to reconnect with their roots.

Priyam Jha, a resident of Boston, Massachusetts, USA, reflects on the emo-

tions of living far from her motherland, especially on Independence Day, when memories of home and national pride feel stronger than ever.

She said, "Indians here are more Indian in comparison they are in India, and they do everything to keep their roots alive among themselves and their children. We Indians living abroad, especially in the USA, still treat India's Independence Day as a proud and emotional occasion."

The fluttering tricolour on every street, the echo of patriotic songs, and the vibrant gatherings in every community overseas - In-

Mamata meets students who fell sick during I-Day celebrations

TDG NETWORK
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited the Institute of Post-Graduate Medical Education and Research and Seth Sukhlal Karnani Memorial Hospital (SSKM) Hospital in Kolkata to meet students who fell sick during the Independence Day celebration on Friday.

At least 39 students fell sick during the Independence Day celebration at Red Road on Friday.

CM Mamata Banerjee said, "I have met all the students individually. In today's generation, students are constantly dieting. They do not have food on time. When doctors give them a discharge certificate, they will be sent home. Except one, all are well now.

The police and other departments are coordinating to ensure everyone returns home safely."

Doctors said that they are under observation now. The



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee meets ailing students who fell sick on Friday. ANI

Chief Minister extended her wishes on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day.

Earlier, CM Mamata Banerjee hoisted the tricolour flag at Red Road in Kolkata.

In a post on X, CM Mamata Banerjee shared, "On the occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all my fellow countrymen. I pay my respects to our ancestors - their patriotism and fearless sacrifices made this day possible. On this day, I also pay homage to this land, the birthplace of Deshbandhu

Chittaranjan Das, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Khudiram Bose, Prafulla Chaki, Kanailal Datta, Bipin Chandra Pal, Pritilata Waddedhar, Matangini Hazra, Masterda Surya Sen, Binay-Badal-Dinesh, Bagha Jatin - and many such golden sons and daughters.

This Bengal stood tall and fought against foreign powers, against injustice and oppression. The spirit of struggle runs in our blood. Even today, we roar against injustice."

"We also bow our heads in reverence to the pioneers of the Bengal Renaissance - Raja Rammohan Roy, Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who gave us 'Barnaparichay', Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, whose famous saying was 'As many opinions, so many paths', Swami Vivekananda, who raised our heads high in the global arena, Bankim Chandra, whose song 'Vande Mataram' (now our national song) resonated across this nation.



President Droupadi Murmu pays homage to the bravehearts on the occasion of 79th Independence Day, at the National War Memorial, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Mask artists celebrate I-Day with Tricolour masks



TDG NETWORK
MAJULI

Joining the rest of the nation, the famed mask makers of Samaguri Satra in Majuli celebrated the 79th Independence Day in a unique way.

The artists from the Sangeet Kala Kendra crafted masks in the colours of the tricolour and held the national flag as they extended their greetings to the entire country on the special occasion.

Indian Army, ITBP, locals unite for historic 'Tiranga March' in Tawang

TDG NETWORK
TAWANG

At 14,000 feet, patriotism met teamwork as the Indian Army's Gajraj Corps led Tiranga March in China's forward areas in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district to mark the 79th Independence Day on Friday. In a novel move, 160 Gorkha troops & attached troops, along with 25 ITBP personnel, carried the 100-metre National Flag through the lush Himalayan grasslands, accompanied by approximately



150 local villagers, including toddlers and children from greenfield villages of Mago and Chuna in Tawang District, marching shoulder-to-shoulder, turning the landscape into a vibrant sea of saffron,

white and green. The Civil Administration, under Assistant Commissioner Thutan Wangchu, led the local villagers in the event coordinated and mobilised by the Indian Army.

Defend identity of Assam from going extinct: CM

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma hoisted the Tricolour at Veterinary College Field, Khanapara in Guwahati on the 79th Independence Day on Friday. On the occasion, he urged the people "to fight for and defend the identity of Assam from going extinct in the coming days due to demographic changes."

"The spirit of the tricolour brought people together as



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma hoisted the Tricolour at Veterinary College Field, Khanapara in Guwahati

we celebrated the country's 79th Independence Day in

Guwahati in an atmosphere of peace and backed by solid progress achieved over the last few years. I urge everyone to always uphold the pride of the nation," Sarma said in a post on X.

In his address, the Chief Minister highlighted the instrumental support of the Centre in the development of Assam. "In today's ceremony, I highlighted the instrumental support of the Union Govt led by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji in ensuring a

solid growth trajectory for Assam in various sectors and lauded our people's efforts to ensure Assam becomes one of the top 5 States," Sarma wrote on X.

"I also spoke about our Government's efforts in ensuring all-around development of the State and lauded our forces' bravery. I also implored people to fight for and defend the identity of Assam from going extinct in the coming days due to demographic changes," he added.

Thousands made sacrifices for independence, says LS Speaker

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla spoke words of inspiration on the 79th year of Independence on Friday, saying that this is a festival of enthusiasm and resolutions and that thousands of people have made sacrifices.

"This festival of independence is a festival of enthusiasm and resolutions. We fought a long battle. Thousands of people made sac-



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

rifices and gave their lives," said the Lok Sabha Speaker. "The country gained its freedom after thousands of sacrifices. The time has come for 140 crore Indians to collectively strive to make

the country a developed India," Om Birla added further. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, delivering his 12th consecutive address on Independence Day, underscored 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) being a foundational plan for 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India), with the idea permeating across different sectors, including in defence, space, clean and renewable energy, agriculture, and mineral exploration.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON PM MODI ON PAKISTAN

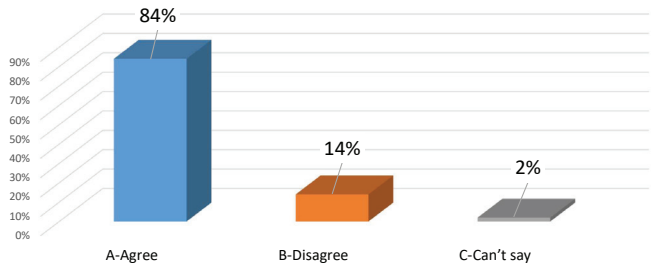
82% people believe that Pak is being stubborn because of US backing

On India's 79th Independence Day, PM Modi vowed firm action against Pakistan-backed terrorism, warning of decisive retaliation for any misadventure. Highlighting Operation Sindoor's success, he dis-

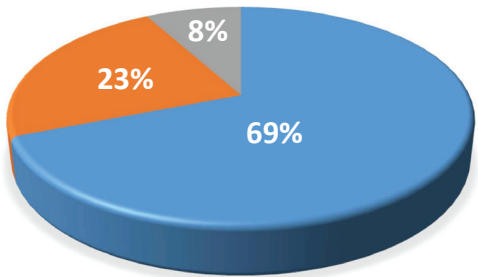
missed nuclear threats and called the Indus Water Treaty "unjust," pledging India's exclusive use of its river waters for farmers, ending decades of agricul-tural losses.

Q1.▶

Did PM Modi's response to Pakistan's nuclear threats come at the right time?



A-Agree
B-Disagree
C-Can't say

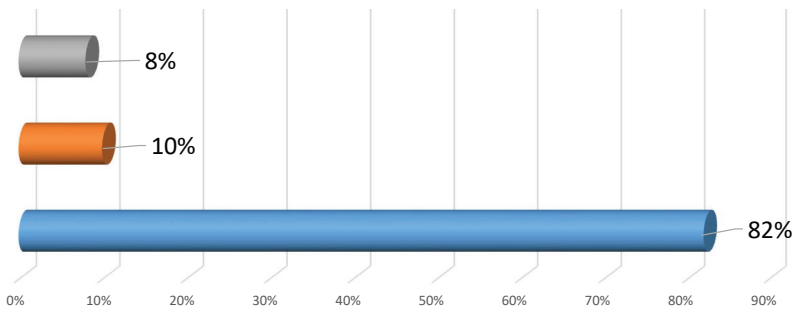
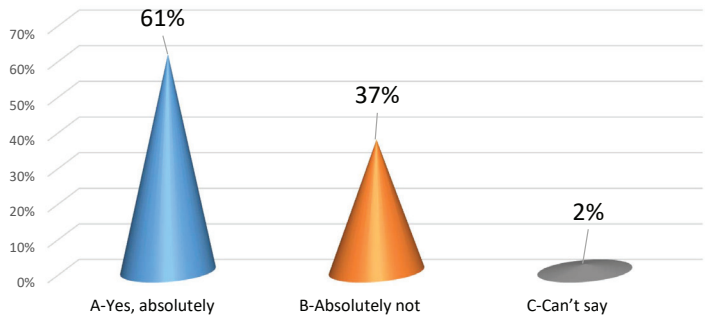


Q2.◀

In the past, was Pakistan not responded to on nuclear threats?

Q3.▶

Will Pakistan remain silent now after the PM's response?



Q4.◀

Is Pakistan being stubborn because of America's backing?

A-Yes, absolutely
B-Absolutely not
C-Can't say

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON TRUMP TARIFF IMPACT ON INDIA

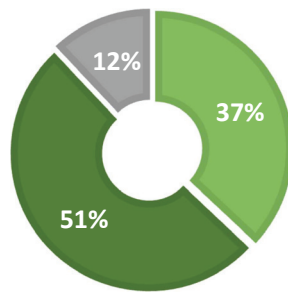
89% believe America's anti-India move will backfire on the US

S&P Global Ratings says US tariffs on Indian imports won't affect India's growth, citing low trade dependence and just 2% GDP exposure. Major export sectors like pharma are

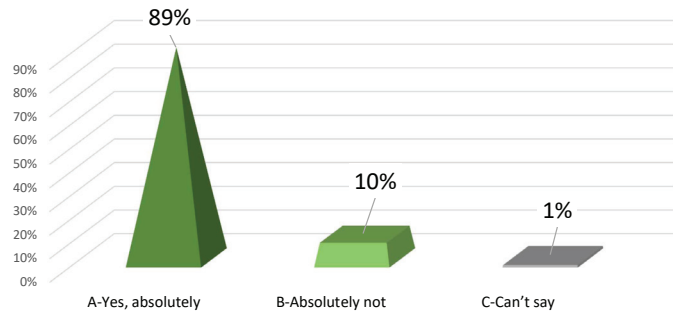
exempt, and strong domestic demand attracts investments. India-US trade hit \$186 billion in 2024-25, with India main-taining a significant surplus

Q1.▶

How do you view India's Atmanirbhar Mission against Trump's tariff?



A-Trump tariff will be a failure
B-America will suffer huge losses
C-Both of the above

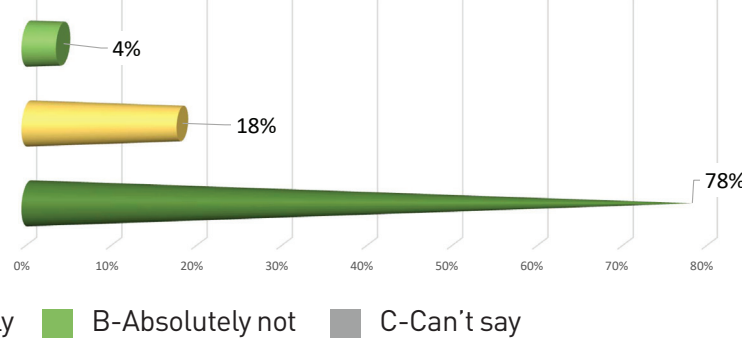


Q2.◀

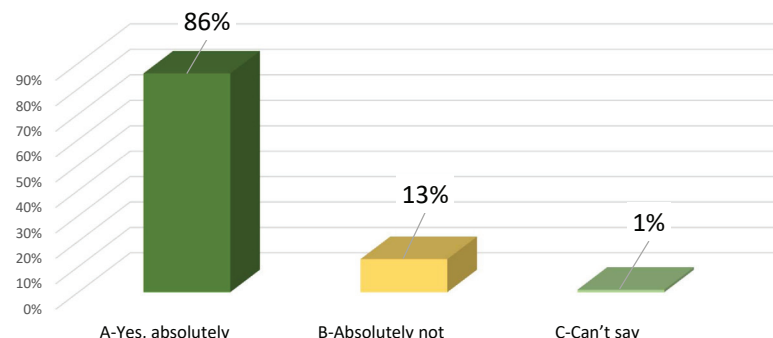
Will America's anti-India move backfire on the US?

Q3.▶

Is America worried about the growing power of BRICS?



A-Yes, absolutely
B-Absolutely not
C-Can't say



Q4.◀

Does America need to rethink its foreign policy?

Six pillars for 2047: PM Modi's I-Day speech

CONTINUED FROM P1

nations surged ahead, the Prime Minister announced that India was now in mission mode to bridge this critical technological gap. By the end of this year, he said, the country will roll out its first Made in India chip, insulating its industries from the supply chain disruptions and shortages that have crippled manufacturing elsewhere.

On energy security, Modi unveiled plans for a ten-fold increase in nuclear power generation capacity by 2047, with work already underway on 10 new reactors. He coupled this with the launch of the National Deepwater Exploration Mission to tap ocean resources, alongside expanded domestic capacity in solar, hydrogen, hydro and nuclear power, to cut dependence on imported petrol, diesel and gas — a drain he described as a persistent burden on the national budget.

Economic reforms took centre stage with the announcement of next-generation GST measures to be rolled out on Diwali in October, reducing taxes on essential goods and providing relief to MSMEs, local vendors and consumers.

These, he said, would be backed by a deeper structural push through a newly formed Task Force for Next-Generation Reforms. The body will review all current laws, rules and procedures tied to economic activity, with a fixed timeline to deliver changes that cut compliance costs for startups, MSMEs and entrepreneurs, reduce the fear of arbitrary legal action, and streamline regulations to improve the ease

KEY-POINTS

- "Blood and water will not flow together."
- "We will not tolerate nuclear blackmail."
- "From 125 Naxal-hit districts to just 20 — this is the new India."
- "Made in India is not just a slogan, it is our shield and sword."
- "By 2047, India will be a developed nation — this is our pledge."
- "Vocal for Local must be every citizen's mantra."
- "Our clean energy goal for 2030 achieved in 2025 — five years early."
- "Illegal infiltration is changing our demography — we will not allow it."
- "The waters of our rivers belong only to India's farmers."
- "In 10 years, 25 crore Indians have come out of poverty."
- "Operation Sindoor showed the world India's new normal against terrorism."
- "From Red Corridor to Green Corridor — development has won."

of doing business.

Modi said these reforms would foster an ecosystem for innovation, entrepreneurship and sustained growth, preparing Bharat for the demands of a \$10 trillion economy by 2047.

Employment generation formed another pillar of the speech, with the launch of the Rs 1 lakh crore PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana. Under this scheme, newly employed youth will receive Rs 15,000 per month, with a target of reaching three crore beneficiaries.

In a significant announcement with strong strategic undertones, Modi called on India's scientists, engineers and youth to take up the challenge of building a fully indigenous jet engine. Drawing parallels to India's rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines and the creation of UPI for digital payments, he said

the same resolve must now be directed towards high-end defence technology. The aim, he emphasised, is to ensure that the engines powering India's skies are entirely home-grown — a decisive step toward strategic self-reliance.

In a related move focused on national security and demographic stability, Modi announced the launch of a High-Powered Demography Mission to tackle the risks posed by illegal migration and demographic imbalances in border areas. He said the mission would safeguard the unity, integrity and rights of India's citizens, while addressing infiltration concerns in a systematic and sustained manner. This comes even as the Election Commission of India is engaged in an exercise to clean electoral rolls to ensure non-citizens are not able to vote.

One hour, forty three minutes: PM's longest address yet

CONTINUED FROM P1

defence to internal security, Modi made multiple announcements, making it clear that neither the US nor the opposition could pressure him. Praising the RSS, he silenced critics questioning the BJP-RSS relationship. He also launched a sharp attack on infiltration, firmly backing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Bihar's voter list, despite opposition protests.

The Prime Minister announced plans for a Sudarshan Chakra-like security system modelled on Israel's

defence network, ensuring that even "a bird cannot threaten our key and religious sites." He warned that any attack would be met with an immediate and decisive response.

On US tariffs, Modi reassured farmers that their interests would not be compromised. He urged citizens to embrace "Vocal for Local" with a focus on quality, rejecting foreign goods in favour of domestic products.

He alleged that infiltration was part of a conspiracy to alter India's demography,

seize tribal land, snatch jobs from youth, and harm the environment. He linked the SIR in Bihar to detecting such infiltrators, asserting that it would proceed despite political protests.

In a speech aimed at all sections of society, Modi promised to review GST rates to ease inflation, announced the Rs 1 lakh crore Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana for youth, and unveiled benefits for farmers and women. He stressed self-reliance as the guiding vision for India's future.

Congress pays tribute to freedom fighters on 79th Independence Day

CONTINUED FROM P1

and brotherhood. Let us come together to carry this struggle forward and resolve to protect the interests of every Indian. Jai Hind," he said.

Rahul Gandhi described independence as a resolve to build a nation rooted in truth, equality, and brotherhood. "This freedom, achieved through the sacrifices of great freedom fighters, is a resolve to build an India where justice rests on the foundation of truth and

equality, and every heart is filled with respect and brotherhood. It is the duty of all of us to protect the pride and honour of this precious heritage," he posted.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra paid tribute to "millions of heroes" whose sacrifices secured independence and entrusted the nation with the democratic principles of justice, equality, and unity. She reaffirmed the party's commitment to safeguarding the Constitution and its ideals.

Senior leader Pawan Khara underscored that freedom was the "shared victory" of the nation's ancestors and called upon citizens to ensure its values and purposes are neither weakened nor lost.

The Congress party, in its official message, also saluted the "dedication, sacrifice, and martyrdom" of freedom fighters, stating that the nation's independence was the result of their unwavering struggle.

IAF on standby as Kishtwar cloudburst toll rises

CONTINUED FROM P1

with clothes and food."

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, who visited the injured in hospital, urged against focusing solely on casualty figures. "Whether one or 50 have left us, it is a sorrow... I pray the missing return home safely," he said. BJP

leader Shagun Parihar, also visiting victims, confirmed that rescue operations remain in full swing, with teams working to evacuate the injured to safety.

The Russian Embassy in India has expressed deep condolences over the disaster. In a statement, it said, "We extend our con-

dolences to the families of those who have perished and wish for a speedy recovery to all injured. Our thoughts and solidarity are with the people of J&K in this tragic hour."

The death toll is expected to rise as rescue efforts continue amid challenging terrain and unpredictable weather.

Opposition criticises PM over RSS praise

CONTINUED FROM P1

tenure when he turns 75 in September. Calling the address "a bland mix of self-congratulation and selective storytelling," Ramesh said the PM had failed to acknowledge economic distress, unemployment, and inequality, while repeating "recycled" slogans on Viksit Bharat and Atmanirbhar Bharat without delivery.

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi questioned why the RSS was lauded from the Red Fort rather than in Nagpur, accusing Modi of attempting to legitimise the organisation's role in the freedom struggle. He said the RSS never participated in the independence move-

ment, "hated Gandhi more than they opposed the British," and warned that the "greater danger" to India's freedom lies in the "hate and division" spread by the Sangh Parivar.

RJD leader Manoj Jha said the address blurred the line between a national speech and an election rally, while Congress leaders Imran Masood and Shama Mohamed criticised the RSS's historical stance, accusing it of failing to hoist the national flag for decades and of fostering division.

The RSS, founded in 1925, did not directly participate in the freedom struggle, focusing instead on social and cultural mobilisation among Hindus.

Lavrov arrives in Alaska for high-stakes Russia-US peace talks

CONTINUED FROM P1

mising its core positions. Asked about Trump's comment that there was a "25 per cent chance" the talks might fail, Lavrov said:

"We never try to anticipate the outcome or make guesses. What we do know is that we have arguments to present and our position is clear."

He noted progress had already been made through earlier contacts, including the visit of Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff to Moscow, where he met President Putin. "Much has been accomplished already," Lavrov said, expressing hope for a "productive conversation" on Friday. Trump, meanwhile, voiced confidence that Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky could be persuaded to pursue peace. Asked whether the

US might offer access to rare minerals as an incentive for Moscow to end the war, Trump said only that the talks would be "very important for Russia and for us — and for us only in that we'll save a lot of lives". "What I'm really doing this for is to save thousands of soldiers a week," Trump said, adding that a follow-up meeting involving Putin, Zelensky and possibly European leaders could prove "more important" than the Alaska summit.

Framing the conflict as "Biden's war", Trump said it would never have erupted under his administration. "I'm there for one reason — to see if I can stop the killing," he remarked, adding that he would know "in the first two minutes" whether a deal was possible.

‘MUST PUBLICLY APOLOGISE’: TN BJP ON RAHUL’S I-DAY BOYCOTT AT RED FORT

Rahul Gandhi’s Independence Day boycott sparks outrage in BJP.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu BJP spokesperson ANS Prasad launched a scathing attack on Congress leader and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of “betraying the nation’s pride” by boycotting this year’s Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort.

Calling Gandhi’s absence “a shameful betrayal” of constitutional values and patriotic spirit, Prasad said the decision reflected a “long-standing pattern of anti-India propaganda.”

He said, “Rahul Gandhi’s boycott of the 2025 Red Fort Independence Day celebrations is a stark reminder of his disdain for Bharat’s patriotic spirit and constitutional values. As the Leader of Opposition, a role that demands unwavering commitment to

PATRIOTISM QUESTIONED

- TN BJP’s ANS Prasad slams Rahul Gandhi for skipping Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort.
- Calls Gandhi’s absence a “shameful betrayal” of constitutional values and patriotic spirit.
- Accuses him of amplifying foreign attacks by endorsing Donald Trump’s remarks on India’s economy.
- Claims Gandhi’s actions embolden critics and raise doubts about his loyalty to India.
- Alleges he spreads false narratives about PM Modi and fears related to the Adani probe.



Tamil Nadu BJP spokesperson ANS Prasad.

national unity, Gandhi’s absence is a shameful betrayal of the trust placed in him.”

Prasad alleged that Gandhi had “endorsed Donald Trump’s baseless jibes about India’s economy,” which, he said, amplified foreign attacks on our nation’s global rise and economic resilience. He said, “This is not an

isolated incident, but a continuation of Gandhi’s long-standing pattern of anti-India propaganda. By endorsing Donald Trump’s baseless jibes about India’s economy, Gandhi has amplified foreign attacks on our nation’s global rise and economic resilience. His actions embolden external critics, casting doubt on

his loyalty to our motherland.”

He also accused Gandhi of spreading false narratives about Prime Minister Narendra Modi, including remarks related to an alleged probe involving industrialist Gautam Adani.

“Gandhi’s relentless defamations of Prime Minister

Modi, including false claims about Modi fearing Trump’s Adani probe remarks, fuels conspiracies that erode trust in our democratic institutions. Such actions betray the Indian National Congress, transforming it into an entity that serves foreign interests over Bharat’s sovereignty,” Prasad said.

Citing Article 51A of the Constitution, which outlines the fundamental duties of citizens, Prasad said Gandhi’s conduct violated the ethos of promoting harmony and cherishing India’s heritage. “His disloyalty threatens India’s strength, emboldening adversaries and discouraging progress,” Prasad asserted.

The BJP spokesperson argued that Gandhi’s absence from the Independence Day celebrations insulted the sacrifices of freedom fighters and trampled on the spirit of India’s independence.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP backs PM Modi’s remarks on Pak

TDG NETWORK
HAVERI



Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Anil Desai

Shiv Sena (UBT) Member of Parliament (MP) Anil Desai showed solidarity with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s remarks on Pakistan and Terrorism during his Independence Day speech on Friday.

“It is absolutely correct because the way Pakistan has given a platform to terrorism, terror, and insurgency between India and Pakistan, it is impossible to have any compromise there until their actions stop and they come on the right path,” said MP Anil Desai.

Desai’s remark came amid PM Modi’s I-Day address at the Red Fort, where he mentioned how India has “set a new normal” against terrorism.

However, party MLA Aaditya Thackeray drew from the PM’s speech to criticise the Indian Cricket Board for going ahead with plans

to play Pakistan in the upcoming Asia Cup T20.

“It’ll be a real shame if the BCCI thinks it’s above what the PM said from Red Fort today. After so many efforts of the Union Government and our country to tell the world that pak is behind the Pahalgham attacks, the greed for money of the BCCI stands above the sacrifice of the Armed Forces, the Nation and even the PM saying blood and water cannot flow together. With all the might that BCCI has in the ICC, it’s a joke to say we are bound by the Asia Cup Rules,” he

posted on X.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation on the 79th Independence Day, hailed the success of Operation Sindoor and saluted the role of the armed forces who targeted terror sites in Pakistan.

The operation, he said, was an expression of India’s outrage at the Pahalgham terrorists’ attack in which “husbands were killed in front of their wives and fathers were killed in front of their children after asking their religion.”

Maha CM hoists Tricolour, attends hoisting ceremony of Bombay HC

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis hoisted the tricolour flag on the 79th Independence Day on Friday.

Alongside, Fadnavis also attended the flag hoisting ceremony of Bombay High Court on the occasion of Indian Independence Day, with Chief Justice of Bombay High Court, Alok Aradhe.

The Maharashtra Chief Minister extended heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for “constantly working to relieve the tax burden of the com-



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis hoists the national flag on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day, at Mantralaya in Mumbai on Friday. ANI

mon man.”

“Gift from Hon PM Narendra Modi Ji for this Diwali! Heartfelt thank you to Hon PM Narendra Modi Ji for

constantly working to relieve the tax burden of the common man,” read his X post on Friday.

“These next generation

reforms in GST will enable growth for common individual by reducing the tax on essential goods and services. This will foster an incredibly positive environment for a new era for MSMEs and local vendors, and consumers in Maharashtra,” the X post read further.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day, announced that the government is set to bring a significant reform in the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which will give considerable relief to consumers and small businesses.

Southern Naval Command performs grand ceremonial parade on I-Day

TDG NETWORK
KOCHI



Southern Naval Command celebrates 79th Independence Day. File Photo

The Southern Naval Command marked the 79th Independence Day with a grand ceremonial parade, reviewed by Vice Admiral V. Srinivas, PVSM, AVSM, NM, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Southern Naval Command. The event showcased the Navy’s discipline, dedication, and commitment to safeguarding the nation’s maritime frontiers.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his 12th consecutive Independence Day address from the Red Fort on Friday, em-

phasizing India’s unwavering commitment to national security and farmers’ rights. In his speech, he declared that India will assert full control over its share of river waters, describing the Indus Water Treaty as “an injustice” that had deprived

Indian farmers while benefiting the neighbouring country.

He stressed that compromises on farmers’ and national interests “are not acceptable... not anymore.

In his speech PM Modi said, “Bharat has decided

that blood and water will not flow together. The Indus Water Treaty was an injustice to the people of India. The rivers of India were irrigating the enemy country while our own farmers were deprived of water. Now, the right over India’s share of water belongs only to India and its farmers.”

“The people of our country have clearly understood how unjust and one-sided the Indus agreement is.

The waters of rivers originating in India have been irrigating the fields of our enemies, while the farmers and the land of my own country remain thirsty without water.

Bengaluru: 1 dies, 9 hurt in cylinder blast in Wilson Garden

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

One person was killed and nine others were injured due to a suspected cylinder exploded in Bengaluru’s Wilson Garden, officials mentioned on Friday.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner, and other officials also visited the site of the incident. One boy, identified as Mubarak has died in the explosion.

After inspecting the site of the explosion, CM Siddaramaiah said that the initial suspicion was that this was a Cylinder blast and that 1 person had been killed.

“An explosion has occurred. At first glance, it is being said that it was a cylinder blast. There is a suspicion that it might have been a cylinder blast. In this building complex, several houses have collapsed. Instructions have been given to repair the



The incident site.

houses. A woman named Kasturamma has been admitted to Victoria Hospital. Narasmma has also been admitted to the hospital. In the incident, a boy named Mubarak has died. There is information that nine people have been injured. Currently, treatment is being given to everyone. All have been admitted to hospitals and are receiving treatment. Out of the ten people involved, one person has died. A compensation of 5 lakh has been announced for Mubarak’s fam-

ily. The cost of treatment for the injured will be borne by the government. Kasturamma has severe burns, and her treatment will be taken care of. The neighbouring houses have also been damaged. The exact cause of the incident is not known; at first glance, it is being said to be a cylinder blast,” the CM said.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh said, “Today, in Adugodi PS limits, around 8.30 am, local Police came to know that there is a blast.

K’taka Cong leaders slam Govt on semiconductor project locations

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

After the Union Cabinet approved four new semiconductor manufacturing facilities in Odisha, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh, Congress leaders in Karnataka on Thursday accused the Centre of favouring BJP-ruled states.

Karnataka CM’s legal advisor AS Ponnanna alleged the BJP-led Union government was prioritising “political gains over national interest.”

“It is very clear that for the BJP government, their political gains are more important than national interest... The yellow metro line here is a prime example of their politicking. We contributed Rs 51 thousand crore, they contributed about Rs 7 thou-

sand crore, yet they are claiming it as if the whole credit goes to the Prime Minister,” Ponnanna told ANI.

Congress leader Rizwan Arshad accused the central government of «twisting» technology giants into investing in Gujarat and other «friendly states.» He claimed a semiconductor factory initially planned for Telangana was «blackmailed» into relocating to Andhra Pradesh.

«The Modi government has always been at twisting technology giants into investing in Gujarat and their friendly states. Similarly, the semiconductor factory to be located in Telangana has been blackmailed to be shifted to Andhra Pradesh. This is a regressive move.

‘Won good seats in Maha’: Girish Mahajan on Rahul ‘vote theft’ claims

TDG NETWORK
NASHIK



Maharashtra Minister Girish Mahajan on Friday slammed Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, over his allegations of “vote theft” against the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Referring to the 2024 Lok Sabha election results, Mahajan stated that the Congress party had won several seats in Maharashtra and did not raise issues with the voter list. He claimed that the party only raised concerns after losing in the state assembly elections.

“Rahul Gandhi won such good seats in Maharashtra, he did not see any problems in the voter list then, now that he has lost at Vidhan Sabha, he is running around with the voter list... One person can fill a form at two places and get his

name at two places... mistakes can happen,” Girish Mahajan told ANI.

Earlier on Thursday, ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, Rahul Gandhi announced the launch of the “VoterAdhikarYatra” against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, urging people to join what he called a “people’s movement”.

Making the announcement in a post on X, the Congress MP said, “From August 17, with #VoterAdhikarYatra, we are launching a direct fight against

vote theft from the soil of Bihar,” he said in a post on social media X.

The announcement came amid the continuous protests by the INDIA bloc leaders and amid its campaign of alleged “vote chori” (vote theft). “This is not just an election issue - it is a decisive battle to protect democracy, the constitution, and the principle of ‘one man, one vote.’ We will ensure a clean voter list across the entire country. Youth, workers, farmers - every citizen, rise and join this people’s movement. This time, the defeat of vote thieves - the victory of the people, the victory of the constitution”

On August 7, Rahul Gandhi had accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Election Commission of “collusion,” alleging it helped Prime Minister Narendra Modi secure a third term.

Kalka MLA hoists Tricolour, announces Rs 1L for students who participate at I-Day event

TDG NETWORK
PANCHKULA

Kalka MLA Shakti Rani Sharma hoisted the National Flag at Kalka Stadium on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day and took the salute at the march past.

Addressing the gathering, Sharma announced Rs 1 lakh for students who participated in the celebrations and extended greetings to the public. She

spoke about paying tribute to martyrs, recent security incidents in Pahalgam, and “Operation Sindoor” carried out by Indian forces. She outlined state government measures for the welfare of martyrs’ families, including jobs to dependents and the establishment of Armed Forces Preparatory Institutes in Charkhi Dadri, Hisar, and Yamunanagar, along with a proposed military museum in Rewari.

Sharma also mentioned welfare schemes such as PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Ujjwala Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, PM Awas Yojana, and the state’s “Lado Sakhi” and “Happy Yojana.” She cited employment statistics, saying that 1.8 lakh jobs have been provided in the state, and spoke of measures for women’s empowerment, housing for poor families, and medical assistance under Ayushman Bharat-



Kalka MLA Shakti Rani Sharma after hoisting the National Flag took the salute at the march past on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day at Kalka Stadium.

Chirayu Yojana.

On environmental mea-

sures, she referred to tree plantation drives, the “One

Tree in Mother’s Name” campaign, solid and liquid waste management projects in villages, construction of Amrit Sarovars, and the approval of electric buses for seven cities. She also highlighted the completion of Maharaja Agrasen Airport in Hisar and its commencement of flight services to Ayodhya.

During the event, Sharma honoured relatives of freedom fighters and war widows by presenting

shawls. Officers and employees were recognised for outstanding work with mementos and certificates.

The march past included contingents from the Haryana Police, Home Guard, NCC boys and girls, and Scouts and Guides. Students from Sophia Convent School, Unison International School, Arya Girls Senior Secondary School, Bal Bharti School, Vivekanand Millennium School, Darshan

Academy, Sikh Girls High School, Akaal Jyot Public School, Alpine International School, and SSD Smart School performed cultural programmes.

Municipal Council Chairman Krishan Lamba, SDM Kalka Sanyam Garg, Tehsildar Vivek Goyal, BDPO Vinay Pratap, ACP Ashish Kumar, BJP Vice President Pawan Kumari, Mandal President Kapil Gaud, and other dignitaries attended the programme.

CM LEADS 79TH I-DAY CELEBRATION

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta hoisted the Tricolour on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day on Friday.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta hoisted the Tricolour on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day on Friday. Alongside, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar hoisted the national flag at his residence in New Delhi on Friday on the occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, joining millions across the country in celebrating the spirit of independence and national pride. The EAM hoisted the national flag, followed by the singing of the national anthem, alongside officials and close associates present to mark the occasion. "Hoisted the Tiranga at my residence, on the occasion of Independence Day. Jai Hind! Jai Bharat!" the EAM stated in a post on X. Speaking on the Independence Day speech delivered by Prime Minister Naren-



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta in a group picture with Delhi Police personnel during the 79th Independence Day celebrations, at Chhatrasal Stadium in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo)

dra Modi at the ramparts of the Red Fort today, the EAM stated that it was a "powerful speech" by the PM, noting the message of "Aatmanirbharta". It was a compelling speech by the Prime Minister. It was a message of Aatmanirbharta and that

we can face all the challenges at home, abroad, and he had great confidence in the Indian people that they will rise to the challenge," Jaishankar said. Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday hoisted the national flag

on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day at the CM's residence in Bhopal. CM Yadav also extended greetings to the residents of the state and the country on the 79th Independence Day, highlighting that it is the most special occasion above all the festivals."I

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta, EAMS Jaishankar, and MP CM Mohan Yadav hoisted the national flag on India's 79th Independence Day at their respective residences.

extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all residents of the state and the nation on the occasion of Independence Day, August 15. This occasion is above all the festivals such as Diwali, Dussehra, and Eid. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India continues to progress and may become a leading nation by the Amrit Kaal of 2047," CM Yadav said.

6 killed after roof collapse at Humayun's Tomb, 11 rescued

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Five people, including three women and two men, were killed on Friday after a portion of the roof of a room at Dargah Sharif Patte Shah collapsed near Humayun's Tomb, Delhi Police said. According to the police, 11 people were rescued from the debris and sent to a nearby hospital for treatment. A search operation was launched immediately after the collapse, with teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Fire Department, and local police deployed at the site. The incident site, located near Humayun's Tomb, was quickly cordoned off to ensure safety and to facilitate rescue efforts. The officials said that NDRF personnel conducted a search operation inside the dargah premises to check for any more people trapped under the debris. Soon after the incident, Fire Department personnel



File photo

A search operation was launched immediately after the collapse, with teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Fire Department, and local police deployed at the site.

and emergency responders also remained present at the scene to assist in operations. "Eleven people have been rescued from the site of the incident and taken to a nearby hospital. The search operation is still under-

way," the Delhi police said. The area around the dargah remained sealed off as structural engineers and investigators examined the site. Further investigation is underway to determine the exact cause of the collapse.

Kharge hoists Tricolour at Congress HQ

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress President and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, hoisted the National Flag at the party headquarters in Delhi on Friday to mark India's 79th Independence Day celebrations. The ceremony was attended by several senior party leaders, including Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, who stood alongside Kharge during the flag hoisting and joined in singing the national anthem. Before the ceremony, both leaders extended Independence Day greetings to citizens, paying tribute to India's freedom fighters. Kharge urged people to honour the legacy of the

national movement by continuing the struggle for constitutional rights, social justice, economic empowerment, and national unity. "Heartfelt greetings and congratulations to all countrymen on Independence Day. We pay humble tribute to the countless great freedom fighters, remembering their sacrifices and invaluable contributions to the national movement. This day is significant because we, the people of India, are now fighting for our rights, the protection of constitutional institutions, social justice, economic empowerment, and brotherhood. Let us come together to carry this struggle forward and resolve to protect the interests of every Indian.

Mi-17 helicopters shower petals, display Operation Sindoor banner

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

While the celebration of India's 79th Independence Day is underway, two Mi-17 helicopters of the Indian Air Force flew above the Red Fort, showering petals. One Mi-17 helicopter flew with the Tiranga showering flower petals, and the other flew displaying a banner of Operation Sindoor, adding more patriotism and colour to the celebration. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the tricolour at Red Fort, as the nation marked the celebration of the 79th Independence Day. Flying Officer Rashika Sharma assisted the Prime Minister in hoisting the flag, after which flower petals were showered from



Independence Day 2025 Red Fort celebrations witness PM Modi hoisting flag, IAF Mi-17 choppers and patriotic events.

two Mi-17 helicopters of the Indian Air Force. Wing Commander Vinay Poonia and Wing Commander Aditya Jaiswal piloted the aircraft. Earlier, PM Modi was received at the Red Fort by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, MoS Sanjay Seth, and the Chiefs of the three services. The Prime Minister also received the ceremonial guard of honour by the National Flag Guard,

the Indian Air Force, Army, Navy, and Delhi Police, totalling upto 128 people. Wing Commander Arun Nagar led the inter-services guard of honour. Ahead of reaching the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Rajghat in the national capital and paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi as the country marked its 79th Independence Day.

Delhi Police deploys AI surveillance, 20,000 personnel for I- Day

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Security has been significantly heightened across the country ahead of Independence Day celebrations, with intensified patrolling, checkpoints for vehicles and individuals, and enhanced surveillance measures. In Delhi, police carried out checks at border points and strategic locations. The national capital's security has been fortified with a multi-layer plan involving Delhi Police, paramilitary forces, the National Security Guard (NSG), the Special Protection Group (SPG), Military Intelligence, and other agencies. Over 20,000 security personnel have been deployed. According to Delhi Police officials, Advanced Arti-



ficial Intelligence systems -- including facial recognition, anti-intrusion cameras, people count cameras, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR), and abandoned object detection -- have been installed. The ANPR will scan number plates to flag suspicious vehicles, while the facial recognition system integrates a database of 300,000 suspects. "The Abandoned Object Detection system will trig-

ger an instant alarm to the control room upon finding any unattended item in or around the Red Fort," said officials, adding that the Anti-Intrusion Cameras will cover every wall and railing of the fort and will alert authorities to any suspicious movement or breach attempt. Anti-drone systems are operational, snipers have been stationed on rooftops, and over 800 CCTV cameras are monitoring key areas.

Police file four FIRs over unauthorised dog lovers' protests over SC order

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police have lodged four FIRs in connection with protests staged by dog lovers without prior permission at multiple locations in the New Delhi district on August 11 and 12, officials said on Friday. Police said the demonstrations were held despite prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), earlier Section 144 of the CrPc, which is currently in force in the district as part of heightened security measures ahead of Independence Day. According to officials, the protests turned unruly



when police personnel attempted to disperse the demonstrators, leading to clashes at some sites. Several videos of the incidents have since gone viral on social media, drawing public attention. "Those who refused to leave the protest sites despite repeated requests were detained. Legal ac-

tion will be taken against all those found violating the law," said the Delhi police. One viral clip shows the Station House Officer of Tughlaq Road police station being manhandled by a group of protesters, while another video captures a confrontation between a woman sub-inspector and a female protester inside a

bus. On Thursday, the Supreme Court reserved its order on pleas seeking a stay on its August 11 directive to remove all stray dogs from localities in the Delhi-NCR region and place them in shelter homes. A three-judge bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and NV Anjaria stated that it would pass an interim order on the August 11 decision of a different bench. At the outset, Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta, representing the Delhi government, remarked that there was a "loud vocal minority" and a "silent suffering majority."

Yamuna River flows below danger level mark

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Yamuna River in the national capital was flowing below the danger mark on Sunday morning. The information from Loha Pul showed that the river is flowing below the 204.20-metre mark. Persistent downpours have pushed river levels close to or beyond danger marks. Earlier, the water level of the Yamuna River in Delhi rose to 204.79 metres at 7 a.m. on Thursday, crossing the warn-



Representation image (Photo:ANI)

ing mark of 204.50 metres and reaching the highest level of the season so far amid the ongoing monsoon season and continuous rainfall, officials said. As monsoon lashes several parts of the country, the water

level of the rivers across the nation is on the rise. On Saturday, the water level in the Ganga River reached closer to the danger mark in Varanasi, submerging the Namo Ghat in knee-deep water. The Saryu River water level

is also rising due to continuous rainfall in Ayodhya city. Uttar Pradesh is facing continuous rainfall in several cities, causing waterlogging. Earlier, in UP's Lucknow district, all government, government-aided and private schools from pre-primary to Class eight were closed on Friday due to heavy rainfall and waterlogging, according to a notice from the District Magistrate's office. The District Magistrate's office said the decision was taken following continuous heavy rain in the past few hours and a forecast for more

rain by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The notice read, "In view of the ongoing inclement weather and waterlogging due to heavy rainfall in the past few hours in Lucknow, as well as the forecast for further heavy rain by the Meteorological Department, all government, government-aided, and private schools--including those affiliated with all boards--from pre-primary to Class 8 in both urban and rural areas of Lucknow district will remain closed for academic activities on August 8, 2025.

Almost 1 500 convicts at Tihar Jail given special remission on 79th I-Day

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Special remission was granted to almost 1,500 convicts at the Tihar Jail on the occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, with officials announcing that the Delhi government has sanctioned Rs 145.58 crore to build a new jail in Narela to ease overcrowding in the national capital's prisons. Director General (Prisons) Satish Golchha in his address during the flag-hoisting event at the Tihar prison headquarters on Friday, said a total of 1,497 inmates have been found eligible for special remission ranging from 15 to 25 days based on their

conduct during their time in the prison. Remission reduces the period of the sentence without changing its character. The Tihar Jail, Asia's largest prison complex, built in 1957, currently has more than 18,000 inmates. The prison complex spreads across Jail Number 1 to 16, with Jail Number 6 and 16 specially designed to house women prisoners. The DG also informed that the department had recently taken over the operation of the Lampur Detention Centre, where around 273 foreigners are housed. "The prison department is strengthening its "correctional philosophy" by focusing on education and skill development for inmates," he said.

10 PILGRIMS KILLED, 35 INJURED IN BUS ACCIDENT IN WEST BENGAL

Victims were returning to Motihari after visiting Deoghar and Gangasagar

TDG NETWORK
BURDWAN (WB)

Ten pilgrims from Bihar died and 35 others were injured as their bus rammmed into a truck parked on the roadside in West Bengal's Burdwan town on Friday, officials said.

The pilgrims, who belonged to Motihari in Bihar's East Champaran district, were returning home after visiting Gangasagar in South 24 Parganas district when the accident happened on NH-19 near Phaguipur in Purba Bardhaman district, they said.

Among the deceased were eight men and two women, they added.

The injured persons, including six children, were admitted to the Burdwan Medical College and Hospital, officials said.



Ten pilgrims from Bihar died and 35 others were injured as their bus rammmed into a truck parked on the roadside in West Bengal's Burdwan town

"There were 45 people on the luxury bus. Efforts are being made to contact their families," an official said.

"The pilgrims began their journey from Motihari on August 8. They first visited Deoghar and then went to Gangasagar," he said.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed grief over the accident and announced ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each

for the next of kin of the deceased.

The pilgrims, who belonged to Motihari in Bihar's East Champaran district, were returning home after visiting Gangasagar in South 24 Parganas district when the accident happened on NH-19 near Phaguipur in Purba Bardhaman district, the officials said.

A statement issued by the

Bihar government said, "The CM has expressed condolences over the casualties in the road accident that took place on the roadside in Burdwan. He is deeply saddened by the deaths of Bihar natives in the incident, and announced ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the immediate family members of the deceased."

Besides, the CM also announced Rs 50,000 as compensation for each injured passenger.

The CM has also directed the officials to remain in touch with their counterparts in West Bengal and ensure proper treatment for the injured persons.

He also asked officials to ensure that bodies of deceased hailing from the state reach their native place in East Champaran, it said.

Chhattisgarh: 6 killed, 1 hurt in car-truck collision

TDG NETWORK
RAJNANDGAON CHHATTISGARH

Six people were killed and one injured in a tragic road accident near Chirchari under the Bagnadi police station area early this morning.

According to Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Rahul Dev Sharma, the incident occurred around 5 AM when a car, carrying seven passengers traveling from Nagpur to Raipur, collided with a truck.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the car driver may have dozed off, causing the vehicle to veer into the opposite lane, where it was struck by the truck.

The impact resulted in the immediate death of six occupants, while the sole survivor was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Police are investigating the incident further.

Cong stalled Fairchild in 1964: Vaishnaw on Ramesh's attack



Ashwini Vaishnaw (L), Jairam Ramesh (R)

didn't Congress develop semiconductor industry" in India despite the country having the requisite talent

He said Intel also tried to set up a semiconductor unit in India in 2005-06 but "was not allowed because of the policy paralysis of the UPA regime". Congress led UPA governments from 2004 to 2010.

Vaishnaw noted that the semiconductor laboratory, Mohali works at a lab scale

and a commercial scale silicon fab works at 20,000-40,000 wafer-starts per month.

"Fairchild founder Robert Noyce came to Bharat in 1964. License permit raj of congress did not allow setting up a semiconductor plant. Went to HongKong. Then founded Intel. Rest is history. Intel once again tried to set up a semiconductor unit in Bharat in 2005-06.

RSS is 100% patriotic, doesn't need certificate from Cong: G Kishan Reddy

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Friday said the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is a "100% patriotic organisation" working for the benefit of the country and described it as the largest non-political organisation in the world.

Reddy said while speaking to ANI, "Whatever people may say, RSS is 100% a patriotic organisation working for the benefit of the country. It is the largest non-political organisation in the world. 140 crore people of India know what RSS stands for."

Reddy also took a jibe at Congress, noting that RSS does not require validation from Congress or any other political party.

He said, "On PM Modi mentioning RSS in his Independence Day speech,



Union Minister G It is a committed organisation that works for India's welfare. It doesn't need a certificate from Congress or any other party."

Meanwhile on Friday, Opposition leaders came down heavily on PM Modi for his remarks during his Independence Day speech in which he hailed RSS for completing 100 years of service to the nation, describing it as the "biggest NGO in the world" and praising its century-long contribution

to nation-building.

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech "stale, hypocritical, insipid, and troubling."

He claimed that the Prime Minister mentioned the RSS in his address to appease the organisation, arguing that Modi "is now at their complete mercy and reliant on Mohan Bhagwat's good offices for an extension of his tenure post-September" when he turns 75.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav criticised Sangh Parivar led by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), accusing them of "swadeshi by words but foreign by heart".

"When the first convention of the Bharatiya Janata Party was held, they decided that he would follow a secular and socialist path. But the path of the people of the Sangh Parivar is not secular and socialist.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Salman Khurshid on Friday demanded answers from RSS for not hoisting the Indian flag for 52 years after Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a reference to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh during his 79th Independence Day speech.

"There are two views about RSS in the country. One is our view, and the other is PM Modi and his allies' view. There is a huge difference between the two views, so I believe we should not touch that issue on such an auspicious day..." Khurshid said.



The Congress leader said that RSS had not hoisted the tricolour for 52 years and added, "They didn't hoist the Tiranga for 52 years, they didn't contribute to the freedom movement. They had opposed the Quit India

Movement. They were urging people to join the British Army to fight the Azad Hind Fauj. So, they had no contribution to the freedom movement..."

He further demanded answers from RSS, saying, "They should give an account for those 52 years. You didn't believe in the Tiranga, didn't believe in the Constitution... Sardar Patel had banned this..."

Prime Minister Modi in his address to the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort lauded the RSS for completing 100 years of service to the nation and described it as the "biggest NGO in the world."

"Today, I would like to

proudly mention that 100 years ago, an organisation was born - Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). 100 years of service to the nation is a proud, golden chapter. With the resolve of 'vyakti nirman se rashtra nirman', with the aim of the welfare of Maa Bharati, swayamsevaks dedicated their lives to the welfare of our motherland... In a way, RSS is the biggest NGO in the world. It has a history of 100 years of dedication," the Prime Minister said.

Early this morning, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the tricolour at the Red Fort on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day.

Bengal nurse found dead in Singur nursing home

TDG NETWORK
KOLKATA

A 24-year-old nurse was found dead at a private nursing home in West Bengal's Hooghly district, police said on Friday, triggering political unrest and allegations of a cover-up.

Tensions escalated as supporters of the CPI(M)'s student and youth wings and the BJP Yuva Morcha mobbed the vehicle carrying the woman's body, which was brought from Walsh Hospital morgue in Hooghly district to Kolkata for post-mortem examination.

According to police, the woman, a resident of Nandigram in Purba Medinipur district, had joined the nursing home four days ago.

Her body was found hanging from a ceiling in a room on the third floor of the facility in Singur on Thursday.

While the nursing home management claimed it to be a case of suicide, the woman's family has alleged



Representational image

she was sexually assaulted and murdered, saying she had uncovered irregularities in the nursing home's operations.

"We have no faith in any post-mortem examination conducted at a state hospital," the woman's father said.

"We want the autopsy to be done at AIIMS Kalyani or Command Hospital, Alipore, to ensure a fair and transparent investigation," he demanded.

Meanwhile, there was

high drama when members of the CPI(M)'s student wing, SFI, and the BJP Yuva Morcha gathered outside the hospital in Kolkata where the woman's body was brought for post-mortem examination.

Both sides traded charges against each other that they were involved in a nexus with local TMC leaders and were trying to shield the nursing home management so that the real reason behind the nurse's death never comes out "like the

RG Kar rape and murder."

CPI-M's student wing SFI state secretary Debanjan Dey said, "The BJP is trying to deflect the focus from the reason behind the death of a sister. As our comrades arrived at the medical college to prevent any attempt to cover up the real reason behind the death, the BJP Yuva Morcha workers arrived at the spot and created a ruckus to help TMC."

Contradicting their claim, BJP Yuva Morcha leader Tamaghna Ghosh said, "The family of the deceased wants post-mortem examination of their daughter be conducted at a central government-run hospital - either AIIMS Kalyani or Command Hospital Alipore. Our workers have assembled at the spot to be on the side of the family and ensure police cannot whisk them away and conduct the process at a state hospital to suppress facts."

He also alleged SFI was working covertly to help

TMC.

"We will not allow them to repeat another botched up post-mortem examination like the one conducted at RG Kar following the rape-murder of the medic one year ago," Ghosh alleged.

A senior Hooghly district police official said they were investigating the case.

"We are waiting for the autopsy report before taking any action," the official said.

The opposition BJP and CPI(M) held demonstrations in the area after the body was found on Thursday, alleging that the nurse was murdered and possibly subjected to sexual torture.

State minister Becharam Manna, who is the local TMC MLA, said action will be taken if police investigation finds any foul play in her death.

TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said both the BJP and CPI(M) have ganged up to do politics over the unnatural death of a young woman.

Nagaland Guv Ganesan dies at 80

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI/KOHIMA

Nagaland Governor La Ganesan, former president of Tamil Nadu BJP, died on Friday while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Chennai, a Raj Bhavan official in Kohima said.

He was 80.

A well-known BJP leader in Tamil Nadu with RSS roots, Ganesan has served as Governor of Manipur, West Bengal and Nagaland between 2021 and 2025.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and a host of other leaders condoled Ganesan's death.

The PM said: "Pained by the passing of Nagaland Governor Thiru La. Ganesan Ji. He will be remembered as a devout nationalist, who dedicated his life to service and nation-building. He worked hard to expand the BJP across Tamil Nadu. He was deeply passionate about Tamil culture too. My thoughts are with his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

Stalin expressed anguish over Ganesan's death and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family and the party.

The chief minister, who paid tributes to Ganesan personally, hailed him as a rare leader noted for his political civility.

He behaved with dignity by respecting



leaders belonging to different ideologies.

Ganesan had huge respect for late DMK leader and former CM M Karunanidhi and he showed love and regard for the chief minister as well.

AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami, former CM O Panneriselvam, MDMK chief Vaiko and PMK leader Anbumani Ramadoss condoled Ganesan's death.

Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, BJP leaders including Tamilisai Soundararajan, were among a host of saffron party leaders who condoled Ganesan's death and hailed his contributions to the party and service to the nation.

Oil or gas reserves will change the face of country: Hardeep Singh Puri

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday highlighted the significance of India's energy security as Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the National Deep Water Exploration Mission from the ramparts of the Red Fort. The mission aims to explore oil and gas reserves beneath the sea, with an ambitious plan to double the

National Reserve by 2032 and triple the current production by 2047.

In a post on X, Puri wrote, "The oil/gas reserves that will be obtained through deep water exploration will change the face of the country." He added, "India's quest for energy security resonates from the ramparts of the Red Fort. PM Shri @narendramodi Ji lays emphasis on the importance of the National Deep Water Mission in India's efforts to

increase domestic exploration and production of hydrocarbons to reduce our dependence on energy imports. Several key reforms, including legislation like the ORD Amendment Act, have been put in place to enhance exploration and production activities in India in the last few years."

The post highlighted India's progress in hydrocarbon exploration, noting, "52 discoveries have been made in the last five years, and 172 since 2014,



including 66 offshore. Acreage of more than 0.38 million sq km has been awarded as compared to 82,327 sq km between 2009 and 2014. India's energy sector is exploring new horizons."

Union Minister Puri further added, "Taking a big step towards energy self-reliance of the country, PM @narendramodi today from the ramparts of the Red Fort announced the launch of the National Deep Water Exploration

Mission."

"This mission, which promotes indigenisation on the mantra of Make in India, will move forward with the resolve to double the National Reserve by 2032 and triple the current production by 2047, with a focus on finding oil and gas reserves under the sea," he said.

Earlier today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day, announced the

National Deep Water Exploration Mission, which aims to explore oil and gas reserves in the sea.

Terming it a "Samudra Manthan," he said the initiative will be executed in Mission Mode, highlighting India's push for energy self-reliance.

"We are now also heading towards 'Samudra Manthan'. Taking this forward, we aim to operate in Mission Mode to explore the oil and gas reserves in the sea. So, India is about to

launch the National Deep Water Exploration Mission," PM Modi said.

Earlier this year, in February, the Ministry of Earth Sciences said, "the deep-sea exploration includes biodiversity, survey and mineral resources. Apart from the benefits of scientific research and technological empowerment, this mission has immediate spin-offs in underwater engineering innovations, asset inspection and the promotion of ocean literacy."

GST REVAMP: CENTRE PLANS TWO RATES

Big reform: Everyday items likely to get cheaper.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

In a path-breaking initiative relating to the Goods and Services Tax structure, the Central Government has proposed to scrap the current slab of 12 per cent and 28 per cent of GST rates and keep only 5 per cent and 18 per cent GST rates, government sources said on Friday. Government sources said as part of the initiative, 99 per cent of 12 per cent slab are proposed to move in 5 per cent slab and 90 per cent of items in 28 per cent slab are proposed to move in the 18 per cent slab.

They said that consumer goods kept in the 28 per cent slab are proposed to be moved to the 18 per cent slab. They also said that a new slab of 40 per cent is proposed for "sin goods" like tobacco and pan masala.

The initiative is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement during his Independence Day Speech on Friday that people are going to get a very big gift on Diwali and the government has embarked on "big reform of GST".



Centre's GST rejig proposes scrapping 12% & 28% slabs, shifting most goods to 5%/18%, and 40% 'sin' slab for tobacco & pan masala. [File]

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR CONSUMERS

- Essentials get cheaper: many 12% items move to 5%, lowering monthly bills.
- Big-ticket buys ease up: several 28% goods shift to 18%, cutting upfront price/EMIs.
- 'Sin' goods costlier: tobacco/pan masala at 40%, discouraging use.
- Simpler GST, fewer disputes: two primary slabs; savings kick in after Council approval.

The sources said that the proposal by the Centre has been sent to the states. It has also been sent to the Group of Ministers (GoM) of the GST Council. The sources said that the

proposal will be studied by the GoM and a meeting of the GST Council is likely to be held in September-October to consider the proposal. PM Modi made a major announcement in the

Independence Day address relating to GST. "This Diwali, I am going to make it a double Diwali for you. This Diwali, you fellow countrymen are going to get a very big gift. In the last 8

The sources said that the proposal by the Centre has been sent to the states. It has also been sent to the Group of Ministers (GoM) of the GST Council.

years, we have done a big reform of GST, reduced the tax burden across the country, simplified the tax regime and after 8 years, the need of the hour is that we should review it once. We started the review by setting up a high-power committee and also held discussions with the states," PM Modi said from the ramparts of the Red Fort. "We are coming with the next generation of GST reforms, this will be a gift for you this Diwali, taxes needed by the common man will be reduced substantially, a lot of facilities will be increased. Our MSMEs, our small entrepreneurs, will get a huge benefit. Everyday items will become very cheap and that will also give a new boost to the economy," he added.

India achieves 2030 clean energy goal five years early

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

In what could be considered as a landmark moment for India's clean energy journey, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from the ramparts of the Red Fort, on Friday announced that the nation has achieved its 50 per cent clean energy target in 2025 -- a full five years ahead of the 2030 deadline.

Marking Independence Day celebrations, the Prime Minister announced and hailed the achievement as a pivotal step towards an Atmanirbhar Bharat in the energy sector, underscoring the country's transformation from a fossil-fuel-dependent importer to a global clean energy leader. "When the world today expresses concern over global warming, I wish to tell the world that Bharat has resolved to achieve 50 per cent clean energy by 2030. That was our target for 2030. Look at the capability of my countrymen, look at their determination to fulfil the resolve of making Bharat developed--we achieved the 50 per cent clean energy target in 2025 itself, five years ahead of



Solar and wind installations in India: PM Modi says nation hit 50% clean energy in 2025—five years ahead of the 2030 target. [File]

schedule. This is because we are as sensitive towards the world as we are responsible towards nature," PM Modi said on the occasion of 79th Independence.

At COP26 held in 2021, India committed to an ambitious five-part "Panchamrit" pledge. This included reaching 500 GW of non-fossil electricity capacity, generating half of all energy requirements from renewables, and reducing emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030.

India also aims to reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 45 per cent and achieve net-zero emissions by 2070. According to the latest government data, India added a record 29.52 gigawatts

(GW) of renewable capacity in 2024-25, taking total installed renewable energy (RE) capacity to 234.24 GW (excluding nuclear), up from 198.75 GW last year. Solar energy leads the charge, with installed capacity skyrocketing from just 2.82 GW in 2014 to 116.24 GW today, now accounting for nearly half of India's total RE capacity. Wind power follows at 51.67 GW, while large and small hydro contribute 54.72 GW combined. Biopower has also grown to 11.59 GW over the past decade. India now ranks 4th globally in total RE capacity, 3rd in solar power, and 4th in wind energy, boasting the world's fastest-growing renewable program.

RBI unveils FREE-AI for fintech

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The endeavour of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to democratise the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the financial sector will open new doors to players as regulator-backed measures such as AI sandboxes, sectoral datasets, and indigenous models can significantly reduce the cost and risk of experimentation, say top executives of the financial service companies.

Top executives said that it is a unique opportunity to blend regulatory trust with speed and agility in niche markets, previously out of reach due to high barriers to entry. On August 13, the RBI's committee unveiled the Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of Artificial Intelligence (FREE-AI), marking a significant step in balancing technological in-

novation with robust risk management in the financial services ecosystem. The framework aims to ensure safe, fair, accountable, and inclusive AI adoption in financial institutions. It outlines seven foundational principles (or 'sutras'), which are operationalised through twenty-six targeted recommendations structured under six strategic pillars: Governance, Data, Fairness, Transparency, Accountability, and Risk Management.

Dewang Neralla, CEO of HiWiPay, welcomed the initiative, stating, "FREE-AI opens doors for smaller players in ways we haven't seen before.

Regulator-backed AI sandboxes, sectoral datasets, and indigenous models reduce the cost and risk of experimentation." He further added that the framework could unlock entirely new categories

of financial products. "AI-based affirmative action for financial inclusion could inspire specialised commercial models -- for example, low-cost cross-border remittance products for underserved student or SME segments, pay-per-use AI compliance tools, and collaborative offerings between fintechs and NBFCs that previously would have been too complex to launch," Shikhar Aggarwal, Chairman of BLS E-Services Ltd, emphasised the value of AI in enhancing customer engagement across India's diverse linguistic landscape.

"We see a huge potential in AI adoption to improve customer service at the grassroots level through context-aware financial guidance, especially multimodal systems in regional languages to handle multilingual diversity," the BLS E-Services Chairman said.

India hosts 10th AITIGA review

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India hosted the 10th meeting of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) Joint Committee at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi, from August 10-14, 2025. Delegations from all ten ASEAN members joined in a hybrid format to advance a review of the 14-year-old pact.

The talks were co-chaired by Nitin Kumar Yadav, Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce, and Mastura Ahmad Mustafa, Deputy Secretary General (Trade) at Malaysia's Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry. Negotiators focused on improving AITIGA's effectiveness, accessibility and trade facilitation, building on eight earlier rounds. Seven of the agreement's

eight subcommittees met in parallel, covering customs procedures and facilitation, legal and institutional issues, national treatment and market access, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, rules of origin, standards and conformity assessment, and trade remedies. Their deliberations addressed product standards, rules of origin, customs processes and market access.

ASEAN remains a key partner, about 11% of India's trade. Bilateral trade totalled USD 123 billion in 2024-25. The next AITIGA Joint Committee meeting is set for October 6-7, 2025, at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, with Malaysia as host. Outcomes from the New Delhi meetings will inform the next phase of negotiations.

Parliament panel to study VDAs

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance has selected "A Study on Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) and Way Forward" as a subject for detailed examination during the 2024-25 fiscal year. The announcement, published as Item No. 3141 in the latest edition of the Lok Sabha Bulletin-Part II on August 14, reflects India's growing focus on emerging digital asset technologies amid global discussions on their economic impact.

The decision follows a formal submission made in late July by a delegation of leading Web3 and digital asset stakeholders, including Digital South Trust, Bharat Web3 Association, Hashtag Web3, CoinDCX, BlockOn Ventures, and KoinBX. The

delegation presented a set of policy recommendations to the Chairperson of the Committee, calling for innovation-friendly regulation to unlock a USD 100 billion Web3-driven economy by 2035. According to the industry, a well-defined and adaptable regulatory framework could enable India to generate over 7 million jobs, attract USD 2 billion in annual foreign investment, and promote transparent and inclusive financial systems. Sudhakar Lakshmanaraja, Founder of Digital South Trust, commented, "India is in a unique position to become a global leader in the Web3 space. The government's focus on VDAs and a regulatory framework will provide the clarity necessary for the industry to flourish, driving innovation, investment, and job creation." Vedang Vatsa, Founder

of Hashtag Web3, added, "Virtual digital assets can contribute to growth by enabling new business models, creating opportunities across industries, and enhancing digital economies globally. With appropriate regulatory frameworks, these assets can bring significant benefits to various sectors and help drive innovation forward." Web3, often referred to as the next evolution of the internet, is based on decentralised technologies like blockchain.

It prioritises user control, data ownership, and transparency. Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs)--which include cryptocurrencies, stablecoins, and tokenised assets--form the backbone of this ecosystem. These digital assets enable new forms of economic activity, from peer-to-peer transactions to decentralised finance.

Piyush Goyal, pharma industry leaders discuss R&D, competitiveness

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has discussed strategies to boost competitiveness and strengthen research and development activities with the business representatives of the pharmaceutical industry. "Had an inspiring interaction with leaders of India's pharmaceutical industry. Discussed strategies to boost competitiveness & advance the R&D ecosystem. Driven by the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' & 'Make In India for the World' vision, our



Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

Government remains committed to further enhancing India's position in the global healthcare value

chain," Goyal wrote in a X post. The meeting is taking place at a time when concerns over US reciprocal tariffs are raising the prospect of significant impacts on many sectors, except for a slew of exempted ones. The Ministry is actively engaging with industry stakeholders to assess the potential impact of import tariffs and to chart a strategic path forward. Pharmaceuticals, electronics and semiconductors, energy products and certain minerals, copper, lumber, bullion, and automobiles and auto components are among the sectors exempted from the tariffs.

India, Singapore boost trade, investment

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The 4th meeting of the India-Singapore joint working group on Trade & Investment (JWG TI) took place at Vanijya Bhawan in New Delhi on Thursday, bringing the two nations together to strengthen economic co-operation and chart future areas of partnership.

The meeting was held a day after the 3rd India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable, underscoring a week of intensive bilateral engagement. According to a Ministry of Commerce & Industry



India's External Affairs Minister with Singapore's Foreign Minister in New Delhi as JWG TI pushes trade and investment cooperation. [File]

press release, the discussions centred on expanding trade and investment links, identifying priority sectors

for alignment, improving logistics and supply chain efficiency, simplifying regulations, and enhancing cross-

border trade facilitation. During the meeting, both sides reviewed progress in existing collaborations, including work in the semiconductor sector and the digitalisation of trade processes. They also explored new opportunities in skills development, capacity building, and other emerging industries. The talks were co-chaired by Rajesh Agrawal, Special Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Beh Swan Gin, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore.

Mahindra reveals new 'NU_IQ' SUV concepts

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Mahindra & Mahindra Limited, on the occasion of Independence Day, revealed its global vision for 2027, unveiling four futuristic SUV concepts based on an all-new modular, multi-energy platform called NU_IQ. The company said the platform will underpin its next generation of SUVs, blending advanced technology, global design, and flexible pow-



Mahinda on Friday showcased concepts of 4 upcoming SUVs Vision.S, Vision.T, Vision.SXT, and Vision.X, at the Freedom NU event in Mumbai. [File]

ertrain options. The concepts were engineered at Mahindra Research Valley and will

go into production starting 2027, targeting both Indian buyers and global left-hand-

drive markets. As per a press release, the four concepts -- Vision.S, Vision.T, Vision.SXT and Vision.X, were presented as part of Mahindra's strategy to create vehicles that eliminate compromises for customers. Multiple top hats, powertrains, FWD/AWD, LHD/RHD capabilities were showcased. Each design targets unique market needs while retaining Mahindra's core attributes such as strong presence, powerful performance, world-class

safety, and a blend of toughness with sophistication.

"NU_IQ is a strategic blueprint for the future of Mahindra SUVs globally. With its modular, multi-energy architecture, it gives us the flexibility to innovate across multiple top hats and powertrains whilst staying true to our SUV DNA," said R Velusamy, President - automotive business (designate) and managing director, Mahindra Electric Automobile Ltd.

Namo Bharat green depot upgrade

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a significant step towards enhancing operational efficiency and environmental sustainability, DB RRTS Operations India Pvt. Ltd., a subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn International Operations (DBIO), has partnered with Wurth Industrial Services India to upgrade depot-level maintenance practices for the Nammo Bharat corridor - India's first semi-high-speed Regional Rapid

Transit System (RRTS) implemented by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC). This Indo-German collaboration introduces advanced, eco-friendly solutions aimed at reducing waste, optimising supply chain efficiency, and improving workplace safety. A key highlight of the partnership is the adoption of Wurth's REFILLO mat aerosol refill system at the Duhai depot, making DB RRTS the first rail operator

in India to implement this innovative technology. The system is designed to minimise hazardous waste and reduce packaging material, aligning with global best practices for sustainable industrial operations. In addition to the REFILLO mat system, Wurth will equip DB RRTS with automated inventory management tools and modular storage solutions to enhance supply chain coordination processes.

ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT: MODI'S CALL FOR CIVILISATIONAL SELF-ASSERTION

OPINION

SIDDHARTHA DAVE



From the ramparts of the Red Fort this Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered far more than a ceremonial Independence Day address. He laid out a civilisational doctrine—*Atmanirbhar Bharat*—as the principal pillar for achieving *Viksit Bharat* by 2047. In Modi's vision, self-reliance is not confined to economic self-sufficiency; it is the unshakeable foundation of sovereignty, dignity, and the collective destiny of Bharat. This is not a policy in isolation but a continuation of the *Swadeshi* ethos, long upheld by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and nationalist thinkers, which sees indigenous capability as the truest measure of national strength.

OPERATION SINDOOR: A WATERSHED IN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

By invoking Operation Sindoor, Modi showcased India's capacity to act with

decisive force using indigenous weapons and systems, without reliance on foreign approval or equipment. This was more than a military success—it was a symbolic severance from the chains of dependence forged over decades of imported defence hardware. It demonstrated that India, when threatened, will not stand in queue for international permissions but will act with sovereign resolve. For a nation often constrained by diplomatic hesitations in the past, this represents a paradigm shift in defence thinking.

TECHNOLOGICAL SOVEREIGNTY: FROM JET ENGINES TO SEMI-CONDUCTORS

Modi's challenge to the youth to develop indigenous jet engines was not merely an industrial goal—it was a declaration of intent that India's defence future will be self-forged. Similarly, the announcement of Made-in-India semiconductor chips by the close of 2025 marks a leap into the high-tech elite, ensuring India cannot be held hostage by supply chain disruptions or foreign technology bans. This is *Rashtra Shakti*—national strength—materialising in the form of technological independence, a long-held dream of nationalist strategists.

SPACE, ENERGY, AND THE STRATEGIC

FUTURE

In honouring Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and announcing India's own space station, Modi placed Bharat on the trajectory of space leadership. No longer will India be a participant—it will be a driver in humanity's next great frontier. Energy self-reliance too is central: meeting the 50% clean energy target by 2025—five years ahead of the global pledge—is proof that environmental responsibility and national security can advance together. Ten new nuclear reactors, the National Critical Minerals Mission covering 1,200 sites, and the National Deepwater Exploration Mission are part of a larger architecture ensuring that no essential resource for survival and growth will be dictated by foreign powers.

SELF-RELIANCE IN AGRICULTURE, MEDICINE, AND DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY

In agriculture, Modi stressed fertiliser self-production to shield farmers from the volatility of global markets and safeguard food security. In healthcare, he celebrated India's role as the "pharmacy of the world" while calling for deeper pharmaceutical R&D to ensure vaccines, medicines, and life-saving innovations are developed domestically. The COVID-19 experience, where India's indigenous vaccines and digital platforms like CoWIN saved millions, was presented as a case study in self-reliance under pressure. In the digital realm, Modi's call for indigenous social media platforms and secure infrastructure is a push for data sovereignty—a refusal to let foreign entities control India's information ecosystem. His "Swadeshi" shop-



Modi's challenge to the youth to develop indigenous jet engines was not merely an industrial goal—it was a declaration of intent that India's defence future will be self-forged. Similarly, the announcement of Made-in-India semiconductor chips by the close of 2025 marks a leap into the high-tech elite, ensuring India cannot be held hostage by supply chain disruptions or foreign technology bans.

front campaign is grassroots economic nationalism, encouraging citizens to wear their pride in Indian-made products openly, reviving the spirit of Deendayal Upadhyaya's *Antyodaya* in a contemporary form.

MISSION SUDARSHAN CHAKRA: TRADITION FUELS INNOVATION

In launching Mission Sudarshan Chakra, aimed

at neutralising enemy infiltrations with precision, Modi bridged the ancient with the modern. Drawing on the imagery of Shri Krishna's divine weapon, he underscored that Bharat's military innovation springs not from imitation but from its own civilisational heritage. The RSS has long argued that cultural memory is a living reservoir of strategic

insight; Modi's framing of this mission confirmed that belief on the national stage.

BOLD ECONOMIC AND GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

Marking his 12th Independence Day address, Modi also rolled out transformative measures aimed at shaping the next chapter of India's growth. These included the creation of a

Rs 1 lakh crore PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana to employ 3 crore youth, the launch of a High-Powered Demography Mission to address national security threats from illegal migration, and the setting up of a Reform Task Force to push Bharat toward a \$10 trillion economy. GST reforms promised as a "Diwali gift" will ease burdens on MSMEs and consumers, reflecting Modi's focus on inclusive yet assertive economic policy.

A REJECTION OF DEPENDENCY AND THE ROAD AHEAD

This address was a repudiation of the colonial and Nehruvian notion that modernisation is synonymous with Western depen-

dence. *Atmanirbhar Bharat* as envisioned by Modi is not isolationist—it is a confident, assertive, and self-determining Bharat engaging the world on equal footing. By 2047, the goal is not just to be developed in GDP terms but to be *Viksit* in the civilisational sense: producing what we need, defending what we must, innovating what we envision, and leading in what we value. This is the 21st-century face of *Swadeshi*—a Bharat that refuses to be a passive consumer in the global order, choosing instead to shape it in its image.

In essence, Modi's 15th August 2025 address was both a mirror to the nation's present strengths and a compass pointing toward its future ambitions. It stitched together defence capability, economic reform, technological innovation, cultural rootedness, and social resilience into a singular narrative of national resurgence. For those who see Bharat as a civilisational state with a unique destiny, the speech was not merely celebratory—it was strategic. It reminded citizens that the road to *Viksit Bharat* will be paved not by foreign prescriptions but by indigenous willpower, innovation, and unity. In reaffirming the spirit of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, Modi has drawn the battle lines for the decades ahead: between dependence and dignity, hesitation and confidence, drift and destiny.

Siddhartha Dave is an alumnus of United Nations University, Tokyo, an eminent columnist and a former Lok Sabha Research Fellow. He writes on Foreign Affairs and National Security.

Four years on: The new Taliban regime and its quest for global recognition

OPINION

DR. ANCHITA BORTHAKUR

On August 15, 2025, the Taliban will complete four years since their dramatic return to power in Kabul—a development that upended two decades of international efforts and altered the geopolitical calculus across South and Central Asia. Marking this anniversary, the group stands not in complete isolation as it once did during its first stint in power (1996–2001), but at the center of evolving regional diplomacy and contested international legitimacy. The reestablishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, after a prolonged insurgency, has triggered new and complex regional alignments, particularly following the Russian Federation's formal recognition of the Taliban government in July this year.

FROM ISOLATION TO ENGAGEMENT: A SHIFTING REGIONAL LANDSCAPE

Russia's recognition marked a major diplomatic win for the Taliban and underscored

a broader regional shift. While Moscow remains the only state to have extended full formal recognition to the Taliban regime, most of Afghanistan's neighbors and regional powers are actively engaging with the group. On February 5, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid announced that the regime is in diplomatic contact with over 40 countries. By 2025, more than a dozen nations, including China, Iran, Pakistan, and Japan, had appointed ambassadors to Kabul.

China became the first country to formally accept a Taliban-appointed ambassador in December 2023, a move followed by others. Interestingly, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan removed the Taliban from their list of designated terrorist groups in late 2023 and 2024, respectively. Most significantly, Russia's Supreme Court annulled the Taliban's designation as a terrorist organization in April 2025—an action that laid the groundwork for full

recognition.

Yet not all relationships have followed a positive trajectory. Taliban-Pakistan relations, once marked by ideological affinity and strategic alignment, have deteriorated sharply due to Islamabad's allegations that the Afghan Taliban regime is harboring Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants—a claim the latter denies. This rift comes amid a surge in cross-border attacks and a deteriorating security scenario within Pakistan.

The Taliban interim administration has nonetheless expanded its international footprint with high-level visits to Kabul by the Uzbek Prime Minister (2024) and Iran's Foreign Minister (2025), signalling regional acceptance of the regime. In May this year, the Taliban participated in a trilateral meeting with China and Pakistan to expand the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into Afghanistan. Moreover, the regime marked its presence on global platforms—attending COP29 in Azerbaijan and the third UN-led special envoy meeting in Doha last year—highlighting its growing diplomatic confidence and the international community's willingness to engage, albeit cautiously.

RECOGNITION ELU-



SIVE AMID HUMAN RIGHTS/HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS

Despite expanding diplomatic ties, full international recognition remains elusive for the current regime. Western governments and institutions continue to condition recognition on tangible improvements in human rights—particularly the rights of women—political inclusivity, and a commitment to counterterrorism. The Taliban leadership, especially the Kandahar-based faction led by Amir Haibatullah Akhundzada, has rejected these as external impositions on Afghanistan's sovereignty.

Last July, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for several Taliban leaders, including the Supreme Leader and the Chief Justice, for gender-based discrimination. The U.S. State

Department reiterated that a regime excluding half its population from societal participation cannot expect legitimacy. It is reported that, since 2021, over 100 decrees have been issued that drastically curtail the rights and freedoms of Afghan women—restricting their education, employment, and public life.

In addition, tensions within the Taliban's own ranks/files are reportedly increasing. A growing rift between the Kabul-based political leadership and the Kandahar faction reflects internal disagreements over women's rights and other policy directions. Still, despite these divisions and challenges from groups like Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) and other resistance factions, the Taliban has maintained a firm grip on territorial control.

Even as the Taliban consolidates its political hold, Afghanistan faces a severe and worsening humanitarian crisis. The forced deportation of thousands of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan and the suspension of international assistance operations have further overwhelmed local communities and aid systems.

According to the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, 22.9 million Afghans require assistance this year. Furthermore, acute food insecurity affects nearly 15 million people, while over 21 million lack safe water and sanitation in the country. The World Bank acknowledges some economic recovery, but it remains modest and fragile due to fiscal constraints, a widening trade deficit, and persistent poverty.

INDIA'S CALCULATED PRAGMATISM

In this scenario, India's approach to the Taliban regime illustrates a pragmatic recalibration. While refraining from extending formal recognition, New Delhi has cautiously expanded its diplomatic and humanitarian footprint in Afghanistan. On November 13, 2024, the Taliban confirmed the appointment of an acting Consul General in Mumbai, and reports suggest that India has recently handed over the Afghan consulate in Hyderabad to Taliban representatives.

The diplomatic maneuvering has intensified in 2025: a telephonic conversation in May between India's External Affairs Minister and the Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister marked the highest-level contact since 2021. Moreover, at the beginning of this year, Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri held talks with his Taliban counterpart in Dubai. India's approach, deeply informed by national security concerns and regional stability, also prioritizes humanitarian support. Shipments of wheat, medicines, vaccines, and other aid, along with providing hundreds of scholarships to the Afghan populace, underscore India's enduring commitment to the Afghan people. Additionally, India has

resumed issuing visas to Afghans and extended support to refugees deported from neighboring states. This reflects a strategy focused on maintaining engagement without legitimizing the regime—a policy shaped by India's historic ties with the Afghan people and the need to counter potential security threats emanating from the country.

LOOKING AHEAD

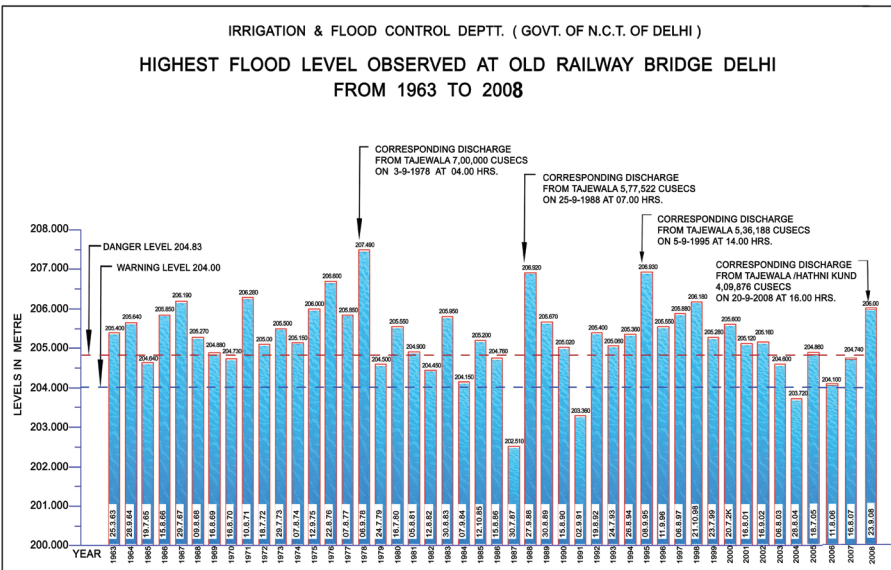
As the Taliban marks four years in power, Afghanistan remains suspended between partial international integration and internal authoritarian rigidity. The group has achieved a surprising level of regional engagement, yet it faces persistent legitimacy challenges rooted in its governance model, particularly on human rights.

If the Taliban is to transition from de facto rulers to gaining legitimate international recognition, it must reconcile its ideological priorities with the expectations of a world increasingly unwilling to accept exclusionary rule. The alternative is continued isolation, constrained development, and a prolonged humanitarian crisis that affects not just Afghanistan, but the region as a whole.

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Authorities are working to intercept and reroute 22 drains discharging into the Yamuna. (File photo)



Squeezed floodplains push water higher; in Asagarpur Jagir, even today’s “routine” 10–50-cm rise can soak basements and livelihoods.

YAMUNA AND THE QUIET CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE WE NORMALISED

Authorities have issued an alert that rising flows in the Yamuna could lift water levels by about 10–50 cm in the coming day. The warning, aimed at low-lying settlements such as Asagarpur Jagir (in Noida’s Sector 128 adjacent to the river), classifies the threat as “low” given the forecast rise. Even so, officials are on standby: preliminary precautions like sandbagging or evacuation plans have been readied for vulnerable patches. Meteorological data indicate moderate upstream releases and continuing monsoon inflows, prompting the cautionary notice. In journalistic terms, the current Yamuna surge is not expected to breach danger marks for Delhi–Noida, but residents near the river remain vigilant. Government spokespersons emphasize that this is a routine advisory, not an imminent flood disaster. By contrast, embedded sensors at Hathnikund (Haryana) and Wazirabad (Delhi) barrages show flows just below warning thresholds, so relief agencies advise only alert status for Asagarpur Jagir and environs.

HISTORICAL YAMUNA FLOODS IN DELHI

Delhi’s floodplain has been inundated periodically over the decades, underscoring the region’s vulnerability. Notable floods include: ● **1978** – A historic deluge (September 3, 1978) saw Yamuna discharge ~7.09 lakh cusecs (cubic feet/sec) into Delhi, flooding large areas. The old *Old Railway Bridge* (ORB) crest hit about **207.49 m**, setting then-re-

TDG EXPLAINER

cord high-water marks. ● **1995** – Another major flood (September 5, 1995) with ~5.36 lakh cusecs reached about **206.93 m** at ORB. Heavy rains over the catchment and gate openings at Hathnikund Barrage drove this event. ● **2013** – Monsoon rains on June 17, 2013 produced ~8.06 lakh cusecs peak flow, cresting at **207.32 m** in Delhi. Although its peak flow was higher than 1978’s (8.06 vs. 7.09 lakh cusecs), upstream diversions limited 2013’s impact compared to 1978. ● **July 2023** – In just three years ago, Yamuna water surged again (with only ~3.60 lakh cusecs briefly) to a **new record of 208.66 m** at ORB, exceeding the 1978 mark by ~1.17 m. Even though gate releases were moderate, unprecedented runoff and possibly gate operations led to the flood. Analysts note that floodplain encroachment, siltation and barrage mismanagement turned that event into a ‘man-made disaster’. Two years on, experts warn that without proper action the capital remains just as vulnerable. These events illustrate how relatively small hydrologic differences can yield vastly different flood impacts. For example, despite 2013’s higher flow, the 1978 and 2023 floods were more catastrophic due to reservoir conditions and floodplain constraints. Delhi’s flood risk arises from a mix of ex-

treme rainfall in the Shivaliks, Brahmaputra flows, and upper-Yamuna management issues. As one analysis notes, the city’s floodplain is “*further losing its precious natural resource to commercialisation*”, with permanent encroachments likely making every flood worse. In sum, Delhi’s history of Yamuna floods (1978, 1995, 2013, 2023) demonstrates the recurring threat to low-lying settlements and riverfront communities.

YAMUNA’S GEOMORPHOLOGY AND FLOODPLAIN DYNAMICS

The Yamuna is an alluvial river with a wide, dynamic floodplain. Historically, it meandered freely across this plain under the forces of seasonal monsoon flows. In natural conditions – ample discharge, gentle regional slope and erodible banks – a river like the Yamuna “*has tendency to migrate along its floodplains*”, carving oxbows and point bars as it seeks equilibrium. Its banks consist of deep alluvium (sand/silt) deposited by millennia of Himalayan runoff. However, in the Delhi stretch the river has been heavily constrained. Multiple barrages (Hathnikund/Tajewala, Wazirabad, ITO/Okhla) and embankments now “*continuously barricade*” the flow. This straightening reduces the river’s cross-section and confinement, hampering its natural flood

attenuation. Sediment behavior is central to flood risk. In unimpeded flows, flood peaks scour and redistribute sediment, periodically lowering the channel bed. But with static flows (e.g. dry summers, dam regulation), silt accumulates and the riverbed *aggrades* or rises. Over decades, this reduces channel capacity. In Delhi, unchecked pollution and silt from tributaries (and reduced environmental flows) have left the Yamuna’s bed unnaturally high – up to a meter above surrounding plains in places. When heavy rains arrive, the river has less space to accommodate floodwater; increasing flood stages for the same discharge. In short, the geomorphic setting – highly sinuous upstream but restricted in the plains – underpins why Delhi’s older floods have been so destructive. Rivers must usually be allowed room to spread for safety; yet Delhi’s Yamuna has lost much of that room to urbanization.

FLOOD MODELING AND RISK ESTIMATION

Modern flood management uses statistical models to estimate how likely extreme floods are. A recent hydrological study in the **Upper Yamuna basin** applied standard flood-frequency techniques to annual peak flows. It fitted two probability models – Gumbel (Extreme Value Type-I) and Log-Pearson Type-III – to discharge records from nine gauges (including Hathnikund). Both models were tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Anderson-Darling methods

for goodness-of-fit, ensuring robustness. The data showed very high year-to-year variability (coefficients of variation up to ~1.0) and confirmed that extreme floods greatly exceed the average annual flow. Notably, the Hathnikund gauge (feeding Delhi) has seen enormous peaks: **23,448 m³/s** in 2019, **22,837** in 2013, **21,082** in 2010 and **20,083** in 2018. These models then translate observed extremes into return periods. For example, a 100-year flood estimate might be 8–10 lakh cusecs at Hathnikund (studies vary). In the Yamuna study, both Gumbel and Log-Pearson III produced similar flood estimates at longer return periods, although the Log-Pearson-III fit was found to be “*more robust*” by the statistical tests. In practice, planners can use such analyses to gauge the probability of different flood heights. For instance, if a 100-year flood at Delhi Railway Bridge is (say) 208.0 m, then current forecasts below that height would be deemed manageable. Statistical modelling thus underpins flood forecasts and infrastructure design: it tells engineers how likely a given crest is, and helps authorities set warning levels. However, models depend on good data – gaps or errors in barrage flow records (as highlighted for 2023) can undermine their accuracy.

GOVERNANCE, REJUVENATION AND POLLUTION CONTROL

Beyond hydrology, river governance is central to flood risk management. The

National Green Tribunal (NGT) and Delhi government have actively mandated cleanup and revitalization of the Yamuna. In 2019, the NGT ordered Delhi to form a River Rejuvenation Committee (RRC) chaired by senior officials; this RRC (with representatives of state/municipal agencies) now oversees pollution abatement and river restoration. By decree of NGT, a High-Level Committee (HLC) under the Delhi Chief Secretary has also drawn up a departmental action plan. In sum, “*river-specific action plans are monitored by the River Rejuvenation Committee*”, ensuring state agencies follow through on anti-pollution and floodplain measures.

Key components of these plans include classic engineering and regulatory steps: ● **Sewage and Industrial Effluent:** Delhi has embarked on a **100% sewage treatment initiative**. Plans call for upgrading 37 existing sewage treatment plants (STPs) and building new ones, raising capacity from ~792 to ~964 million gallons per day by end-2026. Common effluent treatment plants (CETPs) for industrial clusters are also being upgraded. The aim is zero untreated sewage into the Yamuna, which will help maintain its capacity (less organic load means less silt and weed growth). ● **Drain Interception and Trapping:** All major drains into the Yamuna are to be captured. A recent plan reports that 10 out of 22 Yamuna drains have already been “tapped” for treatment, with the rest prioritized (Na-

jafgarh, Barapullah etc. targeted by late-2025). The government has also proposed raising the bypass drains to carry flood flows safely past cities. NGT orders explicitly direct mapping and lining of drains, so that garbage or sewage flooding cannot wash directly into the river. ● **Floodplain Encroachment Removal:** Urban encroachments in the Yamuna’s 500 m floodplain are a chronic problem. The current administration has cleared over **1,500 acres** of illegal structures in the last two-plus years. Drones are used to spot remaining encroachments. One innovative proposal is to develop this open floodplain land into green **biodiversity parks** – the plan specifies 11 such parks (~1,600 hectares total) along the riverfront. This both restores flood storage capacity and provides urban green space. The NGT has also repeatedly ordered prevention of any further construction on the Yamuna floodplain.

● **Regulatory Oversight:** All these tasks are periodically reviewed. The state RRC and Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) meet quarterly to assess progress. Delhi’s new government presented a 45-point rejuvenation plan to the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) in Feb 2025, echoing many of the above actions. The Lok Sabha has also been updated: in one answer the Centre noted that states’ action plans may include afforestation along banks, tapping drains, floodplain regulation and setting up biodiversity parks.

On the pollution front, visible on-the-ground change is slow. The Yamuna in Delhi remains severely polluted (the foam in [87] is symptomatic), so rejuvenation is as much a health mission as a flood one. Nevertheless, these measures – if fully implemented – will shrink the Yamuna’s environmental stress and incidentally improve flow conveyance. For example, with more E-flow releases (aiming for a year-round 23 cumec target) and zero leakages of untreated sewage, the river’s depth and flow regime should stabilize, reducing surprises during floods.

PREPAREDNESS, CLIMATE TRENDS AND URBAN VULNERABILITIES

Looking ahead, Delhi’s flood readiness depends on both climate realities and local resilience. Climate scien-

tists warn that monsoons are now more erratic and intense. Delhi 2023 saw “*the heaviest rainfall in over four decades*”, overwhelming the city’s drainage. In general, research finds that short-duration extreme rain events have **tripled** in India over 70 years. Warmer air holds more moisture, so day-long downpours (rather than steady rains) are becoming common. Under these new conditions, the old hydrologic design assumptions (e.g. canal/drain sizes or reservoir inflow patterns) no longer fully apply. Urbanization further magnifies flood risk. Much of Delhi’s historic floodplain is now paved or built over, leaving fewer natural basins to soak up floodwater. As one expert notes, in cities “*the deluge has nowhere to go*” because previous green buffers have vanished. Indeed, Delhi’s stormwater drains were sized for smaller storms; combined with rampant dumping of waste and silt, this means even moderate rain can cause waterlogging. Noida (adjacent to Asagarpur Jagir) faces similar challenges with clogged drains and rising groundwater.

Current flood preparedness includes procedural measures: the Central Water Commission (CWC) and IMD issue forecasts/alerts based on upstream rainfall and barrage operations. These feeds into state disaster protocols. However, gaps remain in coordination. Past flood inquiries (2023) criticized agencies for inconsistent gate-operation data and lacking real-time flow information. Experts suggest more transparency (publicly sharing barrage releases), improved sensor networks, and trained community volunteers for local flood watches. Public awareness is also key; last-mile alerts via SMS and apps can mobilize residents faster than official broadcasts.

In summary, the Yamuna crisis in Delhi is multifaceted. Immediate alerts (like the one for Asagarpur Jagir) are taken seriously, but long-term risk hinges on both infrastructure and environment. The city must integrate floodplain management, climate adaptation and river restoration. The government’s flood-model analyses, rejuvenation plans and past lessons form the basis, but effective action on encroachment, sewage and climate resilience will ultimately determine if Delhi’s riverside communities remain safe.

Compiled by Ruchira Talapatra



Yamuna River is expected to be the same as this evening. Therefore there is a low chance that parts of Asagarpur Jagir and the surrounding area will be flooded. Use caution if going near the riverfront. (File)

BIHAR ELECTION

BIHAR CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO FREEDOM FIGHTERS AT 79TH I-DAY CELEBRATION

Nitish Kumar recalled sacrifices made by those who laid down their lives in freedom struggle and said their ideals remain a guiding light for nation.

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday hoisted the Tricolour in Patna to mark the 79th Independence Day, paying homage to the country's freedom fighters. Addressing the gathering, he recalled the sacrifices made by those who laid down their lives in the freedom struggle and said their ideals remain a guiding light for the nation.

"On August 15, 1947, our country achieved independence. On this day, we pay our heartfelt tributes to our freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives in the struggle for independence. Their ideals continue to be a source of inspiration for us today," the Bihar CM said.

Separately, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president

TRIBUTES

- Chirag Paswan paid tribute to freedom fighters and extended Independence Day greetings to citizens.
- PM Narendra Modi hoisted the tricolour at the Red Fort, assisted by Flying Officer Rashika Sharma.
- Two Mi-17 helicopters showered petals—one carrying the national flag, the other the Operation Sindoor banner—piloted by Wing Commanders Vinay Poonia and Aditya Jaiswal.
- PM Modi urged citizens to work harder towards a Viksit Bharat and fulfil freedom fighters' dreams.



and Jamui MP Chirag Paswan extended greetings on the occasion, remembering the contributions of India's freedom fighters.

In a post on X, Paswan wrote, "On the occasion of the 79th Independence Day, heartfelt tributes to all

the freedom fighters who sacrificed everything for the nation's independence, and warm wishes to all fellow citizens on Independence Day."

Meanwhile, earlier today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the tricolour

at the Red Fort, as the nation marked the celebration of the 79th Independence Day.

Flying Officer Rashika Sharma assisted the Prime Minister in hoisting the flag, after which flower petals were showered from two Mi-17 helicopters of the In-

dian Air Force - one carrying the national flag and the other 'Operation Sindoor' flag. Wing Commander Vinay Poonia and Wing Commander Aditya Jaiswal piloted the aircraft.

PM Modi was received at the Red Fort by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, MoS Sanjay Seth, and the Chiefs of the three services.

PM Modi also extended his heartfelt wishes to the nation on Independence Day, urging people to work harder, fulfil the dreams of freedom fighters, and contribute to building towards a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India).

"Wishing everyone a very happy Independence Day. May this day inspire us to keep working even harder to realise the dreams of our freedom fighters and build a Viksit Bharat. Jai Hind!" PM Modi wrote in a post on X.

Nitish vows jobs for one crore youth in Bihar



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar ernment jobs, and 39 lakh people have been given employment. Over 50 lakh will be employed before the coming assembly polls. Over the next five years, one crore youths will be provided jobs and employment opportunities", he added.

The CM also announced several initiatives that will be taken by the NDA government in the state.

"The government has also decided to introduce a uniform fee of Rs 100 for preliminary tests of all competitive exams in the state and no money will be charged for appearing in the mains. This decision will benefit lakhs of youth who aspire for government jobs in the state," Kumar added.

The decision assumes sig-

nificance in view of the Assembly polls in the state due later this year.

Highlighting the state's industrial growth, Kumar said the government is taking steps to attract new industries.

"We will offer capital subsidies, interest subsidies, and GST incentives for setting up industries. Land will be provided in all districts, and employment-intensive industries will be given land free of cost. All disputes over industrial land will be resolved within four months," he added.

The CM said seven new medical colleges will be opened in Kishanganj, Katihar, Rohtas, Sheohar, Lakhisarai, Sheikhpura, and Arwal.

He added that special buses will run for Bihari migrants during Diwali, Chhath Puja, and Holi from cities like Delhi, Gurugram, and Chandigarh. "The state government will also request additional festival trains from the Centre.

ED conducts searches in Bihar illegal liquor smuggling case

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Patna Zonal Office, on Wednesday conducted search operations in case of illegal supply of liquor in the state of Bihar, the agency said in a release on Thursday.

The searches were conducted at seven locations in Gurugram, Ranchi, Naharlagun, Namsai and Muzaffarpur, it said. As per the ED release, during these searches, cash to the tune of Rs. 75.6 Lakh, several incriminating materials, documents and digital devices were recov-



After the last round of searches in this case, the ED attached assets worth Rs. 9.9.31 crore. File Photo

ered and seized.

The ED said that it initiated an investigation on the basis of various FIRs and chargesheet under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, filed by the Bihar Police in connection with il-

legal supply of liquor in the state.

Additionally, they leveraged these associated entities to open multiple bank accounts to receive payments from buyers of the illegally supplied liquor in Bihar,

thereby generating Proceeds of Crime, ED said.

In this case, properties to the tune of Rs. 9.31 crore have already been attached on December 12, 2023. Further, a Prosecution Complaint in this case has been filed on 19.05.2025, it said.

In the current searches, several incriminating documents, including handwritten diaries and ledgers pertaining to illegal liquor sales, Tally Accounts, property documents and cash of Rs. 75.6 lakh were found and seized, ED said.

Further investigation is in progress, it added.

AGENCIES
PATNA

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Friday said it was "ironical" that the people of Bihar were fighting to "protect" their right to vote when the country was celebrating Independence Day.

Yadav, the leader of the opposition in the assembly, issued an evocative "open letter", urging the people to take part in the 'Matdata Adhikar (voters' right) Yatra', which will be launched by Rahul Gandhi on August 17.

Does Independence im-

ply that we remain content with hoisting the tricolour at our homes and sway to the tunes of patriotic songs, oblivious to the fact that a dictatorial regime was throttling us? The cronies of the ruling dispensation have brought Bihar into a ridiculous situation," alleged the former deputy CM.

Referring to the anomalies in Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Yadav claimed "the names of those who are alive have been deleted from the voters' list in place of the deceased".

"Just spare a thought for



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav a living person who may have been declared dead despite being alive. How would he or she be feeling today, hoisting the tricolour on Independence Day? We cannot imagine their pain and anguish," he said.

Incidentally, a number of persons declared as "dead"

in the draft electoral rolls were produced before the Supreme Court earlier this week. At least two of them were from Raghupur, the assembly constituency represented by Yadav.

Poor people have to fight for their right to one vote, while those aligned with the ruling dispensation are being allowed to have two votes," alleged the RJD leader, in an obvious reference to at least four prominent NDA leaders having been found to be in "possession" of more than one voter ID cards and their names figuring twice in electoral rolls.

MP criticizes 'bulldozer policy' as rights get crushed

TDG NETWORK
SAMBHAL

Samajwadi Party MP Zia Ur Rehman Barq criticizes the government's demolition drives in Sambhal, arguing they infringe on citizens' rights. He warns that such actions undermine the judiciary's authority and laments potential voter roll injustices in Bihar, calling for a fair democratic process.

Samajwadi Party MP Zia Ur Rehman Barq has harshly criticized the government's contentious 'bulldozer policy,' asserting it infringes on citizens' fundamental



rights. Speaking to journalists in Sambhal, he argued that these demolition activities extend beyond mere structures, encroaching on democratic freedoms.

In recent months, the district administration of Sambhal has conducted numerous demolition drives,

claiming to clear illegally occupied land. However, Barq contends that these operations signify an overreach of executive powers, which are traditionally reserved for the judiciary.

Barq also raised alarms over electoral processes in Bihar, highlighting the deletion of 65 lakh votes during electoral roll revisions. According to him, this could significantly affect election margins, threatening the democratic framework. He called for the re-establishment of constitutional order and transparent governance across India.

Shiv Sena's Shaina NC hails PM's GST reforms

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Shaina NC on Friday praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on bringing reforms in the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Shaina NC said that this will be a Diwali gift for the people of the country from PM Modi, and stated that it would be beneficial for the youth and the country.

"Regarding GST reform, the Prime Minister has said that the next generation GST reform will take place. This will be a Diwali

gift from him. It will benefit many people. The government is sensitive, and we believe that this Diwali gift is very good for the entire country, especially for the youth," the Shiv Sena leader told.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his speech on Independence Day, announced that the government was set to bring a major reform in GST, which would give significant relief to consumers and small businesses.

The PM stated that the revisions in the GST would be rolled out around Diwali

and described them as a "double Diwali gift" for the people.

"This Diwali, I am going to give you a 'double Diwali' gift. A major announcement is coming for the people of the country. Over the past eight years, we implemented a major GST reform that significantly reduced the tax burden across the nation. Now, after eight years, the time has come to review it. We have formed a high-powered committee to begin this review process and have held consultations with the states as well. We are now bringing in next-

generation GST reforms. This will become a Diwali gift for the nation," PM Modi said.

"Tax rates on essential goods and daily needs will be reduced under a simplified framework. This will bring significant relief and convenience. Our MSMEs and small industries will also benefit greatly from these changes," he added.

PM Modi stated that these reforms would directly impact essential goods and daily needs, aiming to ease the tax burden on common citizens. The move comes at a time when the govern-

ment is looking to bolster consumption and improve ease of doing business, especially for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which have been seeking relief in compliance and tax-related issues.

The implementation of GST replaced a maze of indirect taxes with a single, unified system. It made tax compliance easier, reduced costs for businesses, and allowed goods to move freely across states. By improving transparency and efficiency, GST helped lay the foundation for a stronger, more integrated economy.

13 Haryana Police personnel honoured with medals on I- Day

TDG NETWORK
HARYANA

On the occasion of Independence Day 2025, 13 officers and personnel of the Haryana Police have been selected for the prestigious President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service (PPMDS) and Police Medal for Meritorious Service (PMMS) in recognition of their outstanding and commendable contributions.

Haryana Director General of Police (DGP) Shatrughat Kapoor extended his heartfelt congratulations to the entire police force on the announcement made by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. He said that

as the nation celebrates the 78th anniversary of Independence, this honour is a matter of pride and prestige for the entire Haryana Police family.

"The bravery, dedication, and tireless efforts of our officers and personnel, recognised at the national level, will inspire not only the awardees but the entire force to continue serving with distinction," he said. The DGP also expressed hope that this achievement would energise and motivate everyone to strive for even greater excellence in the future.

A Haryana Police spokesperson informed that two officers have been awarded the

President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service, while 11 others have been conferred with the Police Medal for Meritorious Service.

Panchkula Police Commissioner Shibas Kabiraj and IG SVACB Kuldeep Singh have been honoured with the PPMDS.

Meanwhile, UT Chandigarh Director General of Police Dr Sagar Preet Hooda was awarded the President's Medal for Distinguished Service for his contributions during his tenure in Delhi. Sub-Inspector Rajender Kumar and Head Constable Vikram of Chandigarh Police were conferred the Medal for Meritorious Service.

TDG NETWORK
KISHTWAR

Bharatiya Janta Party leader Shagun Parihar visited the District Hospital to check the well-being of the victims of the Kishtwar cloudburst.

She noted that the rescue operations are in full swing, with NDRF and SDRF teams present at the site, rescuing people from the affected areas.

While talking to the media, BJP leader Shagun Parihar said, "A very tragic accident has occurred. Yesterday, we tried to rescue people trapped in the debris. The NDRF and SDRF teams were present there. We are trying to evacuate

as many people as possible from there and send them to the hospital..."

Meanwhile, the Indian Air Force is set to take part in relief and rescue operations for victims of the recent cloudburst in Kishtwar, sources said.

At present, two Mi-17 helicopters and one Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) are on standby at Jammu and Udhampur. Operations will commence as soon as the weather becomes favourable.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is also set to leave for Kishtwar on Friday to assess the damage caused by a massive cloudburst and oversee the ongoing

rescue operations. Abdullah noted that he aims to review the relief efforts firsthand and determine the further assistance needed for those affected.

J&K CM Omar Abdullah announced his impending visit through X, stating that he will leave for Kishtwar on Friday and visit the area hit by the cloudburst on Saturday. CM Abdullah posted on his X about the visit, saying, "I'll be leaving for Kishtwar later this afternoon & will be going to the scene of the cloud burst tragedy early tomorrow morning to see, first hand, the extent of the damage. I will review the rescue operation & assess what further help is required."

Amit Shah hails PM Modi's 11-year progress roadmap

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 79th Independence Day address as a "roadmap" for India's progress, highlighting the achievements of the past 11 years and outlining strategies for a prosperous future.

In a post on X, Shah emphasized the Modi government's commitment to national security through initiatives like 'Operation Sindoor' for eliminating terrorists, 'Mission Sudarshan Chakra' for securing infrastructure, and the 'High-Powered Demography Mission' to ensure an infiltrator-free India.

"On the occasion of the 79th Independence Day,



Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji's address to the nation is a roadmap for the progress of the past 11 years, the strength of the present, and the strategy for a prosperous India. Whether it is the destruction of terrorists through 'Operation Sindoor,' the plan to secure the country's infrastructure through 'Mission Sudarshan Chakra,' or the resolve to build an infiltrator-free India through the 'High-Powered Demography Mission,' he wrote on X.

ISRAEL UNVEILS SETTLEMENT PROJECT, CRITICS WARN COULD SPLIT WEST BANK IN TWO

TDG NETWORK
MAALE ADUMIM, WEST BANK

Israel's far-right finance minister said Thursday that a contentious new settlement construction in the Israeli-occupied West Bank is going ahead a project that Palestinians and rights groups worry will scuttle plans for a Palestinian state by effectively cutting the territory into two parts.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich boasted that the construction, which is expected to get final approval later this month could thwart Palestinian statehood plans.

His announcement came as many countries, including Australia, Britain, France, and Canada say they will recognize a Palestinian state in September, at the United Nations General Assembly.

The construction on a tract of land east of Jerusalem named E1 has been under consideration for more than two decades, and is especially controversial because it is one of the last geographical links between the major West Bank cities of Ramallah



Smotrich unveiled the plans in response to numerous Western nations saying they would recognise a Palestinian state

and Bethlehem.

The two cities are 22 kilometers (14 miles) apart by air. But once the E1 settlement project is completed, it will destroy the possibility of a direct route and will force Palestinians traveling between cities to continue taking a wide detour several kilometers (miles) out of their way, passing through multiple checkpoints, a process that adds hours to the journey.

"This reality finally buries the idea of a Palestinian state, because there is nothing to recognize and no one to rec-

ognize," Smotrich said during a ceremony on Thursday. "Anyone in the world who tries today to recognize a Palestinian state — will receive an answer from us on the ground."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not publicly comment on the plan on Thursday, but he has touted it in the past.

Development in E1 was long frozen, largely due to U.S. pressure during previous administrations. On Thursday, Smotrich praised President Donald Trump and U.S. ambassador to Is-

rael Mike Huckabee as "true friends of Israel as we have never had before."

The E1 plan is expected to receive final approval on Aug. 20, capping off 20 years of bureaucratic wrangling. The planning committee on Aug. 6 rejected all of the petitions to stop the construction filed by rights groups and activists, according to Peace Now, which tracks settlement expansion in the West Bank and filed opposition.

While some bureaucratic steps remain, if the process moves quickly, infrastructure work could begin in the next few months and construction of homes could start in around a year.

The approval is a "colonial, expansionist, and racist move," Ahmed Al-Deek, the political adviser to the minister of Palestinian Foreign Affairs, told The Associated Press on Thursday.

"It falls within the framework of the extremist Israeli government's plans to undermine any possibility of establishing a Palestinian state on the ground, to fragment the West Bank, and to separate its southern

part from the center and the north," Al-Deek said.

Rights groups also swiftly condemned the plan. Peace Now called it "deadly for the future of Israel and for any chance of achieving a peaceful two-state solution" which is "guaranteeing many more years of bloodshed."

The Palestinian Authority and Arab countries have condemned Netanyahu's statement in an interview on Tuesday that he was "very" attached to the vision of a Greater Israel. The prime minister did not elaborate, but some supporters of the idea believe that Israel should control the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Others believe this harks back to the biblical borders of Israel, which also include parts of other Arab countries, such as modern-day Jordan and Lebanon.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also condemned the announcement and reiterated U.N. calls on the Israeli government to halt all settlement activity, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Gaza kids die of hunger as Netanyahu denies crisis

TDG NETWORK
GAZA STRIP

The dead body of 21/2-year-old Ro'a Mashi lay on the table in Gaza's Nasser Hospital, her arms and rib cage skeletal, her eyes sunken in her skull. Doctors say she had no preexisting conditions and wasted away over months as her family struggled to find food and treatment.

Her family showed The Associated Press a photo of Ro'a's body at the hospital, and it was confirmed by the doctor who received her remains. Several days after she died, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday told local media, "There is no hunger. There was no shortage, and there was certainly no policy of starvation."

In the face of international outcry, Netanyahu has pushed back, saying reports of starvation are "lies" promoted by Hamas.

However, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric this week warned that starvation and malnutrition in Gaza are at the highest levels since the war began.



Islam Qudeih shows her severely malnourished shirtless, 2-year-old daughter, Shamm, to journalists at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip. Doctors said Shamm may have a genetic disorder that affects muscle and bone development, but there is no way to test for it in Gaza.

The U.N. says nearly 12,000 children under 5 were found to have acute malnutrition in July — including more than 2,500 with severe malnutrition, the most dangerous level. The World Health Organization says the numbers are likely an undercount.

The past two weeks, Israel has allowed around triple the amount of food into Gaza than had been entering since late May. That followed 21/2 months when Israel barred all food, medicine and other supplies, saying it was to pressure Hamas to release hostages taken during its 2023 attack that launched

the war. The new influx has brought more food within reach for some of the population and lowered some prices in marketplaces, though it remains far more expensive than prewar levels and unaffordable for many.

While better food access might help much of Gaza's population, "it won't help the children who are severely malnourished," said Alex DeWaal, executive director of the World Peace Foundation at Tufts University, who has worked on famine and humanitarian issues for more than 40 years.

Israeli minister pays visit to jailed Palestinian leader

TDG NETWORK
TEL AVIV

Israel's far-right national security minister visited prominent Palestinian Marwan Barghouti in jail and told him "you will not win", a video showed on Friday, a day after another hardline cabinet member vowed to "bury" the idea of a Palestinian state.

Security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir shared the video on his X account, also telling Barghouti - a potential unifying figure among Palestinians who has been jailed for more than two decades - that anyone who threatens Israel would be eliminated.

The prison visit took place earlier this week but became public after ultra-nationalist Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said on Thursday work would start on a settlement that would cut off



Israeli National Security Minister and head of Jewish Power party, Itamar Ben-Gvir, gives a statement to members of the press, ahead of a possible ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, in Jerusalem

East Jerusalem, which Palestinians want as a capital for a future state, from the rest of the West Bank. Smotrich's office said the move would "bury" the idea of a Palestinian state. In the video clip on X which showed Barghouti looking thin and weak, Ben Gvir said: "You will not win. Anyone who messes with the people of Israel,

anyone who murders our children, anyone who murders our women - we will wipe him out."

"You have to know this, throughout history," he said.

The Israeli prime minister's office and a spokesman for Ben-Gvir did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Palestinian Authority described the comments as a "direct threat" to the 66-year-old. Barghouti is a senior member of the Fatah movement that runs the authority, which exercises limited civic rule in parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemns in the strongest terms the storming of the solitary confinement sections of Rimon Prison by extremist Minister Ben-Gvir and his direct threat to brother and leader Marwan Barghouti," it said in a statement.

TDG NETWORK
PESHAWAR

At least 154 people were killed and several injured as heavy rains lashed several parts of Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir over the past 24 hours, officials said on Friday.

Most of the deaths occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after torrential rains triggered flash floods in various districts, while floods damaged scores of buildings and blocked major arteries, including the Karakoram Highway and Baltistan Highway in Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan-occupied Kash-



Residents walk on a damaged road following a cloudburst-triggered landslide and flash flood on a highway near the Chilas district, northern Pakistan

mir (PoK).

A total of 75 people died in Buner district, 17 in Mansehra and 18 each in Bajaur and Batagram districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, local government officials said.

"Over 125 people, including children, have died as the cloud burst followed by flash floods struck parts of the province since Thursday night," spokesman for Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA)

Faizi told PTI Friday.

Rescue teams and local residents have recovered the bodies, he said.

Faizi, however, added that the number of deaths is expected to rise further as scores of people are still missing in affected areas.

Five were killed and four were wounded in Lower Dir; four deaths were reported in Swat; while one casualty and two injuries were recorded in Shangla in the province.

A search and rescue operation was underway under the supervision of Bajaur District Emergency Officer (DEO) Anjad Khan, Faizi said.

China's economy lags in July under pressure from tariffs and weak property market

TDG NETWORK
BANGKOK

China's economy showed signs of slowing in July as factory output and retail sales slowed and housing prices dropped further, according to data released Friday.

Uncertainty over tariffs on exports to the United States is still looming over the world's second-largest economy after President Donald Trump extended a pause in sharp hikes in import duties for 90 days, beginning Monday, following a 90-day pause that began in May.

As officials worked toward a broader trade agreement, China reported earlier that its exports surged 7.2% in July year-on-year, while its



imports grew at the fastest pace in a year, as businesses rushed to take advantage of the truce in Trump's trade war with Beijing.

But that also reflected a lower base for comparison, and manufacturers have slowed investments, hiring and production as they watch to see what comes. Chinese manufacturers also have ramped up ship-

ments to Southeast Asia, Africa and other regions to help offset lost business in the U.S.

"Exports remained a bright spot although the boost from front-loading appears to be tapering off and has started to show up in weak industrial production, as we anticipated," Oxford Economics' Sheana Yue wrote in a report.

China also has been enduring flooding from torrential seasonal rains that have disrupted business activity in many parts of the country

The statistics bureau's report said the economy had shown "notable resilience and vitality against the complex and volatile external environment and adverse impacts from extreme domestic weather."

Annual growth in industrial output slowed to 5.7% in July from 6.8% in June, the National Bureau of Statistics said. That was an 8-month low.

Investments in factory equipment and other fixed assets rose a meager 1.6% in January-July, compared with 2.8% growth in the first half of the year.

COCONUT CRUELTY



Members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) protest against the alleged use of monkeys in the Thai coconut industry, outside Thailand's embassy, Tokyo, Japan.

Japan marks 80th anniversary of WWII surrender as concern grows about fading memory

TDG NETWORK
TOKYO

Japan paid tribute Friday to more than 3 million war dead as the country marked its surrender that ended World War II 80 years ago, as concern grows about the rapidly fading memories of the tragedy of war and the bitter lessons from the era of Japanese militarism.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba expressed "remorse"

over the war — the first time a Japanese leader has used the word in a Aug. 15 address since former premier Shinzo Abe shunned it in 2013.

Ishiba called the war a mistake, but did not mention Japan's aggression across Asia or apologize.

"We will never repeat the tragedy of the war. We will never go the wrong way," Ishiba said. "Once again, we must deeply keep to our hearts the remorse and les-



Japan's ministers bow during a memorial service marking the 80th anniversary of Japan's World War II defeat, at the Nippon Budokan hall Friday, in Tokyo.

son from that war."

He vowed to pass his peace pledge to next generations.

In a national ceremony Friday at Tokyo's Budokan hall, about 4,500 officials and bereaved families and their descendants from around the country observed a moment of silence at noon, the time when Emperor Hirohito's surrender speech began on Aug. 15, 1945. Participants later offered chrysanthemum flowers for the war

dead.

Just a block away at the Yasukuni Shrine, dozens of Japanese rightwing politicians and their supporters gathered to pray.

The shrine honors Japan's 2.5 million war dead, including convicted war criminals. Victims of Japanese aggression, especially China and the Koreans, see visits to the shrine as a lack of remorse about Japan's wartime past.

Ishiba stayed away from

Yasukuni and sent a religious ornament as a personal gesture instead of praying at the controversial shrine.

But Shinjiro Koizumi, the agriculture minister considered as a top candidate to replace the beleaguered prime minister, prayed at the shrine. He told reporters that he made the no-war pledge to the spirits. "It is important to not forget those who sacrificed their lives for their country," he said.

Koizumi is the son of popular former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who outraged China when he visited Yasukuni as a serving leader in 2001.

Rightwing lawmakers, including former economic security ministers Sanae Takaichi and Takayuki Kobayashi, as well as governing Liberal Democratic Party heavyweight Koichi Hagiuda, also visited the shrine Friday.

US, CHINA AGREE TO 90-DAY TARIFF TRUCE

This averts immediate hikes to 54% and 34%—a crucial reprieve for global trade and consumers.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The United States and China have agreed to extend their tariff truce for 90 days, CNN reported, citing an executive order signed by President Donald Trump.

This move averts an immediate surge in duties that could have severely impacted trade between the world's two largest economies.

Notably, the tariffs on Chinese goods would have skyrocketed to 54 per cent from 30 per cent, while Chinese tariffs on US exports would have jumped to 34 per cent from 10 per cent.

In a joint statement with the US, China confirmed the 90-day trade truce extension and said it would maintain the 10 per cent tariffs it has imposed on



The U.S. and Chinese flags are seen on the day of a bilateral meeting between the U.S. and China, in Geneva, Switzerland, May 11, 2025. REUTERS

American goods during that period. The Joint statement follows bilateral negotiations held in Sweden last month, it said.

The extension comes after Trump imposed a slew of "reciprocal" tariffs on trading partners around the world, which have raised the United States' effective tariff rate to levels not seen

since the Great Depression, as per CNN.

According to CNN, higher tariffs on Chinese goods, America's second-largest source of imports, would have almost certainly raised the costs many American businesses and consumers could pay -- or already are paying -- because of increased import taxes Trump

Notably, the tariffs on Chinese goods would have skyrocketed to 54 per cent from 30 per cent, while Chinese tariffs on US exports would have jumped to 34 per cent from 10 per cent.

has enacted.

After meeting in Sweden in July, Chinese negotiators went as far as to say that a deal was reached. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, both of whom attended the meeting, disputed that, saying nothing was final without Trump's word.

"We'll see what happens. They've been dealing quite nicely. The relationship is very good with President Xi and myself," Trump had said on Monday.

A White House fact sheet on the extension said trade discussions with China have been "constructive" and quoted Trump saying: "We're getting along with China very well."

At the conclusion of last month's meeting with Chinese trade officials, Bessent said he warned his Chinese counterparts that continuing to purchase Russian oil would bring about huge tariffs under legislation in Congress that allows Trump to impose levies up to 500 per cent.

National Guard widens DC deployment

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The National Guard began increasing its presence in Washington on Thursday, deploying troops to the National Mall and Metro stations as President Donald Trump's federal takeover of city crime-fighting operations takes shape, The Hill reported.

Overnight, initial signs of public resistance emerged at a checkpoint that temporarily halted traffic on one of the city's main streets. The White House said more than 1,600 personnel were involved in operations across the city on Wednesday, making 45 arrests, mostly of immigrants without permanent legal status.

While the Guard's presence was relatively small earlier in the week, by Thursday all roughly 800 Army and Air National Guard troops ordered by Trump had mobilized for duty, Pentagon officials confirmed.

"They will remain until law and order has been restored in the district as determined by the president, standing as the gatekeepers of our great nation's capital," Department of Defense press secretary Kingsley Wilson told reporters at the Pentagon. She added that Guard members will assist the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department and federal law enforcement officers with "community safety patrols," protecting monuments, federal facilities and traffic control posts, and "area beautification."

"It's a deterrent. It makes people feel safe," Kingsley said.

According to The Hill, Guard members have steadily increased their presence since Monday evening. On Thursday, troops were posi-



National Guard troops stand watch at Union Station near the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Aug. 14, 2025, during the expanded federal deployment. AP

tioned around the National Mall and Metro stops such as Union Station, where tourists stopped to take photos of the vehicles and service members standing in nearly 90-degree heat.

National Guard Bureau spokesperson Maj. Micah Maxwell told The Hill that the deployment involves two teams at the National Mall and nearby Metro stations to maintain a continuous 24-hour presence, with plans to expand to additional locations in the coming days.

"It will be a slow increase, so I wouldn't expect to see a big increase of soldiers and airmen across the city," Maxwell said.

The Guard's role is to support law enforcement. They will not be armed and cannot make arrests, though they may temporarily detain individuals until federal agents arrive. "They will not be arresting people," Wilson said. "They may temporarily limit the movement of an individual who has entered a restricted or secured area without permission."

"The idea is that [the Guard] allows the lead federal agencies then to take their officer personnel to some of the other high crime areas to start addressing that crime," Maxwell added, The Hill reported.

A mix of federal officers set up a vehicle checkpoint on 14th Street NW on Wednesday night, drawing some of the first public protests against Trump's announcement. Protesters held signs reading "Go home, fascists" and "Get off our streets," The Associated Press reported. Social media also showed smaller acts of resistance, including a man shouting at National Guard members near Union Station, filmmaker Ford Fischer shared.

Despite scattered opposition, city leaders and Congressional Democrats face a delicate balance between pushing back against Trump's actions and addressing residents' crime concerns. While violent crime in Washington is at a 30-year low, a Washington Post poll last year found 65 percent of residents considered crime an "extremely serious" or "very serious problem."

Mayor Muriel Bowser (D) initially expressed cautious support, saying, "The fact that we have more law enforcement and presence in neighborhoods, that may be positive." She later urged residents to "jump in" to "protect our city and to protect our autonomy" during a virtual town hall, The Hill reported.

Thousands protest on third night of Serbia unrest

AGENCIES
BELGRADE

Thousands of protesters poured onto the streets across Serbia for a third consecutive night on Thursday, smashing windows at the governing party's headquarters in Novi Sad, the northern city where the country's ongoing antigovernment movement first erupted more than nine months ago, Al Jazeera reported.

The latest demonstrations came after major clashes earlier in the week left dozens detained or injured, with protesters demanding that President Aleksandar Vucic call an early election.

In Novi Sad, anger over alleged corruption in infrastructure projects was reig-



Serbian gendarmier officers guard a street near the Serbian Progressive Party office as anti-government protests continue in Belgrade, Aug. 14, 2025. AP

nited by last year's deadly train station canopy collapse that killed 16 people. Demonstrators stormed the offices of the ruling Serbian Progress-

sive Party (SNS), taking away furniture and documents while splashing paint at the entrance. "He is finished," protesters chanted in refer-

ence to the president, as they ransacked the building. Police and Vucic's supporters, who have guarded the premises for months, were absent from the scene, according to Al Jazeera.

In Belgrade, hundreds of demonstrators clashed with SNS supporters on one of the capital's main boulevards, hurling flares and firecrackers at each other. Police used tear gas at multiple locations to disperse crowds and separate the opposing groups. Similar protests took place in towns nationwide, Al Jazeera reported.

Speaking to pro-government Informer television, Vucic vowed a crackdown on what he called violent agitators. "The state will win," he said, accusing protesters of

being "enemies of their own country" and insisting, "I think it is clear they did not want peace and Gandhian protests. There will be more arrests." He reiterated unsubstantiated claims that the unrest was orchestrated from abroad.

Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said that 47 people were arrested during Wednesday's clashes, with about 80 civilians and 27 police officers injured. The night before, gatherings were reported at some 90 locations across the country, he added.

The European Union's Commissioner for Enlargement, Marta Kos, expressed concern over the unrest, writing on X that reports of violence were "deeply concerning."

Trump touts \$6,000 senior tax break

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Thursday (local time) signed a proclamation marking the 90th anniversary of the establishment of Social Security, while highlighting changes in his recent tax law aimed at providing relief to seniors, The Hill reported.

"On the 90th anniversary of the establishment of this historic program, I recommit to always defending Social Security, rewarding the men and women who make our country prosperous, and taking care of our own

workers, families, seniors and citizens first," Trump said in the Oval Office, The Hill reported.

The president touted his "big, beautiful" tax law enacted last month as paving the way for the "largest tax break for seniors in the history of our country," while lauding efforts in his administration to root out "fraud, waste and abuse."

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, signed in July, greenlighted a temporary \$6,000 tax deduction for Americans aged 65 and above. Experts, however, have noted that the benefit may disproportionately

favour the upper-middle class rather than lower-income seniors, The Hill reported.

"You reported it all the time. In four or five years, it's going to go bust, but not anymore, it's not," Trump said, also citing efforts in his administration aimed at uncovering "tremendous fraud, where we have illegal aliens."

Recent analysis from the Social Security Administration's chief actuary projected that Trump's recent tax and spending megabill could accelerate insolvency for Social Security's trust funds.

Macron, Putin wish India on Independence Day

TDG NETWORK
PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron extended warm greetings to India on the occasion of its 79th Independence Day.

In a post on X, @EmmanuelMacron wrote, "Warm congratulations to the people of India on your 79th Independence Day! I fondly recall welcoming my friend @NarendraModi to France in February, and look forward to deepening our strategic partnership towards 2047 and beyond." Similarly, Russian Presi-



France's President Emmanuel Macron welcomes India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi before a meeting at the Elysée Palace in Paris, May 4, 2022. REUTERS

dent Vladimir Putin sent greetings to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

the state holiday, the Russian Embassy in India said.

In a post on X, the Russian Embassy in India posted,

"Vladimir Putin sent greetings to President of India Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the state holiday, Independence Day."

In his message, President Putin highlighted India's achievements, stating, "India has achieved widely recognised success in socio-economic, scientific, technical, and other fields. Your country enjoys well-deserved respect on the global stage and actively contributes to addressing key issues on the international agenda." He further emphasised the value of the

bilateral relationship, saying, "We highly value our special, privileged strategic partnership with India. I am confident that, through our joint efforts, we will continue to expand constructive bilateral cooperation across multiple areas." President Putin added that this cooperation aligns with the interests of both nations' peoples and contributes to regional and global security and stability. "This aligns fully with the interests of our friendly peoples and supports the strengthening of security and stability both regionally and globally," he said.

TRUMP'S DISCUSSIONS WITH PUTIN IN ALASKA: IS THERE A POSSIBILITY FOR THE WAR TO CONCLUDE?

This week, the attention of the global community is focused on Alaska where Trump and Putin would discuss Russia-Ukraine war and more. US President Trump has been expressing his belief that his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, is prepared to conclude Russia's conflict with Ukraine, making these remarks on the eve of Friday's summit between the two leaders. However, he has also announced that achieving peace would likely necessitate at least a second meeting that includes Ukraine's president. Hence, it is highly unlikely that a truce announcement will be made following the discussions between Putin and Trump on Friday. This devastating war has resulted in hundreds of thousands of casualties and extensive devastation for

both nations. Also, this war has significantly impacted the global economy and political landscape. The entire world desires an end to the war; however, to date, this goal has not been realized.

It is quite interesting to observe how Trump is engaging with Putin regarding the war issue on one side, while simultaneously imposing significant tariffs on India and Brazil, accusing them of indirectly supporting Russia in the conflict by buying its oil and gas. While he makes various statements, including those that are threatening towards Putin, he seems to overlook the fact that Putin has not surrendered to NATO. Putin has outlined his specific demands, which encompass a written guarantee from both Ukraine and NATO affirming that Ukraine will not become a member of NATO, and that



WORLD RECAP
ANSHU JOSHI

the regions taken by Russia in Ukraine will be governed by Russia. In the past, Russia and Ukraine have engaged in three rounds of talks in Istanbul; nevertheless, the issue regarding the territories occupied by Russia is still unresolved, and a ceasefire has yet to be announced.

On the other hand, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has firmly rejected the notion of conceding any captured territory to Russia. He has concurrently met with the German Chancellor, and both he and his European allies have escalated their initiatives this week to thwart any agreement between the US and Rus-

sia that may arise from this week's summit in Alaska, which could leave Ukraine exposed to future assaults. Trump has also speculated about a potential second meeting that would include additional leaders.

Trump stated that a press conference would take place following the discussions, although he did not confirm or clarify whether it would be a joint conference. Additionally, he mentioned in a previous interview that there would be 'a give and take' regarding borders and territory. Trump indicated that it would be the responsibility of Putin and Zelenskyy to reach an agreement. Also,

On the other hand, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has firmly rejected the notion of conceding any captured territory to Russia.

Trump has issued a warning to Putin, suggesting that if he fails to adhere to Trump's guidance, he and his nation will face significant consequences.

Russia currently occupies key strategic areas of Ukraine, raising concerns for Zelenskyy and European leaders that any agreement might solidify these territorial gains, thereby rewarding Putin. Nevertheless, Putin's concerns are tied to Trump's stipulations that favour Ukraine. Hence, there seems to be a situation where there is a clear lack of trust among all the parties involved.

However, certain experts

have also asserted that although the two leaders, representing countries that have been rivals for an extended duration, will primarily focus on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, they might also seek to discuss issues that extend beyond Ukraine, including economic agreements or cooperation in the Arctic. On a larger scale, the summit corresponds with their belief that significant powers should delineate their own spheres of influence.

On one hand, Trump is attempting to position himself as a messenger of peace; on the other hand,

he has once again extended an invitation to the military chief of Pakistan, Asif Munir, to 'further strengthen the ties' between the two countries. His previous invitation was viewed in the context of the ongoing US-Iran conflict; however, the continuation of this invitation not only casts a shadow over the future of India-US relations but also undermines Trump's assertions of combating terrorism and states that sponsor it, as it appears oxymoronic for him to be normalizing US relations with Pakistan while claiming to fight against terrorism, at the same time. Trump aims to strengthen its economic relationship with Pakistan while discussions regarding a trade agreement with India are currently at a standstill. The US administration has shown a

strong interest in boosting partnerships with Pakistan, particularly in the areas of essential minerals and hydrocarbons, alongside a renewed focus on economic collaboration in various emerging sectors. This declaration was issued in a message of congratulations for Pakistan's Independence Day.

Trump has already ruined the relations between India and the US by imposing hefty tariffs on India and if this was not enough, by referring to India's economy as a 'dead economy' (which is the world's fastest growing economy!). While India has taken it with a pinch of salt and has started looking for the alternatives, Trump is forgetting where was Osama found at the end of the day!

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

BOLLYWOOD ACTORS WHO PLAYED ROLES OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS ON BIG SCREEN

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Bollywood has time and again remembered the country's struggle for Independence with its films of the patriotic genre. Top actors like Aamir Khan, Ajay Devgn, Kangana Ranaut, Vicky Kaushal, and Sharman Joshi have also managed to step into the shoes of some great freedom fighters and invoke patriotism on the big screen.

As India observes its 79th Independence Day this year, let's take a look at some Bollywood actors who have etched their names in the history of Indian cinema by their powerful performances as freedom fighters.

Ajay Devgn (Bhagat Singh



in The Legend of Bhagat Singh)

While Bhagat Singh's life and fearless role in India's freedom movement have largely influenced a lot of films, it is Ajay Devgn's

portrayal of the character that remains memorable to date. Devgn impressed audiences with his strong performance, offering a tribute to Bhagat Singh's bravery and sacrifice. The actor even

went on to win the National Film Award for Best Actor for this role in 2002.

Aamir Khan (Mangal Pandey in Mandal Pandey: The Rising)

The Bollywood superstar stepped into the shoes of the Indian soldier in this biographical war drama, set during the Revolt of 1857. As the titular character, Aamir exuded immense power and a rebellious spirit that sparked the First War of Independence. It was directed by Ketan Mehta and also starred Ranu Mukerji in the prominent role.

Kangana Ranaut (Rani Lakshmi Bai in Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi)

Kangana Ranaut delivered a very powerful performance as Rani Lakshmi Bai in the historical drama.

Sunny Deol announces 'Border 2' release date

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

The makers of Sunny Deol starrer 'Border 2' have unveiled the first-look poster and announced the release of the film on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day today.

In a sincere tribute to India's bravehearts, Sunny Deol shared the first-look poster of his highly anticipated film 'Border 2'. The film is slated to release in the theatres worldwide on January 22, 2026.

In the newly released motion poster of 'Border 2', Sunny Deol is seen wearing an Indian soldier



uniform while holding a bazooka in his hand. With fierce intensity in his eyes,

the actor looks all ready to channel the spirit of an Indian soldier once more.

While sharing the poster, the actor wrote, "Hindustan ke liye ladenge.... phir ek baar! (Will fight for India, one more time). #Border2 hits theatres on Jan 22, 2026."

Directed by Anurag Singh, 'Border 2' brings together a powerful ensemble led by Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan, Diljit Dosanjh, Ahan Shetty, Medha Rana, Mona Singh and Sonam Bajwa with production by Bhushan Kumar and JP Dutta.

Speaking about the sequel to one of the most loved Bollywood films, 'Border', producer Bhushan Kumar said

50 years of 'Sholay' and iconic dialogues

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

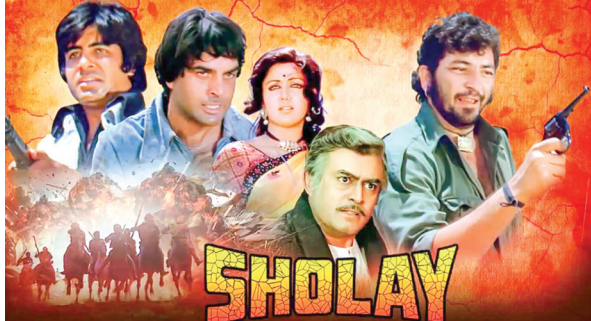
Ramesh Sippy's iconic film 'Sholay' is regarded as one of the greatest films of all time. It starred legendary actors such as Amitabh Bachchan, Dharmendra, Sanjeev Kumar, Hema Malini, Jaya Bachchan and Amjad Khan, among others.

Released on August 15, 1975, 'Sholay' turned into a cult favourite in Indian cinema, owing to its powerful story, memorable characters, iconic dialogues, and the evergreen songs like 'Yeh Dosti', 'Mehbooba Mehbooba', 'Haa Jab Tak Hai Jaan', 'Holi Ke Din' and others.

The film's story focuses on the fictitious Ramgarh village, where retired police chief Thakur Baldev Singh (Sanjeev Kumar) plans to defeat the notorious bandit, Gabbar Singh (Amjad Khan), with the help of Jai (Amitabh Bachchan) and Veeru (Dharmendra). Upon arriving in the village, the duo realises the menace of Gabbar Singh and double on the efforts to help Thakur.

Jaya Bachchan and Hema Malini are seen playing Jai and Veeru's love interests as Basanti and Radha, respectively.

Be it 'Kitne aadmi the?', 'Basanti, in kutto ke samne mat nachna' or 'Bahut yarana lagta hai', even decades after its release, 'Sholay' dialogues continue to resonate with



audiences, often used in various contexts. As the iconic film 'Sholay' celebrates its 50th anniversary, let us look at some of the timeless dialogue from the film that continues to enthrall the audience even today.

'Mujhe sirf Gabbar chahiye zinda'

This is one of the memorable Sholay dialogues. Spoken by the character Thakur

Baldev Singh, portrayed by Sanjeev Kumar.

"Tumhara naam kya hai basanti?"

This dialogue is said when Basanti, played by Hema Malini, is continuously chatting with Veeru, portrayed by Dharmendra; however, she realises that he hasn't even asked for her name. While

she mentions this, Jai, played by Amitabh Bachchan, asks this question.

'Kitne aadmi the?'

Who can forget this iconic dialogue, which is often used by people. This dialogue is asked by Gabbar Singh, played by Amjad Khan, after his gang has been defeated by Jai and Veeru. It is now part of the Indian lingo as a popular slang, transcending generations.

BRAIN PICKING



I love visiting churches and I think I've visited every mosque in Istanbul.

— JANHVI KAPOOR

(Indian Actress)

ACTORS CELEBRATE I-DAY



ANANYA PANDAY WITH TRICOLOUR



KANGANA RANAUT WITH NATIONAL FLAG



SARA ALI KHAN WITH NATIONAL FLAG



SOHA ALI KHAN CELEBRATES I-DAY

REVIEW: COOLIE *****

COOLIE



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Cinephiles always have a few choices when it comes to their regular dose of entertainment at the cinema. Often they look for the iconic hero, whom they'd fan-followed for years, and

the sheer presence of that actor in the film is just enough for them to make their day, while some look at the story and storytelling, some look at the music and melodies, and some go into the finer nuances of filmmaking.

Sometimes, the powerful presence of an iconic personality and their cult following override the poor storytelling and plots and still make the film a hit. It is sometimes the lens with which the audience watches the film that determines its destiny. In my opinion, Lokesh Kanagaraj directed Coolie is going

to be one such film, where people are going to flock only for Rajinikanth and not for the story.

Deva (Rajinikanth) is chasing the person who murdered his friend Rajasekar (Sathyaraj), and in the process ends up reliving his past dealing with rogues and rascals again. Rajasekar lives with his three daughters, is found dead, suspected of a cardiac arrest, and Deva discovers the cause as the inflicted torture before death, where the autopsy report was fraudulently changed. And that leads him to delving into the past of Rajasekar and family, only to discover the gory world of underworld, blackmail, murders,



and a scientific discovery of a quick cremation chair landing into the wrong hands.

Enter the antagonist Simon

(Nagarjuna Akkineni), dealing with the smuggling of watches under the disguise of import and export busi-

ness. He is also a Kingpin of a much larger scandalous and illegal business of stealing the hearts (by removing surgically) of unsuspecting targets from his own staff of Coolies and then burning the bodies into ashes, leaving no trace via the quick cremation chair. Before Rajasekar was murdered, he would assist Simon, along with his daughter Preethi (Shruti Hassan), in executing this for money.

Deva joins Preethi and revives the act to infiltrate the kingdom of Simon. But there are many twists and turns, many plots patched together to create a sequence and give it the shape of a story that doesn't impress much. You have Dayal (Soubin Shahir),

the undercover cop turning rogue, and his wife Kalyani (Rachita Ram) turning into a fictitious fiancée of Simon's son Arjun (Kanna Ravi), a customs officer who helps his father's business from the outside.

While the film has a powerful cast of Rajinikanth, Nagarjuna Akkineni, and Shruti Hassan, among others including a cameo of Aamir Khan, it's the love for the classic styles of the septuagenarian Rajini, his masculine maneuvers, his piercing & high-pitched action sequences, and cherished dance moves keeps the audience in a frenzy. Nagarjuna too shines as a villain in his occasional ap-

pearances in the first half and a larger exposure in the later part of the film.

While many ideas were planted in the first half of the film, they didn't seem to have been explored fully in the later part of the film. The progression of the story at many times seems disconnected from the previous plot, and it looks like it is not patched together creatively enough for continuity.

Rajini fans will get their chills and thrills, but the weak story may disappoint many others.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

THE END OF NEEDINESS



MIKE GEORGE

Are you a needy person? Until we fully realise who we really are, and live our lives in that understanding, we will likely be 'needy' in the company of others. Neediness is largely a subconscious habit, deeply ingrained in our personalities, that we have created over time. It is often conditioned early in our lives by parents or the absence of parents, or perhaps some traumatic event. It is an attempt to fill a hole in our personality, or character, from the outside in, when in fact it can only be healed by internal realisation and experience.

There are always two energies at play – the soul (spiritual) and the body (material). The soul has two authentic needs, often seen as purpose; to realise itself and to be 'useful' to some-

one or something in this material world. The soul, in its early incarnations, had no desires, because it was fully realised. Gradually, as we became more and more focussed on the material world, we began to develop desires, many of which we now attempt to justify as needs.

Our body has basic needs of food, water, and shelter, for which the soul, as the carer, is the supplier. As the soul identifies more and more with the body, believing itself to be the body, the material desires gradually increase. Also justified by often calling them needs. But do I really need a new gadget if the old one is working perfectly well? Do I really need a new BMW if the car I have is comfortable and performing well? Do I need or do I want?

We eventually realise that the healing and the freedom of the soul depends on the ending of neediness and the cessation of desire. But it is a freedom that has to be 'felt' deeply by the self, through the realisation that all I need is to be found within. Summed up as; "I am trapped in satisfying my apparent neediness until I don't need".



The most effective way to eliminate neediness is the practice of meditation.

- I need to be respected until I realise my own self-respect is intrinsic to the self.
- I need to be at peace, until I realise that peace is my core nature, I am peace.
- I need to be accepted as I am until I realise that self-acceptance frees me from the neediness

- of others' acceptance.
- I need learned beliefs from others on which to base my security and stability until I realise the truth for myself. Belief is not the truth. Truth cannot be captured by words and concepts.
- I need to be loved until I realise that I am love.

I can only know that when I give it, at all times, in all ways.

- I need company until I realise I am perfectly OK alone. Then the fear of loneliness disappears. We always have company; in our own minds, or with others. We all need to spend time alone to discover what is going

on inside. When being with the self is enough, we can be alone or with others and remain free.

- I need to be materially successful until I realise that my sense of self-worth is not dependent on how others see me.
- I need to be and feel humble. But real humility cannot be developed

The soul, in its early incarnations, had no desires, because it was fully realised. Gradually, as we became more and more focussed on the material world, we began to develop desires, many of which we now attempt to justify as needs.

as long as I identify with my roles, position, and belongings etc. thereby creating the ego. When the ego ceases, only then can real humility arise.

- I need to be the centre of other people's attention until I have the realisation that self-esteem and self-value arise from the inside out.
- I need to have opinions until there is the realisation that opinions are simply points of view that are constantly changing. They are neither right nor wrong, and never final, they are just points of view. Don't get trapped in your own opinion.

Everyone has some form of neediness. The types and

levels simply vary from person to person. They signify a dependency on something from 'outside in' and therefore a vulnerability within the consciousness. They are not right or wrong, good or bad, but serve as obstacles on the path to self-realisation and the internal freedom that is the intrinsic and original condition of the soul. The most effective way to raise awareness and eliminate any neediness is through the practice of meditation and contemplation.

Mike George is an author of 16 books on self-awareness, spiritual intelligence, and personal 'undevelopment'. To subscribe to *Clear Thinking*, go to www.relax7.com

Opening the door of the mind



ANTHONY STRANO

We do not eliminate the problems and obstacles of our life just by thinking about them. But, of course, everything begins in my own mind: how I see myself, how I see others, and how I see life. As my mind, so the vision of my world. One of the first steps required in trying to understand the philosophy of positive thinking is to have an open mind.

What prevents us from having an open mind? Fear and bad experiences of the past do not allow us to be free – it is especially difficult to be open and to communicate where there have sometimes been bad experiences with people. As we open our minds and put aside our fears, we are able to explore new horizons, directions, and insights. The most important discovery is the discovery of myself; of knowing myself, who I am and where I am going. I have to look inside, at my inner world, and balance it with my external world. This opens the door to the inner journey. This is what meditation is about.

Meditation helps me to refresh my mind, and even to relax my body. The biggest pollution is in my mind; wasteful and negative thinking. The other side of me is



Fear and bad experiences of the past do not allow us to have an open mind.

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pure and divine thinking. I can think like a devil or like an angel. What we try to do in meditation is to collect the energy of our thoughts, calm them down, and start creating thoughts of quality; elevated spiritual thoughts.

Meditation is the science of understanding the energy of the mind. This internal world of feelings, thoughts, and awareness is invisible, but when these attributes of the mind are elevated, divine, on a higher level

of consciousness, the effects are visible.

The whole point is to listen, to observe, and experiment. The deeper the experiment, the more authentic is my experience. When we are in silence, we are able to communicate with the self, able to concentrate and delve deeply into the self. What we need so much now is to slow down our thinking. That slowing down makes the silence very creative and positive, and consequently my actions will be likewise. I need to practise holding a positive thought, polish that thought, and refine it.

Meditation is the key to unlocking peace, love, and truth – the resources of my eternal self.

The late Anthony Strano was an author and Rajyoga teacher with the Brahma Kumaris.

Step out of the shadow of the past



B.K. GEETA

Everyone wants to live a happy life and create a better future for themselves. Having the fundamental resources, such as good health, a sound mind, and adequate wealth, helps in this. But often people who seemingly have everything, lead an unhappy existence. Self-doubt, excessive focus on their shortcomings, and guilt and shame over past mistakes warp their self-perception, trapping them in a cycle of gloomy thoughts.

Self-doubt paralyses us by causing hesitation and overthinking, making it difficult to take decisive action. Even when we get ourselves to act, self-doubt whispers that our efforts will not be enough, leading us to give up prematurely. We may avoid challenging situations or opportunities altogether, which limits our growth.

Fixating on our weaknesses skews our self-image and we

see ourselves as inadequate. It also feeds our insecurity, which then confirms our negative self-beliefs. But it is remaining stuck in the past that probably does the most damage. Guilt and shame tie our identity to our worst moments. When we are held hostage by the past, our memories, emotions, and the resultant beliefs prevent us from fully engaging with the present or imagining a different future.

The paradox is that self-improvement often starts not with self-criticism, but with acceptance. We cannot shame ourselves into wholeness. Mistakes and flaws are not evidence of worthlessness; they are a part of being human. Many great individuals we hold in high esteem were not born virtuous or confident – they became that way, through inner conflict, humility, and resolve.

Mahatma Gandhi was a shy, self-conscious youth. As a lawyer in South Africa, he was so nervous during his first court case that he fled the courtroom. He constantly questioned his worth and struggled with guilt over his personal failings. But through spiritual reflection, humility, and active resistance to injustice, he redefined himself, ultimately becoming a global symbol of nonviolent resistance who led India to freedom from British colonial rule.



Self-improvement often starts not with self-criticism, but with acceptance.

Similarly, Abraham Lincoln battled lifelong depression and was filled with self-doubt. He failed in business, lost several elections, and once wrote that he was the most miserable man alive. However, he channelled his introspection into empathy, resilience, and moral clarity. His humility made him amenable to consensus. He led the United States through its civil war, was instrumental in the abolition of slavery in America, and is now one of the most revered US presidents.

What these stories teach us is

that when we work on ourselves with honesty, kindness, and patience, we can achieve meaningful and sustainable healing and growth.

We can start by speaking to ourselves like a friend: Would we say what we say to ourselves to someone we care about? When we catch ourselves thinking, "I failed, therefore I am a failure," we can instead think, "This did not go well – what can I learn from it?"

Forgiveness is essential to healing. It is not about excusing harm or forgetting the past, but we can

choose not to carry the emotional burden of guilt or resentment forever.

Self-compassion and forgiveness work as emollients, reducing the pain carried from the past. But to turn our life around, meditation comes in handy.

Meditation, which involves creating positive, empowering thoughts about the self – not artificial or forced, but gentle, with faith and self-belief – calms the mind and brings mental clarity. That helps us see the stories of the past from a different perspective – including one of growth,

and resilience. It also trains us to live in the present, not in past regrets or future fears. Regular practice of meditation leads to better focus and fewer distracting thoughts. Focus enables us to process information deeply, improving understanding and memory. We are able to do more in less time, with fewer mistakes. Overthinking and anxiety are curbed, and we become less reactive. With the number of thoughts reduced, there is greater mental space for creative ideas to emerge. In addition, a de-cluttered mind discerns and makes decisions more accurately.

When the quality of our thinking changes, so does our experience of life. A stronger mind develops confidence, which removes the defeatism and inferior feelings of the past. A huge burden is lifted off the mind when we realise that many of the things we used to agonise over and torment ourselves with, are mere trifles. Our enhanced self-assurance brings the courage and willingness to step outside self-imposed limits and explore new possibilities, which opens further avenues for growth. In effect, the fresh outlook gained from meditation becomes a stepping stone to a new life.

B.K. Geeta is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Beware of telling stories about other people that let me off the hook. When I take 100 per cent responsibility for myself, I can see that my life has been my creation. The choices I made - to get involved, not get involved, to stay, to leave - have created my life as it is. No one else is to blame. To tell stories about others is to hide from taking responsibility for my choices. Today let me be honest with myself and shape my life truthfully.

ANANDKUMAR WINS INDIA'S FIRST-EVER MEDAL IN ROLLER SKATING AT WORLD GAMES

TDG NETWORK
CHENGDU

India's Anandkumar Velkumar scripted history after clinching a bronze medal in the men's 1000m sprint inline speed skating track event at the World Games 2025 in Chengdu, People's Republic of China, on Friday.

The 22-year-old Indian skater clocked 1:22.482s to breeze past Switzerland's Livio Wenger to take away the final spot on the podium by a mere 0.1 seconds. Spain's Jhoan Sebastian



Indian skater Anandkumar Velkumar

Guzman Bitar struck gold with a timing of 1:22.288s while Colombia's Jhon

Edwar Tascon Holguin was forced to settle for silver despite a faster run of

1:21.846s.

The Colombian was slapped with a reduced rank. In the context of speed skating or roller skating competitions, "reduced rank" refers to a ranking adjustment applied to a skater due to a penalty, disqualification in a heat or inability to complete a race as intended.

Velkumar's podium finish marked India's first medal in roller skating at the World Games. Overall, in the ongoing edition of the World Games, Velkumar's

triumph added a third medal to India's tally.

The 22-year-old has developed an appetite for making skating history for India on the global stage. In 2021, he became the first Indian to secure a World Championships medal after claiming a silver in the junior men's 15000m elimination race in Ibague, Colombia.

Velkumar was also part of the Indian team which won a bronze medal in the men's 3000m event at the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou.

Sinner vs Atmane at Cincinnati Open semis

TDG NETWORK
CINCINNATI

The world number 136 Terence Atmane continued his brilliant giant-killing run, while world number one Jannik Sinner also delivered a dominant performance to reach the semifinals of the ongoing Cincinnati Open on Friday.

Just a day after toppling American star Taylor Fritz, the French qualifier produced another stunning win over a top-10-ranked talent, Holger Rune by 6-2, 6-3 to reach his first-ever ATP Masters 1000 semifinal and set up an exciting clash with top-ranked Sinner.

On the other hand, Sinner continued his grass court win streak with a brilliant victory over Felix Auger-Aliassime to reach the semifinals.

The defending champion had lost both of his previous matches to Felix, winning just one set, but both of these defeats had come three years back, way before Sinner had reached the top 10 in the ATP Rankings. Now, Sinner produced a clutch performance, reminding fans of his evolution and maturity, beating Felix by 6-0, 6-2.

Speaking after his win, Atmane said, as quoted by the ATP official website, "I do not think any words can describe how I feel right now. It is pretty insane to be honest. I cannot believe it. Being here in the semifinals of a Masters 1000,



breaking into the Top 100 lose, that is the advantage

On the other hand, Sinner continued his grass court win streak with a brilliant victory over Felix Auger-Aliassime to reach the semifinals.

and even more with the win tonight -- it is also a lot of money for me, so it is going to be very helpful for my career. It means a lot to me. I am very emotional about it."

Atmane fired 14 winners with his forehand and displayed his all-court athleticism in a one-hour, 13-minute win.

He entered the tournament with a poor record of one win and four losses this season and is now up 67 places to world number 69 in the ATP Rankings.

Speaking on his emotions after the win over Fritz, the French player said that he could not sleep after that.

"I was just trying to be myself on court, trying to enjoy it as much as I can because I have nothing to

I have of being the underdog here, coming from the qualifiers. I think this is going to give me a lot of confidence for the rest of the year and in my career in general," he added.

Speaking after his match, Sinner said, "I felt that I was returning very well today. I had a small drop in the second set when he broke me. It could have been a small change, but I am happy I broke him back quite early."

"He (Felix) is a very difficult opponent because he serves well, and he moves well. Physically in incredible shape and hits the forehand very well. But we prepared in the best way, also tactically, and I felt like today I was playing some great tennis," he added.

Manu to lead India's charge at Asian Shooting Championship

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker will lead India's campaign at the Asian Shooting Championship 2025, which begins on Saturday and culminates on August 30 at the Shymkent Shooting Plaza in Kazakhstan.

As many as 734 shooters from 28 countries will compete in Kazakhstan. India has sent the largest contingent, comprising 164 shooters across senior and junior events, according to Olympics.com.

In 15 events at the Asian competition, the Indian senior shooting team has 35 members vying for medals. Additionally, Indian shooters will participate in the youth competition.

Manu Bhaker will join the women's 10m air pistol and 25m pistol competitions. In the 2023 Asian Shooting Champi-

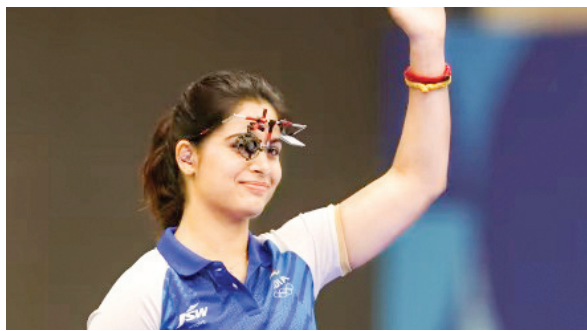
onship in the Republic of Korea, she was a member of the women's 25-meter pistol team that won silver.

The Indian shooter, following up after an incredible Paris 2024 campaign which saw her bag two Olympic medals, has had a muted 2025 season with a 10m pistol silver medal at the Lima leg of the ISSF World Cup as her best accomplishment this year.

India finished third after securing a total of 19 medals, including six gold, eight silver and five bronze at the Asian Shooting Championships in 2023. Asian Shooting Championship 2025:

INDIAN SHOOTING SQUAD MEN

10m Air Rifle: Arjun Babuta, Kiran Ankush Jadhav, Parth Rakesh Mane, Smit Moradiya, Rudranksh Patil, Akhil Sheo-



ran, Chain Singh, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar
50m Rifle 3 Positions: Babu Singh Panwar, Kiran Ankush Jadhav, Akhil Sheoran, Chain Singh, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar
50m Rifle Prone: Goldi Gurjar, Akash Kumar Ravidas, Samarvir Singh, Surya Deep Singh
10m Air Pistol: Anmol Jain, Aditya Malra, Amit Sharma, Saurabh Chaudhary, Inder Singh Suruchi, Varun Tomar
25m Rapid Fire Pistol: Anish

Anish, Neeraj Kumar, Bhavesh Shekhawat, Pradeep Singh Shekhawat, Adarsh Singh
25m Standard Pistol: Amanpreet Singh, Harsh Gupta, Udhayveer Sidhu, Gurpreet Singh
25m Centre Fire Pistol: Amanpreet Singh, Ankur Goel, Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu, Gurgaven Singh Sidhu, Gurpreet Singh
50m Pistol: Ram Babu, Amanpreet Singh, Vikram Jagannath Shinde, Ravinder Singh, Yogesh Kumar

Chennai Grand Masters: Vincent seals title with a round to spare

AGENCIES
CHENNAI

Vincent Keymer completed a landmark triumph at the Chennai Grand Masters 2025, securing the title with a round to spare and becoming the first sole champion in the tournament's history. The 20-year-old German, playing white, drew his match against Dutchman Jordan van Foreest, while results elsewhere confirmed his tournament victory.

Keymer's dominance over a star-studded field also catapulted him into the world's Top 10 on the live rating list, underlining his arrival among the game's elite.

Now in its third year, Chennai Grand Masters 2025 is India's strongest classical chess event. Organised by MGD1, it features two elite 10-player round-robin sections - Masters and Challengers - across nine rounds in nine days. With a Rs 1 crore prize pool, the Masters winner earns Rs 25 Lakhs, the Challenge-



ers winner Rs 7 lakh and a coveted 2026 Masters berth. The event also offers FIDE Circuit points, with the Masters champion securing 24.5 toward the 2026 Candidates qualification.

Speaking on his victory, Keymer said, "I am very happy with the tournament. Winning my games in the first rounds made me self-confident and helped me to be focused, concentrated, and calm. Entering the top 10 in live rating is a milestone I have wanted to reach for a long time, and I am very glad that the hard work finally paid off."

"Winning the tournament and breaking into the Top 10 at the same time is fantas-

tic for me and truly special. However, the tournament will continue tomorrow. That is why I prefer to remain focused and keep the tension for the last round. Winning the tournament is a fantastic achievement, but I also really want to stay in the Top 10, meaning either drawing or winning tomorrow's game," he added.

Elsewhere in the Masters, all five games ended in draws, a rare full split that keeps the race for second and third wide open heading into the final round. Arjun Erigaisi and Karthikeyan Murali-playing each other on day 9-remain in contention alongside several close pursuers, with every half-point on the final day set to carry weighty implications for both the standings and crucial FIDE rating gains.

In the Challengers, GM Pranesh M tightened his grip on the leaderboard with a crucial win over GM Harika Dronavalli, taking a half-point lead (6.5) into the final day.

Aditi lies 32nd, Gurleen tied second in LPGA

TDG NETWORK
PORTLAND

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok produced four birdies in a row towards the end of her first round to make a solid start at The Standard Portland Classic. She shot 3-under 69 and was Tied-32nd.

Four pars at the start from the 10th were followed by a birdie on the 14th and then bogeys on the 18th and the third at which point she was 1-over. Then came a birdie run with four in a row from fifth to the eighth for a 3-under 69.

Two-time champion Brooke Henderson birdied all four par-5 holes for a 7-under 65 and was a stroke behind first-round leader Adela Cernousek.

Henderson is tied second with four others including Gurleen Kaur,

a first generation Indian-American. The others are China's Miranda Wang, Koreans Jeongeun Lee5 and Sung Hyun Park, all of whom shot 65 like Henderson.

The 25-year-old Gurleen played the 2021 US Women's Open and made the cut. She turned pro in 2022 and played Epson Tour and came to LPGA in 2024. Starting on the 10th, Gurleen had eight birdies including five in a seven-hole stretch between the second and he eighth.

Canadian Savannah Grewal, who has roots in India, was T-32.

Leader Cernousek shot a 65 in the final group of the day off the 10th tee. The 22-year-old Frenchwoman played her final nine holes in 7-under 29 — highlighted by an eagle on No. 7.

Ankita Dhyani breaks women's 2000m steeplechase record

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Olympian Ankita Dhyani broke the women's 2000m steeplechase national record while winning gold at the Grand Slam Jerusalem athletics meet in Israel. The 23-year-old Ankita clocked 6-minute 13.92 seconds to better the previous national mark of 6:14.38, held by Parul Chaudhary. With the ranking points she earned from the win on Thursday, Ankita boosted her chances of qualifying for 3000m steeplechase for the World Championships in Tokyo next month through



world ranking quota."Yes, under the rules, the performance of 2000m steeplechase will be counted for world ranking purposes in 3000m steeplechase

for the World Championships in Tokyo. It is an existing rule," Indian athletics head coach Radhakrishnan Nair told PTI. The Grand Slam Jerusalem is a World Athletics Continental Tour silver level (Category B) event. Israel's Adva Cohen and Denmark's Juliane Hvid finished second and third after clocking 6:15.20 and 6:17.80 respectively. Ankita secured a silver medal in the 3000m steeplechase race at the World University Games last month, where she clocked a personal best time of 9:31.99. She took part in the women's 5000m at the 2024 Olympics.

Hockey India: C'garh, U'khand register wins on day 3

AGENCIES
JALANDHAR

Day 3 of the 15th Hockey India Junior Men National Championship featured Division 'B'

matches where Hockey Chandigarh and Hockey Uttarakhand won their fixtures while Hockey Himachal and Jammu and Kashmir settled for a draw in Jalandhar, Punjab.

The day began with the Division 'B' match between Hockey Himachal and Jammu & Kashmir, which ended in a 5-5 draw as both sides shared a point.

Mysuru Open 2025: Yuvraj dominates round three

AGENCIES
MYSURU

Yuvraj Sandhu dominated the proceedings on day three with a phenomenal eight-under 62, highlighted by two eagles, to extend his lead to three shots at the Rs 1 crore Mysuru Open 2025.

A confident-looking Yuvraj, the leader from round one onwards, moved his total to an imposing 22-under 188. Chandigarh-based Sandhu (61-65-62), the current PGTI Order of Merit leader, is now staring at his third PGTI title of the season.

Jamal Hossain (62-65-64) of Bangladesh posted a 64 despite missing some crucial putts to continue in second place for the third straight



day as his total read 19-under 191.

Delhi golfer Arjun Prasad also carded a 64 to move into sole third place at a total of 18-under 192 on another overcast day.

Chandigarh's Karandeep Kochhar matched Yuvraj's first round tournament low of 61 to zoom 11 spots to tied fourth place at 17-under 193.

Kochhar's round featured an eagle and seven birdies.

Italy's Michele Ortolani (63), who fired two eagles on Thursday, also closed the day in joint fourth position.

P Prabhu and Dhruv Bopanna, the two Mysuru-based professionals who made the cut, were placed tied 47th at six-under 204.

Yuvraj Sandhu began the

day by dropping his first bogey of the week on the second. However, Yuvraj came roaring back with two birdies and two eagles on the front nine. Sandhu landed his tee shot within two feet of the pin on the Par-4 seventh to pick up his first eagle, while for his next eagle on the Par-5 ninth, Yuvraj landed his approach within three feet of the flag.

The 28-year-old Sandhu, an international winner, then produced five consecutive birdies from the 10th through the 14th thanks to all aspects of his game coming together. At that stage Yuvraj enjoyed a commanding five-shot lead. However, he had a horrid last four holes where he made three bogeys in exchange for a birdie that reduced his lead.

Yuvraj said, "I was playing in a different mental zone today, as was evident from my scoring between the seventh and the 14th. I was really enjoying myself out there. It's the kind of zone that golfers often strive to get into. My calm and relaxed demeanour and confidence on the course is a direct reflection of the grind that I put myself through during the off-season by pushing myself to the limit. I feel that it shows in my confidence when I turn up to play a tournament."

Jamal Hossain accumulated five birdies over the first 11 holes but then missed some opportunities on the greens as he could only manage two birdies and a bogey over the next seven holes.



Sathiyen Gnanasekaran clinched the WTT Feeder Vientiane title, defeating Japan's Ryoichi Yoshiyama 3-0 in the Men's Singles final. (X)