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JAISHANKAR ‘PERPLEXED’ BY US LOGIC ON OIL TARIFFS

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said he was “perplexed” by US pressure on India’s Russian oil imports, stressing New Delhi’s energy trade is market-driven.

TDG NETWORK
MOSCOW

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow on Thursday, where the two leaders reviewed bilateral ties, discussed preparations for the annual summit later this year, and addressed pressing global and regional issues.

Welcoming Jaishankar for the talks, Lavrov emphasised the growing role of multilateral groupings in shaping a multipolar world order, citing organisations such as the SCO, BRICS and the G20. “I hope for fruitful talks today,” Lavrov said, underscoring the significance of Russia’s strategic partnership with India.

Jaishankar noted that discussions had covered political relations and wide-ranging aspects of bilateral cooperation. “We discussed a lot of issues in our cooperation and found many solutions as well. I want to take these discussions forward so that we have the maximum outcomes when we



Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar commence talks in Moscow. ANI

- **Trade Surge:** India-Russia trade soared five-fold to USD 68 billion in 2024-25.
- **Imbalance Warning:** Jaishankar flagged a USD 58.9 billion deficit, urging corrective steps.
- **Oil Defence:** “We are not the biggest purchaser of Russian oil—that is China,” said Jaishankar.
- **Tariff Tensions:** US imposed 50% tariffs on Indian

goods citing Russian oil imports.

- **Defence Ties:** Russia backs India’s ‘Make in India’ with joint production and tech transfer.
- **On Ukraine:** “India’s approach emphasises dialogue and diplomacy to resolve conflicts.”
- **Pending Cases:** Jaishankar pressed Moscow for the release of Indians in Russian Army.

have the annual summit,” he said. He also placed the talks in the broader global context of shifting geopolitics and evolving economic

landscapes, stressing the goal of maximising complementarities.

The meeting coincided with Jaishankar co-chair-

ing the 26th Session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC) alongside Russian Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov. He described the commission as a key mechanism to prepare for the annual summit and highlighted that bilateral trade in goods had surged more than five-fold from USD 13 billion in 2021 to USD 68 billion in 2024-25.

However, he cautioned that the rapid growth had been accompanied by a sharp imbalance, with India’s deficit rising from USD 6.6 billion to USD 58.9 billion. “We need to address this urgently,” Jaishankar stressed, urging for the removal of non-tariff barriers and regulatory hurdles to enable greater Indian exports in sectors such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals and textiles.

Manturov noted that Russia-India trade turnover had increased by 700 per cent over the past five years, making India one of Moscow’s top three trading partners.

Jaishankar also addressed the India-Russia Business Forum in Moscow and reiterated the need for balanced and sustainable growth in economic relations.

The talks took place amid tensions following the United States’ decision to impose 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods, citing New Delhi’s continued purchase of Russian oil. Responding to queries on the matter, Jaishankar rejected Washington’s logic. “We are not the biggest purchasers of Russian oil—that is China. We are not the biggest purchasers of LNG—that is the European Union. We are also not the country with the biggest trade surge with Russia after 2022. Incidentally, we also buy oil from the US, and that amount has increased. So honestly, we are very perplexed at the logic of the argument,” he said.

He underlined that sustaining energy cooperation with Russia was important for both trade and global energy market stability. India has consistently defended its oil imports from Moscow as

■ P3

Xu Feihong: India, China ‘partners, not rivals’

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

China’s Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s forthcoming visit to China for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit will be “a very important event not only for the SCO but for the bilateral relationship between the two countries”. He added that both sides were preparing to ensure the success of the visit, which Beijing “attaches great importance to”.

Xu’s comments followed Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s visit to New Delhi earlier this week. Wang co-chaired the 24th round of the Special Representatives’ dialogue on the boundary question with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on 19 August, held talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and called on Prime Minister Modi.



China’s ambassador to India, Xu Feihong. ANI

The envoy said the boundary dialogue yielded significant results, with both sides reaching consensus on ten points. “Two groups will be set up by our two sides over the border issue. One group will be for border delimitation into appropriate sectors. The second will focus on proper management of the border and border areas. We should not define the border issue as the relationship between our two countries. The border issue is on one side, and cooperation between In-

dia and China is on the other,” Xu told reporters.

He also stressed the need to enhance “strategic mutual trust” and avoid suspicion, declaring that India and China are “partners, not rivals”. “For two neighbouring countries of such size, unity and cooperation are the only way to achieve common development. China and India’s friendship benefits Asia. We are the double engines of economic growth in the region. Our unity benefits the world at large,” he said.

Situating the ties in a broader setting, Xu noted: “The world today is experiencing a turbulent period; the international order is undergoing the most profound evolution since World War II. At this moment of turbulence and change, the significance of China and India relations has become increasingly evident. China-India cooperation benefits both countries. Both are

■ P3

ECI appoints observers for VP poll

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming Vice-Presidential elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday appointed two senior officers of the rank of Additional Secretary as Observers to oversee the electoral process.

The election, scheduled for September 9, will see a direct contest between Justice (Retd.) B. Sudershan Reddy, backed by the INDIA bloc, and the NDA’s nominee, C. P. Radhakrishnan. The last date for filing nominations is August 21, while candidates may withdraw their nominations until August 25.

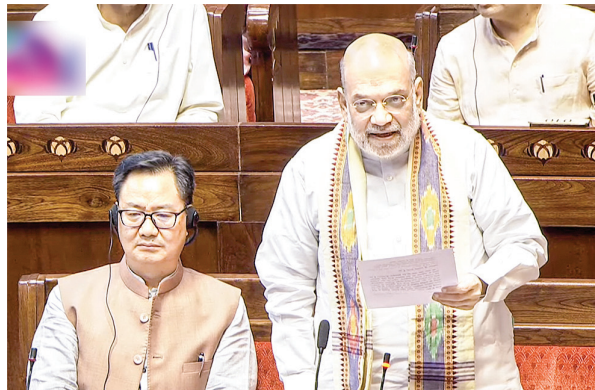
■ P3

Rajya Sabha clears Joint Committee review of key amendment bills

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Thursday referred three significant legislations—the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill, 2025, the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2025, and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2025—to a Joint Committee of Parliament.

The committee, comprising 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha, will be nominated by the Speaker and the Deputy Chairman, respectively, and has been directed to submit its report on the last day of the first week of the winter session



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks in Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

of Parliament.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah moved the proposal in the Upper House, which was adopted through a voice vote despite loud sloganeering and disruptions by the Opposition. Earlier on Wednesday, Shah had

introduced the three Bills in the Lok Sabha.

The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, seeks to disqualify a Union or State Minister facing corruption or serious criminal charges who has been in custody for at least 30 con-

secutive days. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2025, aims to amend Section 54 of the 2019 Act to provide a legal framework for the removal of the Chief Minister or a Minister under similar circumstances.

Opposition MPs have strongly opposed the proposed amendments, labelling them “draconian” and “unconstitutional.” Tempers flared in the Lok Sabha when several Opposition members tore and flung copies of the Bills towards Home Minister Shah in protest against provisions that would allow the removal of the Prime Minister or Chief Ministers under detention for corruption or serious offences.

Opposition deadlock cuts Lok Sabha’s work time to 37 hours

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The monsoon session of Parliament was largely marred by uproar and disruptions. At the very outset, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar’s resignation gave the Opposition an opportunity to raise questions. The Opposition had already been pressing for a discussion with the government on the SIR issue

and demanding a thorough probe into Bihar’s voter list.

The government maintained that the matter was sub judice before the Supreme Court and therefore could not be discussed in Parliament. It further argued that a debate on a constitutional institution like the Election Commission was not permissible. Despite this, the Opposition

■ P3

GoM backs scrapping of 12% and 28% GST slabs

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Thursday said that the Group of Ministers (GoM) has extended its support to the Centre’s proposal to eliminate the 12 per cent and 28 per cent tax slabs under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime.

“We have supported the two proposals of the Government of India to scrap GST slabs of 12 per cent and 28 per cent,” Choudhary said after attending the GoM meeting with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

He added that while all states took part in the discussions and offered suggestions, some had raised concerns. “Everyone made suggestions on the proposals made by the Centre. A few states had observations. This has now been referred to the GST Council, which will take the final decision,” he noted.

West Bengal Health Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said her state sought

■ P3

Drone sighting sparks massive search near Jammu’s Gajansoo border

AJAY JANDYAL
JAMMU

Security forces launched a massive search operation in the Gajansoo-Marh belt along the Indo-Pakistan International Border in Jammu after a suspected hostile drone was spotted deep inside Indian territory on Wednesday.

According to officials, the drone movement was noticed in the evening hours, triggering an immediate alert in the border belt. Jammu and Kashmir Police, along with Border Se-



Massive search operation launched after suspected drone spotted near Jammu’s Gajansoo border area.

curity Force (BSF) personnel, swiftly cordoned off the fields and adjoining residential areas in an attempt to

track the flying object.

The area remained tense as search teams combed through agricultural lands

‘BIRD OF THREAT’

BSF personnel in RS Pura intercepted a pigeon carrying a note warning of an “IED blast Jammu Station,” triggering high alert on Wednesday. Security was intensified at key installations, with strict checks at Jammu Railway Station. Police are probing possible cross-border involvement.

sible weapons or narcotics drop. “Soon after receiving inputs of drone activity

■ P3

Golcha succeeds SBK Singh as Delhi Police Commissioner

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Central government on Thursday appointed senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Satish Golcha as the new Commissioner of Police, Delhi, a day after Chief Minister Rekha Gupta was assaulted during a public meeting at her residence.

Golcha, a 1992-batch officer of the AGMUT cadre, was serving as Director General (Prisons) before his appointment. He replaced SBK Singh, who had been holding additional charge



Satish Golcha appointed as Delhi Police Commissioner. ANI

of the Delhi Police Commissioner since 1 August following the retirement of Sanjay Arora. Singh, a 1988-batch officer, continues as Director General of

Home Guards.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in its order: Golcha has served in several key positions in the Delhi Police, including Deputy Commissioner, Joint Commissioner and Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order and Intelligence). Notably, he was Special CP (Law and Order) during the 2020 North-East Delhi riots. He also held charge as DGP of Arunachal Pradesh between February 2022 and June 2023.

The appointment comes

■ P3

RAJYA SABHA CLEARS ONLINE GAMING BILL AMID OPPN UPROAR

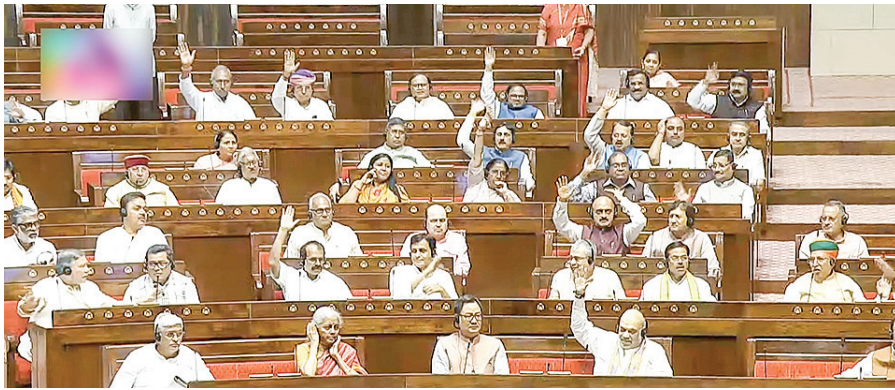
TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha on Thursday passed The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill amid protests and sloganeering by the Opposition.

Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw had moved the Bill, earlier cleared by the Lok Sabha, for consideration and passage in the Upper House.

Explaining the provisions, Vaishnaw said the Bill recognises three categories of online gaming — e-sports, online social gaming, and online money gaming. Of these, two-thirds of the sector — e-sports and online social gaming — will be promoted and encouraged.

“Online gaming has emerged as an important sector in the digital world. In e-sports, teams learn coordination and strategic thinking, and our players have won



Proceedings of the Rajya Sabha are underway during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Thursday.

“This Bill, passed by both Houses of Parliament, highlights our commitment towards making India a hub for gaming. At the same time, it will save our society from the harmful effects of online money games.”

- PM Modi

several medals. The Bill will promote e-sports, create an authority for regulation, and grant legal recognition. Similarly, online social games such as solitaire, chess, and sudoku

will also be promoted and overseen by an authority,” the minister said.

On the third segment, Vaishnaw warned that online money gaming had become a

“public health risk”.

“This segment has led to addiction, especially among middle-class youth, draining family savings. It is estimated that 45 crore people have been affected and more than Rs 20,000 crore lost.

The WHO has declared it a gaming disorder. Online money gaming has triggered compulsive and violent behaviour, destroyed families, and is linked to money laundering and even terror activities,” he stated.

Rijiju, Kharge engage in war of words in Rajya Sabha

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge were engaged in a brief altercation on Thursday during the passage of ‘The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill’ in the Upper House.

Opposition MPs were protesting and raising slogans while Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw was presenting the Bill in the House.

Addressing the Chair, Rajya Sabha LoP Kharge said, “When everybody was inside (the well), you passed the Bill. I have one request, listen to everybody, dismiss our points, we won’t bother, but at least what we want to say in this, if you (Speaker) don’t give us chances, then this is wrong.”

Responding to this, Vice Chairman Harivansh said, “I will welcome if you want to say something on the Bill.”

Kharge said, “You said lis-



Kiren Rijiju



Mallikarjun Kharge

ten what is happening in the House.

Objecting to this, Union Minister Rijiju accused the Opposition of “not cooperating” with the House proceedings and hit out at Kharge, stating that raising questions on the Speaker is wrong. “Whatever questions Kharge ji raised on the Chair (Speaker) are wrong. The Chair always gives a chance to speak, but they don’t speak on the subject. Accusing the Chair like this is not good. Kharge ji, this

is wrong. I iterate and have a discussion on the subject. Since the commencement of the session, they have not cooperated, and at the end, you are alleging that you were not given time. This is wrong. I condemn this,” Rijiju said. Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha passed ‘The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill’ amid protests and sloganeering by the Opposition. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had moved the Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha, for consid-

eration and passing in the Rajya Sabha.

Highlighting the provisions of the Bill, the Union Minister stated that it comprises three segments, “E-sports, Online Social Gaming, and Online Money Gaming”, out of which 2/3rd the segment (E-sports and Online Social Gaming) will be promoted and encouraged. The Union Minister described the third segment, Online Money Gaming, as a “public health risk”.

Earlier in the day, the Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die, marking the final day of the Monsoon Session.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla concluded the proceedings and formally wrapped up the session.

In his valedictory address, the Speaker expressed concern over the lack of decorum and traditions in the House and criticised the Opposition for “planned disruptions” and “sloganeering”.

Reservation not applicable in lateral entry appointments: Govt

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Reservation is not applicable in appointments made through the lateral entry mode, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday.

The lateral entry is referred to as the appointment of specialists, including those from the private sector, in government departments.

“So far 63 appointments have been made at the level of Joint Secretary/Director/ Deputy Secretary on contract/ deputation basis into various government departments through lateral entry since 2018 in three cycles (2018, 2021 &

2023,” Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said in a written reply.

He said these appointments have been made for specific assignments, keeping in view their specialised knowledge and expertise in the domain area.

“Since, each of these appointments has been made against single post cadre, reservation is not applicable in view of the Hon’ble Supreme Court judgement in the case titled ‘PGIMER, Chandigarh Vs. Faculty Association and Ors’ and accordingly category wise data of the appointed officers has not been maintained,” the

minister said.

Presently, 43 officers are in position in various ministries/departments, Singh said. The minister was responding to queries seeking details of the recruitment of officers in the central government through lateral entry in the last five years and “whether reservation pattern has been followed in this recruitment,” among others. Following a political row over the lack of a reservation provision, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in August last year cancelled its advertisement to fill key posts in government departments through lateral entry.

Parliament panel raps govt over poor fund utilisation, reduced targets in disability schemes

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A parliamentary committee has pulled up the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD) for persistent underutilisation of funds and reduced physical targets across key schemes for persons with disabilities, warning that such lapses risk undermining their welfare.

The 13th report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment, tabled in Parliament on Thursday, reviewed government action on its earlier recommendations related to the 2025-26 Demands for Grants.

While the panel welcomed

some corrective steps, it said several replies from the government were “unsatisfactory” and required reiteration.

The committee expressed concern that fund utilisation remained inconsistent across flagship schemes such as the Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP), the Scheme for Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA), the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS) and scholarships.

In 2024-25, less than 40% of SIPDA’s revised allocation was spent, with significant sums returned due to procedural delays.

“This is a recurring pattern observed over the past three

years,” the panel noted, adding that structural issues like weak coordination with states and delayed approvals were not being adequately addressed.

On the ADIP scheme, which provides assistive devices, the committee flagged a steep drop in beneficiaries last year and criticised the reduction of physical targets for 2025-26. It asked the ministry to base future targets on “granular assessments of regional needs” rather than budgetary constraints alone.

The panel also raised alarms over rehabilitation services under DDRS, where targets were scaled back from 40,000 to 32,000 beneficiaries, and only 74 of 325 planned District Disabil-

ity Rehabilitation Centres remain functional. It urged strict enforcement of new rules to fast-track approvals and avoid duplication of services. The committee was equally dissatisfied with SIPDA’s performance, citing repeated mismatches between allocations, revised estimates and actual expenditure. It recommended instituting a real-time tracking system through the Central Project Monitoring Unit (CPMU) to monitor proposals and fund flow. On accessibility, the panel welcomed the inclusion of the Accessible India Campaign in SIPDA but warned that the absence of a dedicated financial framework for barrier-free infrastructure could slow

progress.

It asked the government to create a “long-term, outcome-oriented roadmap” with specific allocations.

The report also touched upon scholarships, where allocations and coverage dipped sharply in 2024-25 despite high demand in previous years.

It recommended stronger forecasting, AI-based verification tools and streamlined disbursements to avoid delays. While acknowledging improvements such as automated proposal forwarding, greater CSR involvement and expanded assistive technology partnerships with IITs and ISRO, the committee stressed that “procedural reforms alone will not suffice.”

Key cancer drugs not covered by current price controls: Parl panel

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary panel has flagged that a substantial segment of cancer drugs are still beyond the ambit of current price control mechanisms and recommended measures to include the widest possible range of cancer drugs by expanding the scope of the Drugs Prices Control Order.

In its 163rd report presented on Wednesday, the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha, headed by Narain Dass Gupta stressed that regular and comprehensive market assessments should be instituted to monitor prevailing drug prices and availability trends.

Though significant steps have been taken in recent years towards strengthening the regulatory frame-

work for governing the pricing of cancer drugs and promote affordability, a substantial segment of such drugs still remain beyond the ambit of current price control mechanisms, it said.

The Committee noted that with the notification of NLEM, 2022, the number of anti-cancer medicines under price control has increased from 40 (in 2011) to 63 (in 2022). However, a

significant number of oncology medications are not included under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013, and thus are not subject to any statutory price ceiling.

“This regulatory non-inclusion has led to excessive and often unaffordable pricing, thereby limiting access for a large section of the patient population,” it stated.



Trinamool Congress MPs Sagarika Ghose, and others stage a protest at Parliament premises, during Monsoon Session, in New Delhi. ANI

Nishikant Dubey defends Bills to remove PM, CMs, ministers facing criminal charge

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey on Thursday defended new bills allowing the removal of elected representatives who are arrested on serious criminal charges and held in custody without bail for more than 30 days.

Countering opposition criticism, Dubey said the opposition’s politics “runs on tuition and tweet” and questioned whether ministers should continue in office when jailed, citing examples of leaders in the past.

“Rahul Gandhi’s Congress and the entire Opposition’s politics run on tuition and tweets. If a PM, MP or minister is jailed, should they not resign? Amit Shah was the Home Minister of Gujarat. Did he not go to jail? Did he not resign before going to



jail? He did not take any constitutional position until he was acquitted by the court,” Dubey told reporters.

He pointed to examples of leaders resigning on moral grounds, including Uma Bharti stepping down as Karnataka CM after being summoned by a court, and L.K. Advani resigning as MP during the Hawala case until his acquittal. “A case was registered against Uma Bharti in Karnataka. She resigned from her CM chair, and then she went to the Karnataka Court.

She was not even jailed. But the party accepted her resignation because she was summoned. L.K. Advani faced a Hawala case. He resigned as the MP and did not contest any election until he was acquitted,” he said.

“But today, people like Arvind Kejriwal keep being the CM from jail. What is wrong if such a bill is being brought? Even the PM will be included. Following the imposition of the Emergency, an amendment was introduced that prohibited any action against

the PM for any crime. The PM should be punished if he commits a crime under the right to equality,” he added.

He also accused the Congress of misusing political and legal means against rivals, claiming that leaders like Madhavrao Scindia and Rajesh Pilot were jailed to sideline them. “You (Congress) did not even spare your own party. Madhavrao Scindia and Rajesh Pilot, who were potential opponents of the Gandhi family, were sent to jail.

.. Who sent Kanimozhi and Raja to jail? You remove potential people from your party. You send people to jail. The BJP has not done anything like this with any alliance partner who left us, be it the Akali Dal or any other party. Did we jail Uddhav Thackeray,” he said.



BJP MP Kangana Ranaut and Nishikant Dubey arrive to attend the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, in New Delhi. ANI



Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi arrives to attend the monsoon Session of the parliament, in New Delhi. ANI



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Congress MP Charanjit Singh Channi at Parliament premises during the monsoon session. ANI



Samajwadi Party (SP) MP Dharmendra Yadav and TMC MP Satapdi Roy arrive to attend the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, in New Delhi. ANI



Bansuri Swaraj, Praveen Khandelwal, Manoj Tiwari, Harsh Malhotra, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and others show victory signs at Parliament premises in New Delhi. ANI

THE DA ILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON 130TH CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL

77% respondents said that it is not right for any minister, chief minister, or prime minister to run the government while in jail.

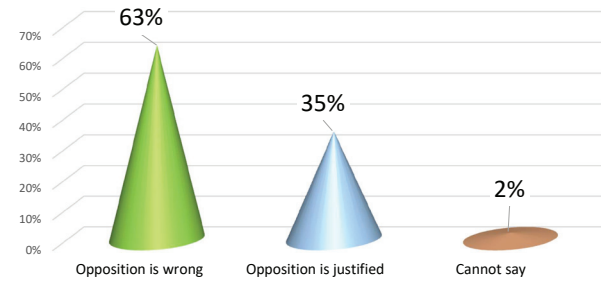
A recent India News survey of 403 respondents, conducted on 21 August 2025, highlighted strong public support for key government de-

cisions. A majority endorsed the constitutional amendment to bar jailed ministers, viewed it as a strike against corruption, and backed on-

line gaming regulation. Most respondents also expressed alignment with the NDA government's policies and direction.

Q1.▶

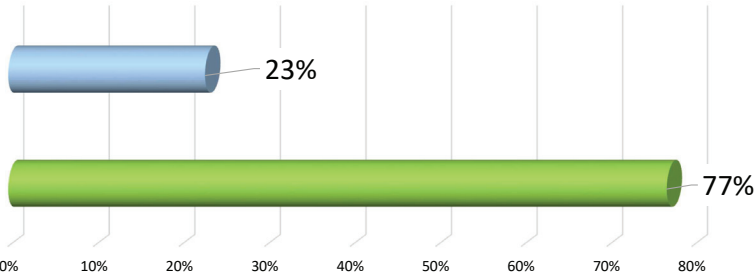
In Lok Sabha, an important bill was introduced under which any minister facing serious criminal charges and staying in jail for more than 30 days will be removed from their ministerial post. What is your opinion?



◀Q2.

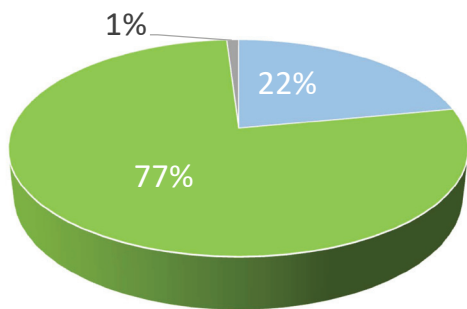
Do you see this bill as a major decision by the government against political corruption in the country?

■ Yes, absolutely
■ Not at all

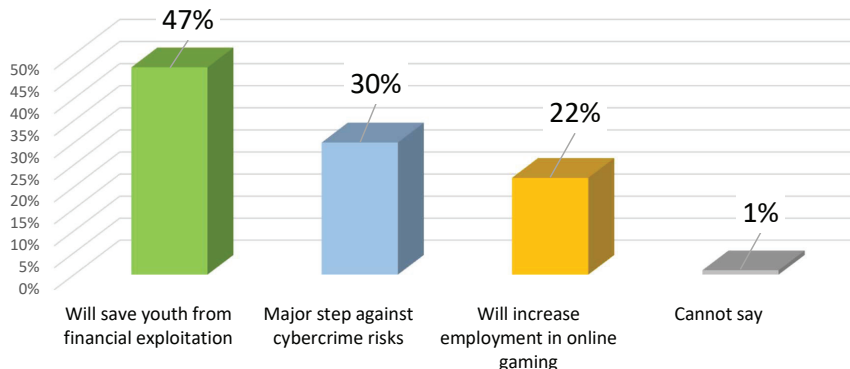


Q3.▶

Is it right for any minister, chief minister, or prime minister to run the government while in jail?



■ Yes, absolutely
■ Not at all
■ Cannot say



◀Q4.

The central government introduced the Online Gaming Regulation and Control Bill 2025 in Lok Sabha. What is your opinion?

THE DA ILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON SHRI KRISHNA MAKHANCHOR CAMPAIGN

85% of respondents call childhood nickname of Shri Krishna as 'Makhan Chor' an expression of love.

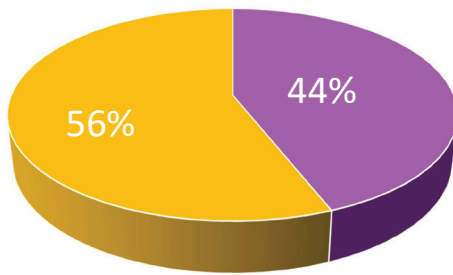
A recent India News survey on the Shri Krishna 'Makhan Chor' campaign shows divided opinions. While 56% oppose remov-

ing the childhood tag, 44% support it. Most respondents, 85%, view the nickname as an expres-

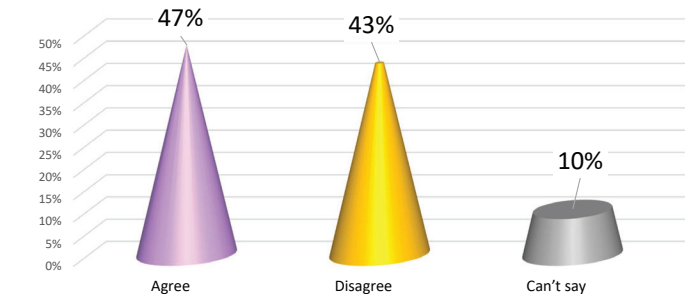
sion of love. Notably, 79% believe Krishna opposed Kansa's policies, though 55% feel there's no need to alter existing perceptions about him.

Q1.▶

The Madhya Pradesh government is planning a campaign to remove the tag 'Makhan Chor' associated with Lord Krishna. What is your opinion?



■ Support it
■ Oppose it



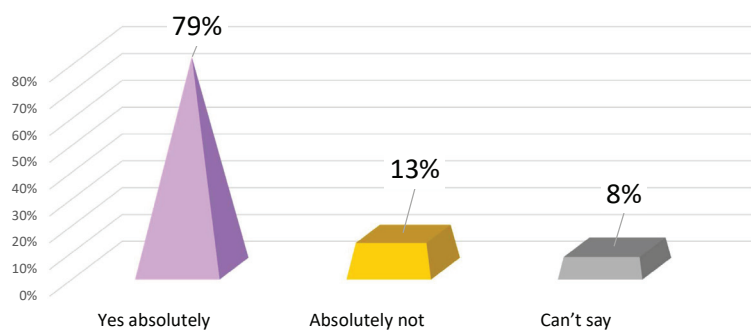
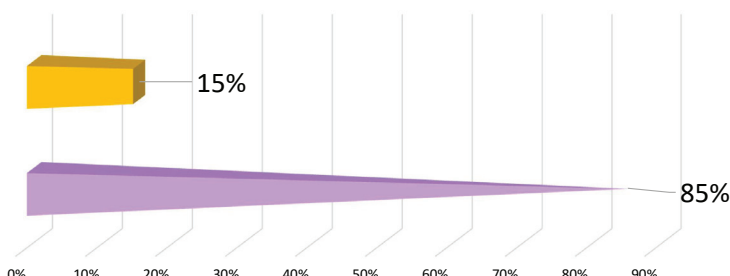
◀Q2.

The Madhya Pradesh CM's cultural advisor has suggested that instead of calling Krishna 'Makhan Chor', he should be portrayed as 'Milk Butter Distributor'. What is your opinion?

Q3.▶

What is your opinion about the childhood nickname of Shri Krishna as 'Makhan Chor'?

■ Call it an expression of love
■ Call it wrong



◀Q4.

Is it true that Krishna had opposed Kansa's policies and raised the Makhan revolt?

Jaishankar 'perplexed' by US logic

CONTINUED FROM P1

market-driven, even as US President Donald Trump imposed additional tariffs in July.

On regional issues, Jaishankar and Lavrov exchanged views on Ukraine, West Asia, the Middle East and Afghanistan. The External Affairs Minister reiterated India's consistent stance: "Our approach continues to emphasise dialogue and diplomacy as essential to resolving differences."

Defence and military ties also featured prominently in the talks. Jaishankar said cooperation remained robust, with Russia supporting India's 'Make in India' initiative, including joint production and technology transfer.

He also raised the issue of Indians reportedly serving in the Russian Army. "While many have been released, there are still some pending cases, with some missing persons. We hope that the Russian side will expedi-

tiously resolve this," he said.

During his three-day visit, Jaishankar laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow, paying tribute to those who sacrificed their lives during the Great Patriotic War. He also underscored that India-Russia relations have been among "the steadiest of the major relationships in the world after the Second World War," and continue to draw strength from both historical trust and forward-looking cooperation.

Xu Feihong: India, China 'partners, not rivals'

CONTINUED FROM P1

important neighbours and major developing nations, each at a critical stage of national rejuvenation."

Wang Yi also delivered a message and invitation from President Xi Jinping for the

SCO Summit in Tianjin on 31 August-1 September. Modi accepted the invitation, calling the summit an opportunity to strengthen constructive relations between the two nations.

Xu later detailed the consensus reached during the

24th round of talks, noting that both sides agreed to maintain peace and tranquility along the border while pursuing a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary dispute in line with the 2005 Agreement on Politi-

cal Parameters and Guiding Principles. An Expert Group under the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) will explore "early harvest" boundary delimitation, while a Working Group will focus on advancing effective

border management. Xu highlighted expanding people-to-people links, pointing to the resumption of the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra, India restarting tourist visas for Chinese nationals, and discussions on restoring direct flights.

India-France leaders reaffirm...

CONTINUED FROM P1

said he had a "very good conversation" with Macron, adding, "Exchanged views on efforts for peaceful resolution of conflicts in Ukraine and in West Asia. Reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthen the India-France strategic partnership."

Responding on X, Macron confirmed the discussion, stating, "We coordinated our positions on the war in Ukraine in order to

move towards a just and lasting peace, with strong guarantees for Ukraine and Europe's security. On trade issues, we agreed to strengthen our economic exchanges and our strategic partnership in all areas; this is the key to our sovereignty and independence."

Macron also highlighted the upcoming AI Impact Summit in New Delhi in 2026, following up on the Paris AI Action Summit earlier this year, and underlined

close coordination between the two countries ahead of France's G7 presidency and India's BRICS presidency in 2026.

The leaders also touched upon their broader cooperation across defence, technology and multilateral forums. Both countries reiterated support for United Nations Security Council reforms and stressed enhanced collaboration on regulating the veto in cases of mass atrocities.

CONTINUED FROM P1

clarity on revenue implications. "All states are with the common people, but I raised in the meeting that if states lose revenue, that ultimately affects the people. We want to know how we will be compensated. The GoM will now send its report to the GST Council with our concerns," she said, adding that no assessment of revenue loss had yet been shared.

Uttar Pradesh Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna also flagged the issue. "The Centre's presentation did not mention how much loss would be incurred, so we cannot say what the figure will be. But our point is that the common people should benefit from this," he remarked.

In his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced a restructuring aimed at rationalising the GST framework, which currently has multiple slabs—5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent. The move to scrap the 12 per cent and 28 per cent brackets is being seen as part of a broader effort to simplify the indirect tax system and minimise classification disputes.

The final decision now rests with the GST Council, which will review the GoM's recommendations and feedback from the states before implementing any changes. On Wednesday, Finance Minister Sitharaman addressed the GoM on Compensation Cess, Health and Life Insurance (for individuals), and Rate Rationalisation at Vigyan Bhawan.

CONTINUED FROM P1

remained adamant.

Parliament did discuss *Operation Sindoor* for two days, but even those proceedings witnessed heated exchanges between the Treasury and Opposition benches. While the SIR issue has momentarily united the Opposition, the real test will come during the Bihar elections, where the Aam Aadmi Party—despite aligning with others in Parliament—will contest separately.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla expressed disappointment with the Opposition's conduct. Despite his efforts and agreements reached in the Business Advisory Committee, the Opposition continued to create ruckus inside the House.

On the last day of the session, Birla told members that consensus and

MONSOON SESSION AT A GLANCE

- 15 Bills Passed despite protests over Bihar's voter rolls (SIR).
- 21 sittings in 32 days, adjourned a day early.
- Work done: 37 hrs out of 120 scheduled.
- Productivity: Lok Sabha 31%, Rajya Sabha 33%.
- Key Bills: Income Tax (No. 2) Bill, Online Gaming Bill, National Sports Governance Bill, Shipping Reforms.
- Major Debate: Operation Sindoor (35 hrs combined).
- Unfinished: Space mission discussion on India's first astronaut aboard ISS.

disagreement are part of democracy, but collective efforts must ensure that the House functions with dignity and decorum. "We must consider what message we are sending to the citizens through the highest democratic institution of the country," he said, adding that all parties and members should introspect on this issue.

Birla informed the House that 14 government bills

were introduced during the 18th Lok Sabha's monsoon session, of which 12 were passed. A total of 419 starred questions were listed, but only 55 could be answered orally due to repeated disruptions. Although 120 hours of debate had initially been scheduled with the agreement of the Business Advisory Committee, proceedings lasted barely 37 hours because of the deadlock.

ECI appoints observers for VP poll

CONTINUED FROM P1

The Vice-Presidential post fell vacant after Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned on the first day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament on July 21, citing health reasons.

The officers appointed by the ECI as Observers are Sushil Kumar Lohani, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and D. Anandan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance. Additionally, Nitin Kumar Shivdas Khade, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, has been placed on the reserve list.

Earlier in the day, Opposition candidate and former Supreme Court judge Justice

(Retd.) B. Sudershan Reddy filed his nomination papers, describing the moment as an honour. He pledged to discharge the responsibilities of the office with impartiality, dignity, and steadfast commitment if elected.

Reddy filed his nomination in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi.

In a statement released after filing his nomination, Justice (Retd.) Reddy said, "Today, I had the honour of filing my nomination papers for the office of the Vice President of India as a joint

candidate of the Opposition parties. I did so with a deep sense of humility, responsibility, and unwavering commitment to the values enshrined in our Constitution."

Reflecting on his career and principles, he added:

"My life in public service—as a judge of the Supreme Court of India, as a student of law, and as a citizen rooted in the democratic traditions of this Republic—has taught me that the true strength of India lies in the dignity of every individual, the protection of constitutional morality, and the unity in our diversity. This election is not merely about one individual."

Drone sighting sparks massive search in Jammu

CONTINUED FROM P1

ity, teams of BSF and police rushed to the spot. A large-scale search operation is still underway," an official confirmed.

The incident has revived concerns over renewed drone activity across the border. In the past, security forces have foiled multiple drone-dropping attempts

in the Jammu sector, recovering consignments of weapons, explosives, and narcotics believed to have been sent from across the border.

Officials said security has been further tightened along the sensitive border belt to ensure that any infiltration or smuggling attempt is swiftly neutralised.

Satish Golcha named Delhi Police Chief

CONTINUED FROM P1

in the backdrop of a major security breach on Wednesday, when Chief Minister Rekha Gupta was slapped and manhandled by a man identified as Rajesh Khimji during a at her Shalimar Bagh residence. CCTV footage showed that the accused had conducted a recce of the premises before the incident.

Khimji, a rickshaw driver from Rajkot, Gujarat, has been charged under at-

tempt to murder provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and remanded in police custody for five days. His mother claimed he acted out of anger over a Supreme Court order to move stray dogs into shelters.

Following the incident, the Centre upgraded Gupta's security to Z-category cover by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Personnel took charge of her protection on Thursday morning, with additional deployment at her residence

and office.

The Chief Minister, who sustained injuries to her hand, shoulder and head, said the attack would not deter her. "Such incidents can never break my spirit and resolve to serve the public. I will be among you with more energy and dedication than ever before," she posted on X.

Gupta, who assumed office on 20 February this year, has been holding regular sessions as part of her public outreach initiative.

OPPN'S VP PICK B SUDARSHAN REDDY FILES PAPERS, SAYS POLL NOT ABOUT AN INDIVIDUAL

B Sudarshan Reddy said contest about reaffirming idea of India

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The opposition's vice-presidential candidate B Sudarshan Reddy Thursday filed his nomination for the elections to the second-highest office, and asserted the contest is not just about an individual, but reaffirming the idea of India where Parliament functions with integrity, dissent is respected, and institutions serve people with independence. The former Supreme Court judge filed his nomination in the presence of top opposition leaders, including Congress' Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, Samajwadi Party leader Ramgopal Yadav, DMK's Tiruchi Siva, TMC's Satabdi Roy,



INDIA alliance Vice-Presidential candidate, former Supreme Court Judge B. Sudarshan Reddy, files his nomination for the VP election in the presence of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, SP MP Ram Gopal Yadav, NCP-SCP chief Sharad Pawar and other INDIA bloc leaders, in New Delhi.

Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Sanjay Raut, CPI(M)'s John Brittas among others. In a statement after filing his nomination, Reddy vowed that if elected, he would discharge the role of vice president with im-

partiality, dignity, and a steadfast commitment to dialogue and decorum. "Today, I had the honour of filing my nomination papers for the office of the vice president of India as a joint candidate of the op-

position parties. I did so with a deep sense of humility, responsibility, and unwavering commitment to the values enshrined in our Constitution," he said in a statement. "This election is not

merely about one individual. It is about reaffirming the idea of India as envisaged by our founders -- an India where Parliament functions with integrity, where dissent is respected, and where institutions serve the people with independence and fairness," Reddy said.

The vice president, as the chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, carries the responsibility of safeguarding the highest traditions of parliamentary democracy, he noted.

"If elected, I pledge to discharge that role with impartiality, dignity, and a steadfast commitment to dialogue and decorum."

Reddy submitted four sets of nomination papers before the Rajya Sabha secretary general, who is also the returning officer for the vice-presidential election.

Public anger against TMC increasing: PM ahead of visit



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday criticised the Trinamool Congress (TMC) ahead of his visit to West Bengal, stating that public anger against the ruling party is growing and the people of the state are increasingly looking towards the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with hope.

In a post on social media platform X, the Prime Minister wrote, "I am eager to be among @BJP4Bengal Karyakartas at a rally in Kolkata. With each passing day, public anger against the TMC is increasing. West Bengal is

TMC attacks PM Modi ahead of Bengal visit

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

On the eve of his visit to West Bengal to inaugurate development projects, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to social media site X to express his happiness about his visit, forcing the Trinamool Congress to up their criticism. He also attacked the Trinamool Congress, forcing the latter to hit back. "It is always a delight to be among the people of

Kolkata, a city whose development we are greatly committed to.

Tomorrow's programmes in the city are mainly focussed on connectivity. The metro services, which will be flagged off, include Noapara-Jai Hind Bimanbandar, Sealdah-Esplanade and Belegghata-Hemanta Mukhopadhyay routes. Connectivity to and from the airport as well as the IT hub areas will be enhanced.

eagerly looking towards the BJP with hope because of our development agenda."

Highlighting the focus of his visit, PM Modi said the programmes in Kolkata would primarily centre around enhancing connectivity.

"It is always a delight to be among the people of Kolkata,

a city whose development we are greatly committed to. Tomorrow's programmes in the city are mainly focused on connectivity. The metro services, which will be flagged off, include Noapara-Jai Hind Bimanbandar, Sealdah-Esplanade and Belegghata-Hemanta Mukhopadhyay routes.

No first-time Aadhaar card to be issued for people above 18 yrs in Assam: Himanta

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

The Assam Cabinet on Thursday announced that no new Aadhaar cards will be issued to individuals above the age of 18, except those belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and tea garden communities, for the next one year, a move aimed at curbing issuance to illegal foreigners.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, addressing a press conference, said the restriction has been enforced to prevent illegal immigrants from obtaining Aadhaar cards and falsely



claiming Indian citizenship. "Assam cabinet has today decided that Aadhaar card will not be issued for persons above 18 years of age, except ST, SC and Tea garden workers, for another one year. If any person from

other caste who is yet to get an Aadhaar card, they can apply for it within the month of September. We will allow them to apply within the month of September," Sarma said.

He further added that in rare and exceptional cases, the District Commissioner (DC) will be authorised to issue Aadhaar cards after verifying relevant reports, including from the Special Branch and Foreigners Tribunal.

"We have continuously pushed back Bangladeshi nationals along the border. We want to ensure that no one (illegal foreigner) can obtain an Aadhaar card

Assam flags B'desh's influence in Dhubri

NIBIR DEKA
NEW DELHI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday expressed serious concern over pro-Bangladesh sentiments allegedly being provoked in border areas of Dhubri district. Recounting his past visit to the district, Sarma said he had witnessed wall writings showing allegiance to Bangladesh. "Our

chicken neck region is extremely vulnerable as most people who settled there originally came from Bangladesh. Now, some elements in Bangladesh are provoking residents to create pro-Bangladesh sentiments," he stated. The Chief Minister cautioned that such attempts posed a threat to India's sensitive Siliguri corridor, popularly known as the "chicken neck."

CJI warns against turning judicial activism into 'judicial terrorism'

SAMBHAV SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Judicial activism, though permissible, must not cross into 'judicial terrorism or adventurism,' the Chief Justice of India observed during Day 3 of Presidential Reference hearing on whether courts can prescribe timelines for the President and Governors to act on Bills.

CJI reiterated that the Court has always deprecated judicial overreach, while stressing the need for a balance between constitutional functionaries.

The Supreme Court 5-judge Constitution Bench comprising CJI BR Gavai, Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P.S. Narasimha and A.S. Chandurkar continued hearing the Presidential Reference matter.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Centre, opposed judicially fixed deadlines, arguing that such intervention could



disturb the constitutional balance.

Mehta said that the issues of prolonged inaction must be resolved politically, not through judicial mandates. Cautioning against judicial overreach, he said: 'Some solutions must come from within the political system.'

The Bench expressed concern over Governors withholding Bills indefinitely.

CJI Gavai remarked, 'If there is a wrong, there has to be a solution. Should the Court remain powerless if

Bills are stalled for years?'

Justice PS Narasimha observed that while rigid timelines may not be feasible, a structured process must be put in place to prevent legislative paralysis.

Justice Surya Kant raised the example of Tamil Nadu, where several Bills were kept pending. The Bench questioned the implications of Governors withholding Bills even when passed with a two-thirds majority

The bench cautioned that such inaction could render legislatures 'defunct.'

TDP MLA accused of assaulting, kidnapping forest officials

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA
HYDERABAD

In a shocking incident at the temple town of Srisailem, where liquor consumption is strictly prohibited, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MLA Budda Rajasekhara Reddy allegedly created a drunken outrage, assaulting and kidnapping forest officials on duty. The late-night incident has triggered widespread condemnation from employees' unions, officials, and devotees, with CCTV footage of the assault going viral on social media.

According to forest department sources, the Dornala-Srisailem ghat road is closed to traffic between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. daily to protect wildlife in the tiger reserve. On Tuesday night, Deputy Range Officer D. Ramanayak, beat officers J. Mohankumar and T.K. Guruvayya, and driver Shaik Kareem were patrolling near

Chinnarutla beat when they noticed two vehicles parked suspiciously. The vehicles belonged to MLA Rajasekhara Reddy and his followers.

When the officials approached and saluted the legislator, he allegedly responded with vulgar abuse, accusing them of corruption. Despite officers explaining that night traffic is prohibited under tiger zone rules, the MLA reportedly drunk manhandled them and insisted on passage. His followers allegedly snatched their identity cards, wallets, walkie-talkies, and mobile phones.

Two officers were forced into the MLA's vehicle while two others were bundled into their own department jeep, which the MLA himself drove. The staff were confined in a guesthouse at Srisailem, where Jana Sena leader Ashok Kumar and another aide reportedly joined in the assault.

YSRCP slams Govt for betraying AP employees, pensioners

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA
HYDERABAD

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has accused the coalition government of betraying the trust of nearly 13 lakh employees and pensioners in Andhra Pradesh, after the long-awaited Joint Staff Council (JSC) meeting failed to deliver any concrete outcomes.

YSRCP Employees and Pensioners Wing President, Nalamara Chandrasekhara Reddy, said the meeting, convened by the Chief Secretary after a 14-month gap, turned out to be a mere formality, sparking frustration and resentment across the state's workforce.

Highlighting key concerns, Reddy pointed out that the 12th Pay Revision Commission (PRC) has been pending for two years without the appointment of a new commissioner since the

last resignation. He also slammed the government for ignoring demands on pending Dearness Allowance (DA) arrears—four installments overdue—and the promised Interim Relief (IR).

"Why hold a JSC just for show?" he questioned, demanding clarity on the unresolved 11th PRC and DA arrears, which continue to remain absent in employees' pay slips despite repeated appeals from unions including the Amaravati JAC.

Reddy urged the government to immediately constitute a new PRC with at least 30% benefits, release DA arrears, and revive the Employees Health Scheme, which has been crippled by unpaid medical bills. He further sought an increase in medical reimbursements from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, abolition of the Contributory Pension Scheme in favor of the Old Pension Scheme,

regularization of 7,000 contract workers, allotment of house sites, and enhancement of pension benefits—10% for those aged 70+ and 15% for 75+.

The YSRCP leader also pressed for an increase in the retirement age to 62 years for public sector employees, citing the growing financial burden and job insecurity among workers.

Condemning the Chief Secretary's "evasive response" in the meeting, Reddy said the government's indifference risks alienating employees and pensioners, who are already under severe economic stress. He warned that unless urgent corrective measures are taken, discontent could snowball into widespread unrest.

"The government must act swiftly to restore confidence and deliver justice to its employees and pensioners," he added.

Nitrogen leak at pharma firm near Mumbai kills 4, leaves 2 critical

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

At least four workers were killed and two others seriously affected after inhalation of nitrogen gas that leaked at a pharmaceutical company in Tarapur MIDC of Maharashtra's Palghar district, officials said on

Thursday.

The incident occurred in the afternoon at Medley Pharma located in the industrial area of Boisar, around 130 km from here, they said.

Chief of Palghar district disaster management cell, Vivekanand Kadam, said that between 2.30 pm and

3 pm, nitrogen gas in one of the units of the company leaked, affecting the staff working there.

"Six workers were rushed to the hospital, where four of them died around 6.15 pm," he said.

Two others were admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) at a local hospi-

tal, where they are currently undergoing treatment, he said.

All five employees were removed from the plant and were rushed to the hospital, where four were declared dead on arrival, whereas one more worker is serious and undergoing treatment, he said.

Fadnavis seeks Pawar, Uddhav's support for NDA VP nominee

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday sought the support of NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray for NDA candidate C P Radhakrishnan in the next month's vice-presi-



dential elections.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said apart from CM Fadnavis, Defence Min-

ister Rajnath Singh also called Thackeray, urging him to extend support to the NDA pick.

The NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) are part of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra along with the Congress. The three parties are constituents of the opposition INDIA bloc at the national

level.

The ruling NDA has fielded Maharashtra Governor Radhakrishnan as its vice-presidential candidate, while former Supreme Court judge B Sudarshan Reddy is the opposition alliance's pick for the post. The election to the country's second highest constitutional office is scheduled on September 9.

DELHI CM ATTACK CASE: POLICE INVESTIGATING ACCUSED FROM EVERY ANGLE

Delhi Police and Central agencies widen probe into CM Rekha Gupta’s attack.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police are probing the attack on Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, which occurred on Wednesday, from every angle and are coordinating with Rajkot Police, sources said. Central agencies, including the Intelligence Bureau (IB), are also involved in the investigation.

According to sources, the police are investigating the accused Rajesh Khimji’s social media accounts, and they will take the accused to every place he visited in Delhi. The police officials are also getting the accused’s phone examined by the forensic team. So far, whatever the accused has said in the interrogation is being verified.

The accused told police that he wanted to convey a message to the Chief Minister regarding the lives of three lakh stray dogs in Delhi.

Recently, the Supreme Court, in its August 11 order, directed authorities in Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurugram, and Faridabad to ensure localities are free of stray dogs. The court also ruled that captured animals should not be released back onto the streets.

KEY UPDATES ON DELHI CM ATTACK CASE

- Delhi Police, IB and Rajkot Police jointly probe accused Rajesh Khimji
- Accused cited stray dog issue as motive behind assault on CM Gupta
- Supreme Court reserved order on pleas challenging stray dog removal directive
- CM Rekha Gupta given CRPF Z-category security after attack



Rajesh Khimji, accused in CM Rekha Gupta attack case.

However, on Thursday, the Supreme Court reserved its order on pleas seeking a stay on the August 11 order 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 said it will pass an interim order on the matter.

Meanwhile, the Central government has granted Z-category security cover by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to CM Rekha Gupta following the attack.

Earlier today, the accused Rajesh Khimji was remanded to 5 days’ custody. He was produced before the duty magistrate at his residence. Before being produced before the magistrate, Rajesh was taken to Aruna Asif Ali hospital for a medical checkup. Thereafter, he was

referred to the LNJP Hospital by the Aruna Asif Ali Hospital. Duty magistrate Arvind Tomar granted a five-day custody remand after hearing the submissions of the Delhi police. He is to be produced before the court after the expiry of five days of police custody.

Rajesh Khimji, a resident of Rajkot, Gujarat, was arrested by Delhi Police on Wednesday after allegedly attacking CM Rekha Gupta during a public hearing at her official residence in Civil Lines. A case has been registered against him at the Civil Lines Police Station.

Police took precautions as a group of lawyers belonging to a political party had gathered in the court premises before the production of Rajesh Khimji. A heavy police force was deployed to ensure his safety and security.

On Wednesday, CM Gupta

said she was shocked after the attack but is now feeling better. She described the attack as a cowardly attempt to undermine her work for the welfare of Delhi’s people.

Sharing a post in Hindi on X, the Delhi CM wrote, “The attack on me during this morning’s public hearing was not just an attack on me, but a cowardly attempt on our resolve to serve Delhi and work for the welfare of the people. Naturally, I was in shock after this attack, but now I am feeling better. I request all my well-wishers not to trouble themselves by coming to meet me.”

The Delhi Chief Minister also expressed heartfelt gratitude to everyone for their good wishes and blessings, with her post adding, “I express my heartfelt gratitude for your immense love, blessings, and good wishes.”

Delhi BJP MPs visit CM Rekha after attack

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Harsh Malhotra and other Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs met Delhi CM Rekha Gupta on Thursday and inquired of her well-being.

The CM on Tuesday was attacked by Rajesh Khimji during ‘Jan Sunvai’ yesterday. The accused has been sent to a five-day police remand.

After meeting Delhi CM,

while speaking to ANI, emphasised the resilience and courage demonstrated by the Chief Minister in the aftermath of the attack.

She said, “All the 7 MPs of Delhi went to Delhi CM Rekha Gupta’s residence to inquire about her well-being. I assure the people of Delhi that there is nothing to worry about. Rekha Gupta is brave, and her morale is still high. She will keep meeting everyone the way she always



Union Minister Harsh Malhotra and other Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs meeting Delhi CM Rekha Gupta on Thursday.

Union Minister Harsh Malhotra reassured the public that she is recovering well and will soon resume her official duties.

He said, “All of us came to inquire about Delhi CM Rekha Gupta’s well-being. She is completely healthy now. She will get back to her schedule soon. Such incidents take place, but they will not affect her routine of meeting people.”

BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj,

has... The accused will not be spared.”

Manoj Tiwari, another BJP MP, echoed similar sentiments, highlighting that the attack had not impacted the Chief Minister’s morale or commitment to public service.

Tiwari said, “The CM’s morale is not at all affected. The Jan Sunvai will continue as per the schedule. She will meet people again next Wednesday.

Court remands accused Khimji in 5 days’ police custody

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta’s attack case accused Rajesh Khimji was remanded to 5 days’ custody. He was produced before the duty magistrate at his residence.

Before being produced before the magistrate, Rajesh was taken to Aruna Asif

Ali hospital for a medical checkup. Thereafter, he was referred to the LNJP Hospital by the Aruna Asif Ali Hospital. Duty magistrate Arvind Tomar granted a five-day custody remand after hearing the submissions of the Delhi police. He is to be produced before the court after the expiry of five days of police custody.

Will continue fighting despite unexpected blows: CM Rekha

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday reaffirmed her commitment to public service following an attack on her earlier this week, stating that she would continue to fight for the interests of Delhi despite facing “unexpected blows” and would never “abandon” the national capital. In a post on social media platform X, Gupta said women possess “double the strength” to overcome adversity and must pass numerous tests to prove themselves. She added that public hearings would now be conducted not only at her residence but in every assembly constituency across Delhi.



CM Rekha Gupta.

“When I was in college, Papa gave me a car to drive. One day, a big accident happened. I got scared and became afraid to even touch the car again. Then Papa said that accidents happen in life, but you can’t stop out of fear. You can’t stop walking on the path,” the post read. “Today, his same lesson comes to mind again. Yesterday, another accident happened, but I can never stop fighting for the interests of Delhiites.

Six Delhi schools receive bomb threats, panic spreads amid ongoing security alerts

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Six schools across Delhi received fresh bomb threats earlier today, prompting swift action from the Delhi Police and Fire Department.

The schools include Andhra Education Society Senior Secondary School (Prasad Nagar), BGS International Public School (Dwarka Sector 5), Rao Man Singh Senior Secondary School (Chhawla), Maxfort School (Dwarka Sector 1), and Indraprastha International School (Dwarka Sector 10).

Delhi Police and the Fire Department arrived at the affected sites, including BGS International Public School, where visuals show emergency personnel actively managing the situation.

Poonam Gupta, Principal of BGS International Public School, confirmed receiving the bomb threat email early morning, which also includ-



According to Delhi police, a group identifying itself as ‘Terrorisers 111’ sent an email to various schools on Thursday.

ed a “threat of bloodshed.”

She said, “This morning, I received a mail on the school Email ID, where there was again a bomb threat and threat of bloodshed. As a precautionary measure, I immediately called the police, and everyone was here by 6:30 AM, including the bomb squad. I am not sending any child inside the building as a precautionary measure.”

This latest series of threats comes after over 50 schools have received another bomb threat mail in the national capital region in the early

hours of Wednesday, police officials have informed.

According to Delhi police, a group identifying itself as “Terrorisers 111” sent an email to various schools, including DAV Public School, Faith Academy, Doon Public School, Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, and others, demanding USD 25,000. The same group had allegedly demanded USD 5,000 in cryptocurrency after sending various bomb threats on August 18.

The group sent a bulk email to the principals and administration staff of vari-

ous schools, claiming that they have “breached their IT systems” and will detonate bombs within 48 hours across school premises.

“We are the Terrorisers 111 group. We have planted explosives inside your building, and others across the city. Devices include high-yield C4 bombs and timed charges placed in classrooms, auditoriums, staff rooms, and school buses, designed to cause maximum casualties. We have breached your IT systems, extracted student and staff data, and compromised all security cameras. We are monitoring your actions in real time. Transfer 2000 USD to Ethereum address within 48 hours, or we will detonate the bombs,” the email read.

“Evacuate all schools and suspend operations immediately to avoid loss of life. Any attempt to contact authorities will trigger immediate detonation and public release of your sensitive data.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Yamuna River in the national capital is flowing close to the danger level.

Visual from Loha Pul on Thursday showed the water close to the 205 m mark.

The opening of all 18 gates of Hathinikund Barrage was opened after 1.78 lakh cusec of water came into the river due to heavy rainfall, resulting in a rise in the water level of the river.

Continuous change in water level over the past few weeks has kept the administration on its toes.

Earlier, on Wednesday, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta visited the residential area at Yamuna Bazaar, where water from the overflowing Yamuna River had entered and assured that there is no flood-like situation in Delhi and the water level will drop within one to two days.

After assessing the affect-



The Yamuna River in the national capital is flowing close to the danger level

ed area, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said, “The situation is under control. The water level was close to 206 m in the morning, but it has not crossed this mark yet. The water should recede in a day or two. We are providing food and water, as well as a medical facility here. There is no flood situation in Delhi.”

She said that the administration has made arrangements in school for those who want to go to a safer

location, providing them with a place to stay and food, as well as all the necessary help in the affected area.

The Yamuna River was flowing close to the danger mark, and it was due to this that the water entered the residential areas near the riverbank. CM Gupta visited the affected area to analyse the situation and talk to the people living in the area.

The Yamuna River is

flowing close to the danger mark after all 18 gates of Hathinikund Barrage in Haryana’s Yamunanagar were opened on Sunday due to rising water level after continuous rain.

The visuals of the river at Delhi’s ITO showed that the water has neared the danger mark. This raised concern among the authorities.

Earlier, all the 18 gates of Hathinikund Barrage were opened after 1.78 lakh cusec of water came into the river due to heavy rainfall, resulting in a rise in the water level.

Vijay Garg, Executive Engineer of the Irrigation Department, said, “1.78 lakh cusec of water has come into the river after the recent rainfall. This is the highest water level of this season.”

The water level in rivers is increasing due to continuous rainfall, and flood-like situations are being witnessed in several regions.

MCD orders NGOs to prioritise ferocious stray dogs in drives

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has directed all NGOs working with it for sterilisation and immunisation of canines to first pick up “ferocious” dogs from vulnerable places and maintain detailed records, including CCTV footage of the captured animals.

The civic body has also instructed its zonal veterinary officers to work alongside the NGOs and ensure that the stray dogs are handed over to the nearest Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres.

As part of the process, the NGOs and veterinary officers must ensure that every stray dog picked up is recorded through the 311 mobile application,

with daily reports submitted from their respective areas to the officials concerned.

The directive follows the Supreme Court’s order of August 11, which instructed authorities in Delhi-NCR to begin picking up stray dogs from all localities “at the earliest” and relocating them to designated dog shelters. The two-judge bench had also ordered immediate creation of shelters and asked authorities to report back on progress within eight weeks.

In its circular, the MCD emphasised that NGOs must prioritise removing “ferocious or aggressive” stray dogs known for biting incidents, particularly from sensitive areas such as government offices, hospitals, schools, parks



An animal control official catching a dog.

and residential colonies.

“The stray dogs will be kept at ABC centres run by NGOs, which must maintain CCTV footage of sheltered dogs and preserve these records,” the circular said.

Meanwhile, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) have started iden-

tifying stray dogs in their neighbourhoods and reporting them to the civic authorities.

Saurabh Gandhi, general secretary of the United Residents of Delhi (URD), said people of the city were thankful to the top court for its intervention. “We just want a solution

to the rising number of incidents involving stray dogs.

The court order will not only provide relief to the people but also ensure these animals are safely kept and properly fed at the shelters,” he said.

The URD has asked housing societies to provide numbers, photos and other details of stray dogs in their areas, along with records of dog attacks, to the authorities.

RWAs have also been instructed to report individuals obstructing the relocation of stray dogs by MCD teams and NGOs, as well as dog-bite cases, ensuring that proper follow-up action is taken. Gandhi added that RWAs plan to place all collected details and official responses before the Supreme Court.

SFI opposes DU’s Rs 1 lakh bond rule

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Students’ Federation of India (SFI) on Thursday strongly opposed Delhi University’s decision mandating a Rs 1 lakh bond from candidates contesting the students’ union elections, calling the move “arbitrary and exclusionary” and announcing its plan to approach the Delhi High Court against the provision.

The university, through a notification issued on August 8, directed that contestants of the Delhi University Students’ Union (DUSU) polls must submit the bond as a preventive measure to curb the defacement of public property during election campaigning. DUSU elections for the academic session 2025-26 are scheduled for September 18, with counting of votes to take place the following day.



In a statement, SFI Delhi State Committee member Sohan Kumar Yadav said that while the administration’s intention to prevent defacement of property was understandable, the decision itself was deeply flawed.

“Year after year, the DU campus has suffered at the hands of rogue organisations that spend lakhs on canvassing, leading to rampant defacement. But imposing a Rs 1 lakh bond on candidates will do more harm than good,” he

said. Abhinandana, the joint secretary of SFI at Hindu College, added that the provision would effectively discourage ordinary students from participating in the democratic process. “This provision will alienate marginalised students who cannot compete with those having ample resources,” she said, stressing that student politics must remain inclusive and representative of diverse social and economic backgrounds.

BIHAR ELECTION 2025

RAHUL URGES CITIZENS TO SAFEGUARD VOTING RIGHTS, PROTECT DEMOCRACY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi urges citizens to safeguard democracy and defend voting rights.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday urged citizens of the country to safeguard their voting rights and protect the country's democracy.

In a post on social media platform X, Gandhi highlighted several issues which he said reflected the ruling government's failure, including unemployment, inflation, education-related scams, road safety, terrorism, demonetisation, and the farmers' movement.

"Dear Voters of India, I want to ask you all a straightforward question - can a government formed by stealing votes ever have the intention of serving the public? No, right! They don't even need your votes, so they don't care about your problems either," Gandhi said in his post.

He went on to list alleged governance failures by the Centre.

"Record-breaking unemployment is ruining the

HIGHLIGHTS OF RAHUL GANDHI'S APPEAL

- Warns citizens against alleged voter list manipulation and "stolen votes"
- Lists failures: unemployment, inflation, scams, and safety lapses
- Accuses Centre of ignoring deaths from terror, COVID, and farmers' protests
- Urges people to vote responsibly to protect Constitution and democracy



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at an event on Thursday in Bihar.

future of the youth. The government keeps filling the coffers of capitalists.

Scams like NEET, SSC, and paper leaks have destroyed the careers of millions of students. The government has simply turned a blind eye!

Inflation is touching the sky, making life unbearable for the common man. Yet, the government keeps increasing taxes!

Train accidents and the collapse of basic infrastructure like roads and bridges have led to the untimely deaths of hundreds of innocent people. But the government hasn't even fixed accountability.

From Poonch to Manipur, incidents of terror and violence have occurred - hundreds have died. The government hasn't even taken responsibility!

Demonetisation, COVID, and the farmers' movement claimed millions of lives. The Prime Minister didn't offer help, let alone show empathy! Why? Because this government wasn't chosen by you; it was formed by stealing votes," the post read.

LoP in the Lok Sabha further appealed to the public to vote responsibly and elect a government that is ac-

countable and empathetic.

"Whether you live, die, or suffer - it makes no difference to them. They are confident that, whether the public votes or not, they will come back to power through theft.

A clean voter list is the foundation of free and fair elections. Don't let your voting rights slip away - because all your rights rest on this very foundation.

Getting full support, blessings of people: Tejashwi on voter rally

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday termed the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar a "historic" yatra, adding that the campaign is getting full support and blessings from the people of the state.

He also criticised the Nitish Kumar-led government in Bihar, saying that people are worried and dejected due to poverty, corruption, law and order issues, migration, lack of investment, and poor education and health systems in the state.

"People of Bihar are aware citizens. They know their rights. How 'Voter Bachao Adhikar Yatra' is going on, we have been getting full support and blessings of the people. This is a historic Yatra. People of the BJP and the Election Commission have been exposed. In the days to come, people of Bihar will give a befitting reply to the current government," he said.

"He (CM Nitish Kumar) can do whatever he wants, but nothing is going to come out of it. People of Bihar have realised the reality of the NDA. Poverty, corruption, law and order, migration, there is



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav

no investment or factory in Bihar, no sugar or jute mill is being set up. People are worried and dejected. They are not being heard. Education and health systems are bad in the state. People want freedom from this 'khataara government' and want to build a new Bihar. People of Bihar will bring about a change this time," the RJD leader added.

The 'Voter Adhikar Yatra', which began on August 17 from Sasaram, has entered its fifth day today.

The 16-day yatra has been organised to protest against the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list in Bihar and alleged 'vote chori'. The yatra will cover more than 1,300 km across over 20 districts and conclude in Patna on September 1.

Earlier on Wednesday, when asked about the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra', Tejashwi Yadav remarked that there's a lot of anger among the people. "The public is saying 'Vote Chori Gaddi Chhodd'...", he added.

Hailing the positive response to his 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in poll-bound Bihar, Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi expressed confidence that the entire country will also be resisting 'election chori' (election theft).

Speaking to reporters at Parliament premises, the Congress leader said, "The response is very good. Everyone is now saying 'vote chori' in Bihar. This is reality. Attempt of 'election chori' is being made. Bihar is resisting. The entire country will resist."

Success of journey belongs to public: Bihar Congress chief on 'Voter Adhikar Yatra'

TDG NETWORK
SHEIKHPURA

Bihar Congress president Rajesh Ram expressed gratitude for the public "giving strength" to the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' by participating in large numbers to ensure that voting rights are protected on Thursday.

"With this yatra, we made a small effort to secure the rights of the people, on including their names in the SIR, but the success and support of this journey belong entirely to the public; the public is giving it strength, and this is a big deal for us," Bihar Congress president Rajesh Ram told ANI here.

The Yatra, continuing

for the fifth day, reached Sheikhpura earlier today. Leaders of the party, along with leaders of alliance partners Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), and Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP) participated in the rally.

The Congress leader also

said that all issues within the alliance, including seat sharing talks are also on the "right track."

Meanwhile, state AICC in charge Krishna Allavaru alleged that the ongoing SIR is not just limited to Bihar but for the whole country. He called into question the legitimacy of

the government, saying that a party which comes to power through theft will not work to solve issues of the people.

"SIR is a big issue not only for Bihar but for the whole of India because the vote theft that is happening is attacking every right of the public. If a government is formed by stealing votes, then why will that government work to increase employment, reduce inflation, and corruption? A government that steals votes will not work for the people," Allavaru said.

He also mentioned that alliance level talks are going well, saying that "every party will get respectable seats."



Bihar Congress president Rajesh Ram expressing gratitude for participation in Yatra in large numbers on Thursday.

BJP leadership likely to become 'more hard liner' in future: Prashant Kishor

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor on Thursday elaborated on his recent remarks regarding the trajectory of the BJP leadership of becoming increasingly 'hardline', suggesting that in the future Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership could appear "softer" by comparison.

He mentioned the shift in the BJP's ideological spectrum across three leadership era of Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani and PM Narendra Modi.

Explaining his remarks, Kishor said, "The reference of the statement which

is being given in that statement I have tried to explain the evolution of BJP's leadership. If you compare Vajpayee and Advani, then Vajpayee is considered as mascot of soft Hindutva while Advani was a hardliner. But in today's



Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor talking to reporters on Thursday

context if you compare Advani and Modi, people who use think Advani as a hardliner will consider him soft in comparison to Modi."

He warned that this trajectory could continue, "So I tried to explain that with upcoming time trajectory of BJP's leadership will keep getting of hardliner. In next 10 to 15 years BJP leadership will be in hand of such a person where Modi's leadership will look softer."

Earlier, responding to Congress's 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar Prashant Kishor on Sunday said that it is due to his party's padyatra that the opposition party has been forced to hit the streets.

Speaking to reporters, Prashant Kishor said, "Our padyatra has forced these leaders onto the streets. This is the fear of Jan Suraj that the pension, which had been Rs 400 for the last 20 years, has now increased to Rs 1100, and the salary of cooks has doubled. 125 units of electricity have become free... Earlier, RJD used to ask for votes, raising the fear of PM Modi and Nitish Kumar, and the BJP used to ask for votes, mentioning the fear of Lalu Prasad Yadav."

Bihar elections are expected to be held later this year in October or November; however, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has not announced an official date.

Fadnavis calls up Uddhav, Pawar Sr to seek support for NDA VP nominee

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday touched base with Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and NCP (SP) supreme Sharad Pawar, seeking support for the candidature of CP Radhakrishnan, who has been named as the Vice Presidential nominee and former Supreme Court judge B Sud-



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis

counting to take place on the same day.

This comes after the INDIA bloc's Vice-Presidential nominee and former Supreme Court judge B Sud-

by the United Doctors Front through advocate Satyam Singh Rajput.

The petition sought to declare as unconstitutional the NMC's decision to relax recruitment rules for medical college faculty.

It also sought an interim stay on the controversial provisions. The petition demanded that only clinically qualified MBBS doctors (MD/MS) be allowed to teach MBBS students.

Advocate Satyam Singh

ershan Reddy on Thursday filed his nomination papers for the upcoming VP election, describing the moment as an honour and pledging to discharge the role with impartiality, dignity, and a steadfast commitment, if elected.

Reddy filed the nomination in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, and Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi.

Rajput, representing the petitioner, argued that the central government's decision will dilute medical education standards and equate MSc/PhD holders with MBBS, MD, and MS doctors.

In an exclusive conversation with iTV network, Advocate Rajput said that it would adversely impact the careers of MBBS, MD, and MS doctors, who have achieved their qualifications through rigorous effort and national-level examinations.

Will do our best to ensure Reddy wins: AAP convenor Kejriwal

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday extended support for the candidature of former Supreme Court judge B Sudarshan Reddy for the post of Vice President.

Speaking to the reporters, Kejriwal said, "AAP has supported the candidature of former Supreme Court judge B Sudarshan Reddy for the post of Vice President. At the time of his nomination, from our side, Sanjay Singh was present. Just now, Justice Reddy had come to meet me, and we discussed the current situation in the country. We discussed the election strategy. We will do our best to ensure B Sudarshan Reddy wins."

"Justice Reddy has had an impressive career as a judge. If a person like him becomes the Vice President of the country, the respect for the post of Vice President will increase... I urge everyone to support him..." he added.

Kejriwal also congratulated and gave best wishes to Justice



Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal meeting former Supreme Court judge B Sudarshan Reddy on Thursday.

Kejriwal also congratulated and gave best wishes to Justice Reddy and added that he is hoping to congratulate him on September 9, in case he wins.

Reddy and added that he is hoping to congratulate him on September 9, in case he wins.

AAP National Convenor also urged political parties from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to vote for Justice Reddy as "it's a matter of Telugu pride".

"Justice Reddy is Telugu, and this is a matter of Telugu pride for the people of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The

political parties from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana should vote for the nation and Telugu pride," he said.

Earlier today, former Supreme Court Justice B Sudarshan Reddy filed his nomination for contesting the Vice Presidential elections and pledged to discharge the role with impartiality, dignity, and a steadfast commitment, if elected.

Proud moment: CM on Kerala becoming first fully digitally literate state

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday announced at Central Stadium that Kerala has been declared as India's first fully digitally literate state.

The Kerala CM said, "This is indeed a proud moment for Kerala and for every Malayali across the globe. Today, our state has achieved a milestone that fills us with immense pride. Kerala has become the first fully digital state in India. I want to extend my special congratulations to our youth, whose dedication and involvement made this achievement possible."

"Just as Kerala once became the first fully literate state in the country in 1991, today we have repeated history by setting another benchmark. Both achievements came under the leadership of a Left Democratic Front government, and this underlines the commitment and determination required to bring society together for such



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan

transformative progress," the Kerala CM added.

Explaining the origin of this benchmark, the Kerala Chief Minister said, "The success story began in Pullampura Panchayat, which became the first fully digitally literate panchayat in Kerala. Overcoming challenges, volunteers, local representatives, and students together ensured that even ordinary citizens, including the elderly and homemakers, became digitally empowered. Today, those who once had little exposure to computers or smartphones are paying bills online, using services, and actively engaging on social media."

Rhe Kerala CM also remarked that this achievement is "a model for the entire country".

Delhi HC notice on plea against NMC rules

SAMBHAV SHARMA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday has issued a notice to the central government and others in response to a petition challenging the new regulations issued by the National Medical Commission (NMC).

The petition has been filed

JAPAN EYES USD 68 BILLION INDIA INVESTMENT AHEAD OF PM MODI VISIT

Japan plans massive new investment target for India as Modi's visit nears.

TDG NETWORK
KYOTO

Japan is considering announcing a 10 trillion yen (USD 68 billion) decade-long private investment target for India when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits later this month, Japan Wire of Kyodo News reported, citing government sources on Thursday.

The news platform stated that the new target--an update of a five-year 5 trillion yen investment goal rolled out in 2022--is intended to further spur investment at a time when the two countries are working closely to promote a "free and open Indo-Pacific" in the face of an assertive China. The Japanese government

JAPAN PLANS \$68 BN INDIA PUSH

- Tokyo to set decade-long 10 trillion yen investment target in India.
- Talks to cover chips, AI, clean energy, critical minerals cooperation.
- PM Modi to visit Japan from August 29-31 for summit.
- AI initiative with Indian startups also expected in outcome document.

may mention the target in an outcome document to be issued following summit talks between Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Modi, the Japanese government sources said, according to Kyodo News.

PM Modi's visit to Japan is scheduled for three days from August 29, the plat-

form reported. It will be PM's first visit to Japan since May 2023, when he travelled to the Group of Seven summit in the western city of Hiroshima.

The Japanese government said in March 2022, at the time of a visit to India by then Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, that it would aim

for 5 trillion yen of public and private investment and financing over five years.

The Indian and Japanese governments are also seeking to agree on a new framework to explore cooperation in economic security, such as for procuring stable supplies of critical goods, according to the news platform, citing sources.

India's private sector business activity posts record growth in August: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's private sector economy expanded at the fastest pace since records began in December 2005, according to the HSBC Flash India PMI by S&P Global. The rise in August was powered by a surge in sales volumes and new orders, marking the quickest pace of business activity growth ever recorded.

The HSBC Flash India Composite Output Index, which tracks the combined performance of manufacturing and services, jumped to 65.2 in August from 61.1 in July. This four-point rise signaled a record acceleration in overall private sector business activity. Services outpaced manufacturing, with activity hitting a fresh survey high.

Sub-sector performance reflected broad-based strength. The HSBC



Flash India Manufacturing PMI rose to 59.8 in August from 59.1 in July, its highest reading since January 2008. Meanwhile, the services sector led the rally, posting its strongest growth since the survey began.

Pranjul Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC, highlighted the drivers of this performance: "The Services flash PMI touched an all-time high of 65.6, led by a sharp pick up in new business orders, both export and domestic. The Manufacturing flash PMI

rose further, inching closer to the 60-mark, led by a smart rise in new domestic orders. Growth of new export orders, however, remained unchanged at July's levels. Margins improved as the rise in output prices was much faster than that for input costs."

Both manufacturers and service providers recorded accelerated growth in new orders, with export markets contributing significantly. The survey noted stronger inflows from Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, pushing export order growth to its fastest level since 2014.

Employment also saw a boost. August marked the continuation of workforce expansion for the 15th consecutive month, as service firms drove stronger job creation. Manufacturers reported only a slight slowdown. This momentum helped keep outstanding business volumes primarily in check.

Capital market must lower friction and compliance cost: SEBI Chief

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Thursday underlined the urgent need for innovation in capital markets that not only widens opportunities but also reduces compliance costs, making the system safer and more accessible for both issuers and investors. He was speaking at the 22nd Annual Capital Markets Conference (CAPAM2025), organised by FICCI.

Pandey stressed that reforms must actively support faster capital formation while ensuring long-term investor engagement. "Innovation in the capital market must lower friction and compliance cost for issuers, investors and intermediaries, while managing the risk. It should also provide a diverse range of opportunities depending upon the risk appetite," he said. Highlighting SEBI's regu-



latory initiatives, Pandey pointed to the shortening of IPO timelines, adoption of digital processes, and safeguards such as blocking of funds and direct payouts, which, he said, have cut costs and improved efficiency. He added that a verified payment channel for SEBI-registered intermediaries through UPI will come into effect on October 1, 2025. This move, according to him, will protect investors from cyber frauds, a growing concern in the era of digital finance.

The SEBI Chairman also noted that technology should be viewed as a trust multipli-

er rather than a showpiece, especially at a time when instances of fake apps and unregistered intermediaries continue to surface. SEBI, he said, is working with social media platforms to curb such fraudulent activities.

Reflecting on the changing landscape, Pandey said innovative regulations have helped create new asset classes and instruments. "AIFs, REITs, INWITs, SIPs, SIFs, PMS, these acronyms now occupy an important place in the Indian capital market"

He also pointed out that India's securities market has expanded significantly, with 13 crore unique investors, 7 crore mutual fund investors, and a capital pipeline worth 1.4 trillion rupees. "Transparency attracts long-term capital," he remarked, calling for stronger disclosures, better controls, and aligned incentives to meet the aspiration of building a larger and deeper capital market.

India surpasses China in smartphone exports to US

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India has overtaken China in smartphone exports to the United States, marking a major milestone in the country's manufacturing journey, according to a social media post by PIB citing research firm Canalys. As per the post, schemes such as Make in India and the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) have played a key role in reshaping the electronics sector.

It said, "As a result of schemes like Make in India and PLI, India is now moving at a new pace in those industrial sectors in which it was never even considered a key manufacturer before. According to a report by research firm Canalys, in the second quarter of this calendar year, i.e., April-June, India has also overtaken China in terms of smartphones exported to the US."



The post states that the share of Made in India smartphones in US imports climbed to 44 per cent during April-June 2025, a sharp rise from 13 per cent in the same quarter of 2024. At the same time, China's share dropped from 61 per cent a year earlier to just 25 per cent in the same period. This uptick in smartphone exports is supported by a decade-long transformation of India's electronics industry. In the previous month, the Ministry of Electronics & IT detailed the growth trajectory in a release, showcasing that between 2014-15 and 2024-25, India's electronics and mobile manufacturing sector has witnessed a notable transformation.

Gold prices rise sharply in global markets amid rising economic uncertainties

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 600 to Rs1,00,620 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, supported by fresh buying from stockists and renewed safe-haven demand, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs1,00,020 per

10 grams on Wednesday. In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also rose by Rs500 to Rs1,00,200 per 10 grams, inclusive of taxes. It had closed at Rs99,700 per 10 grams in the previous session.

"Gold prices rose on Thursday, driven by safe-haven demand and bargain buying after the price fell to a three-week low in

the previous session. The renewed demand for safe haven was spurred by President Donald Trump's call for the resignation of a Federal Reserve governor, which raised concerns about the central bank's independence," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

Following Trump's comments, the US Dollar re-



treated from recent highs, further supporting gold

prices, Gandhi added. Alongside gold, silver

Indian stock market ends higher on hopes of GST rate cut

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Indian stock market on Thursday ended higher on the sixth consecutive session as investors' sentiments are optimistic due to the possible Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate cut.

At the end of the trading session today, BSE Sensex was up 142.87 points or 0.17 per cent at 82,000.71, and Nifty 50 at National Stock Exchange (NSE) was elevated by 33.20 points or 0.13 per cent at 25,083.75.

On the weekly expiry day, the benchmark Nifty index opened with a positive gap, reflecting early optimism. However, the momentum fizzled out as the index remained confined within a narrow trading band of just 98.75 points throughout the session.

"The subdued movement reflects a cautious undertone among market participants ahead of the Jackson Hole symposium. Investors are closely watching for cues from Federal Reserve Chair Jerome



Powell's speech, which could offer insights into the future trajectory of interest rates and monetary policy," said Sudeep Shah, Head - Technical Research and Derivatives at SBI Securities.

Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said, "Investors are closely tracking developments around recent discussions and approvals on GST reforms, which are prompting sector-specific reactions. In addition, global cues remain in focus, particularly the Jackson Hole symposium, where commentary from central bankers could influence sentiment."

"The Nifty index continued its strong momentum on the

weekly expiry day and closed with gains of 0.13 per cent. The SEBI's plan to remove the weekly expiry dampened the sentiment of capital markets-related stocks," said Kunal Shah - Technical and Derivative Analyst at Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

Observing the market sentiment, Siddhartha Khemka - Head Of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd said, "In a positive development, the Group of Ministers (GoM) on GST rate rationalisation approved the proposal to scrap the current four-rate structure and move towards dual rates of 5 per cent and 18 per cent."

GoM backs Centre's proposal to scrap 12% and 28% GST slabs: Samrat Choudhary

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Thursday said that the Group of Ministers (GoM) has extended its support to the Centre's proposals to eliminate the 12 per cent and 28 per cent slabs under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) structure.

"We have supported the two proposals by the Govt of India of scrapping GST slabs of 12 per cent and 28 per cent," Choudhary said after attending a meeting of the Group of Ministers (GoM) with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.



He added that while all states participated in the discussions and offered suggestions, a few had some observations.

"Everyone made suggestions over the proposals made by the Centre. Some states have a few observations. This has been referred to the GST Council. The Council will make a decision," Choudhary said.

According to Choudhary, the proposal to remove the two slabs was deliberated

upon during the meeting and received general support.

"The proposal by the Central Govt of ending two slabs was deliberated on and supported. We have made recommendations. The GST Council will make a decision over this. We have supported the two proposals by the Govt of India of scrapping GST slabs of 12 per cent and 28 per cent," he stated.

Speaking to reporters, Chandrima Bhattacharya, Health Minister, West Bengal said, "All the states are with the common people, but I raised in the meeting that if the states are going to lose the revenue, then that ultimately goes back to the

common people so we want to know how we are going to be compensated. The GoM will now send its report to the GST Council with the notings of our concern we raised."

She further added, "We don't know what is the revenue loss by this GST rate cut. They have not assessed yet. In the GST Council we will get to know."

Speaking on the revenue loss, Uttar Pradesh Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna said, "The presentation given at the Centre did not mention how much loss is being incurred, so we cannot say how much loss there will be from working like GST."

Credit costs of banks surge in Q1FY26; asset quality marginally weakens: Ratings

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The credit costs of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) in the country surged in the first quarter of the current financial year, even as their asset quality worsened marginally on a sequential basis, according to a report by CareEdge Ratings.

The report highlighted that the overall credit cost for SCBs rose sharply by 62.7 per cent year-on-year to Rs 0.44 lakh crore in Q1FY26.

It stated "Credit Cost Rises in Q1FY26; Asset Quality Worsens Marginally Sequentially".

However, the trend was not uniform across public sector banks (PSBs) and private banks (PVBs). While PSBs reported an improvement, PVBs faced a steep rise in provisioning requirements.

For PSBs, credit cost fell 4.8 per cent year-on-year to Rs 0.16 lakh crore during



the quarter. The report noted that large PSBs, in particular, witnessed a notable rise in provisions, though overall the segment showed relative stability supported by stronger asset quality.

On the other hand, credit costs of PVBs increased significantly by 172.1 per cent year-on-year in the same quarter. This sharp rise was largely driven by one major private bank, which created contingency and floating provisions of Rs 0.11 lakh crore.

The bank made use of

stake sale gains in its subsidiary as well as treasury gains to build this buffer. Excluding the impact of this one-time provisioning, the credit costs for private banks would have stood at Rs 0.17 lakh crore, which still represents a 64.3 per cent year-on-year increase.

In terms of business growth, the report stated that credit offtake in Q1FY26 expanded by 9.5 per cent year-on-year, slightly below deposit growth, which came in at 10.1 per cent.

Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research, Kotak Securities.

Meanwhile, minutes from the US Federal Reserve's July meeting revealed officials remain cautious about inflation and the labour market, with most members considering it too soon to cut interest rates.

Spot silver, in contrast, was down 0.32 per cent at USD 37.78 per ounce.

also surged sharply. Silver prices rose by Rs1,500 to Rs1,14,000 per kilogram, inclusive of all taxes, compared to Wednesday's close of Rs1,12,500 per kg, the association said.

In the international markets, however, spot gold was trading 0.28 per cent lower at USD 3,339.04 per ounce in New York.

"Gold is holding steady near USD 3,340 per ounce

as investors await key US macroeconomic data, including jobless claims, PMIs, and existing home sales. However, the main focus remains on Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech at the Jackson Hole Symposium, with investors watching closely for signals of a monetary policy shift, particularly after last year's remarks signalled the start of a rate-cutting cycle," said

LOVE’S PYRE, HONOUR’S TOMB

OPINION

SHWETA MAHENDRA



“Militat omnis amans.” — Ovid, *Amores* I.IX
“Every lover is a soldier.”

From ancient times, marriage in India has been envisioned as a sacred bond, not merely a social contract or a religious ritual. The Hindu scriptures speak of love, respect, and partnership between husband and wife—a vision where a woman is honoured and dignified within her new family.

Yet alongside this ideal lies a stark reality: a woman’s choices, especially in love and marriage, have always

been tightly controlled. Ancient texts acknowledged love marriages Gandharva Vivaha based on mutual desire. Yet even these texts warned that such unions were unfit for high-born noble families. Marriage, they insisted, must preserve caste boundaries and social order—even at the cost of a woman’s happiness.

This tension between sacred love and strict control runs through India’s most moving love stories. Sohni Mahiwal drowned while trying to reach her beloved across a river. Heer and Ranjha died because their families refused to accept their bond. Shirin and Farhad’s love ended in death, crushed under royal pride and social barriers. These legends persist because they show how love has long been seen as a dangerous threat to family and community honour.

Yet the burden placed upon women begins far

earlier, from the moment a daughter is born. In many households, the birth of only girl children carries unspoken shame. Such shame is unwritten, yet it dictates social behaviour with ruthless efficiency. Girls grow up learning that their bodies, choices, and even silence are seen as the family’s fragile shield. Unwritten rules follow them everywhere: do not speak too loudly; do not look at boys; do not laugh too freely; do not fall in love. This relentless conditioning becomes a cage.

Modern India has not escaped these ancient chains. Young women still fall in love across lines of faith, caste, or gotra. And when they do, their families often respond—not first with physical violence—but with words sharp enough to wound: “We’ll drink poison.” “We’ll kill you.” “We’ll never show our faces in society again.” Emotional blackmail traps daughters, forcing them into marriages with men they do not love. Yet the punishment does not end at the wedding. Some women spend years suffocating beside men who feel like strangers. Others attempt to break free, facing renewed storms of blame and violence. And tragi-



cally, some women become victims of honour killings, for they know precisely how their families “resolve” the question of dishonour.

The data is chilling. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, over 145 honour killings were recorded in India between 2017 and 2021. Experts believe the actual numbers are far higher, buried under euphemisms like “suicide,” “accident,” or “domestic violence.” In Shakti Vahini v. Union of India (2018), the Supreme Court declared: “Any kind of torture or ill-

treatment that tantamounts to atrophy of choice of an individual relating to love and marriage by any assembly, whatsoever nomenclature it assumes, is illegal and cannot be allowed a moment of existence.” Yet convictions remain scarce

In many states of northern India, khap panchayats, without any legal authority, operating like a local legal system with self-nominated judges and lawyers continue to wield alarming influence. They forbid same-gotra marriages, inter-caste unions, and love marriages

altogether. Couples who defy these dictates risk exile, violence, or death. Despite repeated Supreme Court rulings declaring such orders illegal, khap influence remains deeply entrenched, nourished by the same false ego that equates honour with controlling women’s lives.

Once a girl marries outside her caste or faith, families fear total ostracism. No one will marry her sisters. Relatives sever ties. Parents are shunned for failing to “control” their daughter. The punishment is collec-

tive: entire families face social boycott; brothers and sisters lose marriage prospects; parents are labelled dishonourable. This grim reality makes honour killings not merely acts of personal violence, but crimes propelled by a suffocating social ecosystem. Honour becomes a weapon wielded to police private lives.

Yet another question often goes unasked: What becomes of the young man who loved the girl who has been murdered? Society rarely pauses to ask whether he, too, survives with shattered hopes, carrying guilt, fear, and a future permanently scarred. Can he return to an everyday life, knowing that his love cost someone her life? In many cases, both lovers are killed together, and two families are left ruined in the name of “honour.”

At the heart of honour killings lies a profound hypocrisy. Society wields a double-edged sword. If a father kills his daughter for love, people condemn the violence, calling it barbaric. Yet if a woman, forced into marriage, runs away or even kills the husband she never loved, the same people brand her as immoral and shameless. How can a

society claim moral authority when it condemns both the violence of the oppressor and the desperate acts of the oppressed? How can anyone claim it is justice? It reveals that what is called “honour” is rarely about virtue or dignity. It is about control, fear, and maintaining a social order that subjugates women’s choices. It is crudely disguised as pride.

Let us never forget: women have always borne the weight of their choices with courage. They belong to the same lineage that once chose *jobhar* over dishonour, embracing flames rather than surrendering their pride and virtue. Even Sati stepped into the fire for her husband’s honour. We must learn to trust women. To question them when conscience demands it. To offer counsel, and to walk away if a relationship turns abusive or suffocating. But we must never burn them, cut them, or shoot them. The right to take a human life belongs to God alone—for love, in its true essence, is never demonic. Love is a soldier; it marches on, demanding sacrifice, but never cruelty. It is hatred and violence that turn human beings into monsters.

India’s industrial pivot: Building resilience in critical mineral supply chains

OPINION

MANISH VAID

The electric-vehicle boom and clean-energy revolution have ignited a global race for critical minerals. EV sales topped 17 million in 2024 and are projected to exceed 20 million in 2025. Lithium, cobalt, and rare earths, essential to batteries, turbines, and electronics, are now strategic commodities. China’s April 2025 export curbs sent shockwaves through supply chains, with rare-earth magnet shipments halving that month. Automakers worldwide warned of production halts due to supply insecurity.

Yet rather than derail progress, these disruptions have sparked renewed global collaboration.

MINERALS, MARKETS, AND POWER PLAYS

For India, the turning point came with the Quad’s Critical Minerals Initiative, unveiled at the July 2025 summit. The Initiative aims to bolster economic security and shared resilience through coordinated efforts to secure and diversify critical mineral supply chains.

This shift is already visible. The U.S. firm MP Materials is expanding domestic refining and prioritizing allied buyers. The EU is fast-tracking projects under its Critical Raw Materials Act. India, for its part, has formed a dedicated task force to build its battery metals ecosystem, signed mining deals in Africa, and is stockpiling key inputs.

These global moves are translating into actionable partnerships. Australia is

forming joint ventures to supply lithium to India. Japan has deepened its stake in Lynas, Australia’s rare-earth giant. U.S. mining companies are ramping up projects in Mongolia and Africa.

These signal a new wave of opportunity for miners, refiners, and technology firms. In India, manufacturers are already drawing up plans for cathode plants and EV component hubs, supported by the government’s Raw Materials Act and recent incentive schemes.

BUILDING INDIA’S MINERAL RESILIENCE

India imported 53,748 metric tons of rare-earth magnets in FY2025 alone. To reduce this strategic vulnerability, New Delhi launched a seven-year national initiative for rare-earth processing and magnet production.

Industry is responding swiftly. Vedanta Resources committed \$1.2 billion for copper-cobalt mining in Zambia. Tata Steel is expanding processing capabilities through global partnerships. Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) has earmarked Rs. 3,500 crore for rare earth processing and mining, while Indian Rare Earths Ltd. has inked a JV with Kazakhstan’s UKTMP JSC to process ilmenite into titanium slag.

This industrial momentum is reinforced by diplomatic progress. In October 2024, India and the U.S. launched a Joint Framework on Critical Minerals under the 6th U.S.–India Commer-

cial Dialogue. India is also working with Quad partners to harmonize technical standards, opening new markets and insulating domestic manufacturing from global shocks.

Yet much remains to be done. Indian policymakers must now double down on value addition. Concessions for minerals like lithium and nickel should be coupled with robust local processing, similar to U.S. efforts under its 2025 Critical Minerals Future Act. India could also emulate the UK’s mining-

Innovation must become central to this agenda. India should collaborate with Japan, the U.S., or the EU to develop cutting-edge recycling technologies and establish a circular supply chain. Japanese firms like JERA have demonstrated innovative methods that recover up to 90% of metals from used EV batteries, while Panasonic Energy, in partnership with Sumitomo Metal Mining, is pioneering scrap-to-cathode nickel recovery.

Trade diplomacy must

Companies like Mahindra, Sona Comstar, and Uno Minda are now investing in rare-earth magnet R&D to cut Chinese dependency. Scrap recovery and recycling are gaining traction, boosted by a 1,345 crore scheme to support domestic magnet production.

INSTITUTIONALIZING MINERAL RESILIENCE

The Quad’s forward push is laying the groundwork for future standards, financing, and joint investment. Minerals Security Partnership is



To compress timelines, regulatory processes must be streamlined by aligning central and state-level clearances. Permitting delays, currently stretching up to 18 years, are a bottleneck India cannot afford.

skills renewal push. Instead of piecemeal efforts, the government should promote public–private partnerships that incentivize lithium-ion battery gigafactories and foster equity-backed joint ventures with leading conglomerates such as Tata, Vedanta, and JSW. To compress timelines, regulatory processes must be streamlined by aligning central and state-level clearances. Permitting delays, currently stretching up to 18 years, are a bottleneck India cannot afford.

also play a stronger role. India should secure long-term offtake agreements via bilateral deals, just as it has recently done with the U.S., Australia, and Japan on rare-earth cooperation. These arrangements will provide Indian manufacturers the confidence to invest in downstream processing and capacity building.

Even recent tariff tensions with the U.S. have proved catalytic. Indian firms have moved quickly to secure free-trade carve-outs or restructure supply chains.

already advancing sustainable mining and cross-border project funding. Markets are watching closely as Chinese ore licences shift and alternative suppliers, from India’s graphite reserves to new U.S. zinc refineries, gear up.

With the right mix of policy, investment, and strategic foresight, Indian industry can turn today’s mineral crunch into tomorrow’s competitive edge. The rare-earth shock of 2025 showed that supply chains can adapt fast. The challenge now is to institutionalize that agility, through long-term planning and partnerships that build resilience, not dependence.

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Disclaimer: Views are personal

Assam police action in invoking sedition law against journalists in second case legally unsustainable

SANJEEV SIROHI

To put it gently, it was definitely most astounding, anguishing and appalling to see that on August 12, 2025 that is the day the Supreme Court had issued notice on “The Wire’s” newspaper petition challenging the constitutionality of the new sedition law and protected its journalists which also included the founding editor named Siddharth Varadarajan who earlier was with prestigious “The Hindu” newspaper from any “coercive action” by the Assam police in a case that had been filed in Morigaon in July came a fresh shocker as the Guwahati Crime Branch summoned Siddharth Varadarajan and senior journalist Karan Thapar in a fresh second ‘sedition’ FIR case that had been filed by the State police amid controversy over an article that had been published pertaining to “Operation Sindoor” which is certainly beyond a straw of doubt legally unsustainable. It must be disclosed here that the summons was received at “The Wire’s” office in New Delhi on August 14. On August 18, an identical summons was received in the name of Karan Thapar for the same FIR. It must be noted that the summons for Siddharth Varadarajan had been issued by the police inspector Soumarjyoti Ray under Section 35(3), BNSS that referred to an FIR (03/2025) that had been registered at the Crime Branch, Panbazar, Guwahati, under Sections 152, 196, 197(1)(D)/3(6), 353, 45 and 61.

It is most baffling to see that while the FIR that had been registered against Siddharth Varadarajan in Morigaon on July 11, 2025 pertained to a complaint that had been filed by a BJP

officeholder over a story that had been published in “The Wire” on June 28, 2025 (IAF Lost Fighter Jets to Pak Because of Political Leadership’s Constraints’: Indian Defence Attache), it is not apparent what article or video the Crime Branch FIR relates to. We need to note here that a Bench of Apex Court comprising of Hon’ble Mr Justice Surya Kant and Hon’ble Mr Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued a directive that had explicitly restrained the Assam Police from proceeding with any such coercive measures. In hindsight, it may be also recalled here that Hon’ble Mr Justice Joymalya Bagchi in his earlier stint as a lawyer had most successfully argued before a Special Bench of the Calcutta High Court against the West Bengal government’s arbitrary ban on Dwikhondito that was a book that had been authored by the eminent Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen disliked by hard-line Islamic fundamentalists.

By the way, we also need to note that the interim order from the Apex Court granting protection from coercive action came in response to a writ petition that had been filed by the ‘Foundation for Independent Journalism’ which operates ‘The Wire’ newspaper website alongside Siddharth Varadarajan. It must be laid bare that the petition had challenged the constitutional validity of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita which is a provision that has been perceived by the petitioners as overly broad and potentially repressive. The petitioners had vehemently argued that the sweeping language of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita threatens the freedom

of expression and press independence, citing serious concerns that it mirrors vestiges of colonial-era sedition laws.

There can be just no gain-saying that media is the fourth pillar of Indian democracy and journalists must be protected from arbitrary arrests and detention because they are not terrorists or some criminals! It was very rightly pointed out by Albert Camus that, “A free press can be good or bad, but, most certainly, without freedom, a press will never be anything but bad.” No denying it!

It must be certainly taken into account that the senior counsel Nitya Ramakrishnan who represented the petitioners had argued before the Bench in Supreme Court that Section 152’s vague wording creates a “chilling effect” on journalistic freedom. Nitya also informed the Apex Court that the FIR was kept a secret and it was only through well-placed sources that it became possible to learn of the complaint that had been made, the date of the FIR and so also the criminal sections that had been invoked. It is entirely in the fitness of things that the Supreme Court has shielded Siddharth Varadarajan from coercive prosecution and has decided to delve into the broader constitutional questions that engulf Section 152 and its implications that it has for democracy and free speech. It needs no rocket scientist to conclude that Assam police action in arbitrarily invoking sedition law against senior and eminent journalists in second case is legally unsustainable and deserves to be set aside most promptly! There can be just no denying or disputing it! *Sanjeev Sirohi is an Advocate*

WINNERS & LOSERS IN ONLINE GAMING NOW

India's Online Gaming Bill bans predatory money-games but champions e-sports and skill gaming, transforming gaming from a social menace into a digital growth engine.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025 was passed by the Lok Sabha on August 20, 2025. It creates a legal framework to promote and regulate India's fast-growing online gaming industry (including e-sports, social/casual games and educational games) while banning real-money gaming (RMG). In practice the Bill prohibits any online game where money is staked for cash prizes – for example fantasy sports, poker, rummy or lotteries – and criminalizes their advertisement and financial transactions. All such RMG platforms (even foreign ones accessible in India) can be blocked by the new gaming authority. Violators face heavy penalties – generally up to 3 years in jail and/or fines (up to Rs 1 crore or more) for running or facilitating illegal money-games. At the same time, the Bill explicitly protects and encourages skill- or subscription-based gaming (like e-sports, recreational mobile games, and online chess) under government oversight. In short, the law means that gambling-style gaming is outlawed, while promoting the rest of the digital gaming sector with stricter safeguards for users.

WHAT JUST CHANGED

● Rapid growth and social impact: India's gaming sector has expanded explosively – estimated at ~\$3.8 billion and growing – and over 450 million Indians play online games. Government sources noted that unchecked online money-games have “grave social, economic, and psychological consequences,” especially for young and vulnerable users. Widespread addiction, financial ruin and fraud were linked to these platforms. Aggressive marketing (including celebrity endorsements) has drawn many youth into high-risk betting games.

● Crime and security concerns: Officials warned that offshore gambling apps were being used for money-laundering, financing terrorism and fraud. Providers operating from abroad evade state laws and taxes, posing

enforcement challenges. The government argued a ban was needed to protect citizens and national security.

● Consumer protection: Health and education experts had long urged action, citing cases of suicide and family distress linked to online betting losses. The stated objective of the law is to shield players (especially youth) from the dangers of “compulsive and addictive” gambling through a clear regulatory mechanism.

WHAT'S ALLOWED VS BANNED

● Ban on “Online Money Games”: The Bill forbids any person or app from offering or facilitating online games with monetary stakes. Section 3 explicitly states that no one shall “offer, aid or induce... online money gaming service”. This includes a ban on all forms of online gambling and betting – fantasy sports, lotteries, card games (poker, rummy) and similar – as well as sponsorships or ads for such games. Banks and payment companies are barred from transferring funds to these games.

● Permissible games: Games of pure skill or no-stakes games (like e-sports, puzzle/educational games, and casual social games) are explicitly allowed. The government commits to “actively promote” e-sports and online social games, which it sees as innovation-driven and economically valuable. These games may charge subscription or entry fees, but must not offer guaranteed monetary returns to players. E-sports is even recognized as a legitimate sport, with plans for government training and awareness programs.

● New Regulatory Authority: The Bill creates a central Online Gaming Authority. This body will register and categorize all online games, determine which games involve money stakes, handle consumer complaints, and enforce the law. It can issue directions to platforms, block illegal sites, and impose penalties. Importantly, the law targets game providers and advertisers, not individual players – downloading or playing a permitted game is not a crime, only running or promoting money-gaming is.

TDG EXPLAINER

● Penalties: Offenses related to online money gaming are made punishable by up to 3 years' imprisonment and/or fines (up to Rs 1 crore). Repeat offenses have higher penalties (up to 5 years and Rs 2 crore). Specific violations (like advertising or processing transactions for banned games) carry similarly stringent fines and jail terms. Some offences are cognizable and non-bailable under the new law, reflecting its seriousness.

WHO WINS

● Legitimate game developers and e-sports: By carving out a safe space for skill-based and recreational games, the Bill aims to boost India's homegrown gaming industry. Development studios, esports teams, and tech startups focused on innovation can flourish under clearer rules. Government support (through funding, training academies and technology institutes) is promised for e-sports and creative gaming sectors. In effect, the Bill redirects talent and investment toward legal, skill-oriented gaming instead of gambling.

● Youth and families: Ordinary gamers – particularly students and young players – are protected from predatory betting games. Doctors and educators have welcomed the Bill as a safeguard, noting that money-games had “left children and youth vulnerable to exploitation and serious mental health risks”. Parents benefit from reduced exposure to high-pressure gambling apps. Over time, public health experts expect fewer compulsive-gambling cases and social harms.

● Consumers of skill gaming: Because the Bill does not punish lawful gameplay, users of e-sports and recreational games face no new restrictions. Players who pay subscriptions or tournament fees for skill games can continue enjoying them – indeed, the Bill's intent is to encourage these activities by ensuring fair play and recourse against fraud

● Government and econo-



Representative image

my: The central authority and uniform rules benefit regulators and law enforcement by simplifying oversight. By plugging gaps in enforcement (and closing illegal sites), the government hopes to recover revenue that was leaking offshore. The Bill's supporters argue that a regulated sector can contribute tax income from legitimate gaming services and e-sports events that would otherwise be lost. In summary, regulated gaming and e-sports players, developers, and even government coffers stand to gain, while only illicit betting operators lose out.

THE FEDERAL WRINKLE

Nationally, this legislation recognizes the strategic value of gaming. India has a young, digitally-savvy population and a large pool of software talent, giving it potential to become a global hub for game development. The government explicitly aims to position India as a leader in gaming and tech innovation. Establishing a clear legal framework attracts foreign investors and



Representative image

multinational developers that want certainty, which could boost exports and high-tech jobs. India's gaming ecosystem already employs on the order of ~200,000 people; by promoting the non-gambling segments (e-sports, skill gaming), the Bill seeks to grow that workforce and associated revenue. Globally, a well-regulated market may improve India's image (showing it can police cyber-risks) and give Indian companies confidence to compete internationally. In short, the Bill ties India's domestic policy to global digital trends and aims to harness the \$9+ billion worldwide gaming market for India's economy.

THE MONEY QUESTION

Proponents claim the Bill will strengthen India's digital economy by curbing money-wasting “gambling” activities and boosting legitimate gaming ventures. By eliminating unregulated betting, government and society could save on fraud and

social costs, while channeling spending into tax-compliant businesses (e.g. paid subscriptions, in-game purchases for skill-games). Skills-based gaming can drive employment in software, design and esports management. The formal sector could see higher investment as regulators and investors gain confidence in predictable rules.

However, gaming industry groups warn of short-term disruptions. The RMG (online betting) segment was estimated at roughly \$3.8 billion, employing ~130,000 people. These companies – including fantasy sports and live tournaments – had attracted sizable capital and advertising (even sponsorships for sports leagues). According to industry bodies, an abrupt ban could cause 20,000+ job losses and force hundreds of firms to shut or pivot. Media companies and sports teams fear losing 30–40% of their franchise revenues without betting ads. The Bill will wipe out current tax collections from RMG; for example

industry data suggest ~Rs 20,000 crore in annual revenues and ~Rs 20,000 crore in taxes (GST) were at stake. Ultimately, economists note that the net economic effect depends on how quickly new business models (games without cash stakes) can absorb displaced demand, and how efficiently authorities can capture remaining value under the new regime.

LOOPHOLES TO WATCH

● Regulation vs. Ban: Many stakeholders argue the Bill overreaches by banning even skill-based money games. Critics (including opposition politicians and industry groups) call it a “knee-jerk” prohibition without stakeholder consultation. They say legitimate contests (e.g. paid chess tournaments) might be swept up or simply rebranded as off-shore gambling. This could spur legal challenges over definitions of “skill” versus “chance”.

● Offshore and Technology Loopholes: Enforcement

across borders is hard. With an estimated 45 crore current online gamblers, many may flock to illegal foreign sites or underground networks once domestic apps close. Tech-savvy players could use VPNs, cryptocurrencies or peer-to-peer transactions to bypass bans. The Bill empowers authorities to block websites, but history suggests determined users find workarounds (e.g. mirror sites). Thus, illicit gaming may simply migrate to less visible channels, undermining the law's intent.

● State vs. Central Laws: Gambling and lotteries are regulated differently by states. The new central law may conflict with existing state laws or ongoing licenses. The Bill does not reconcile these overlaps or address activities like casino gambling, betting on horse races, or crypto-based games, leaving gaps. For example, loot boxes or NFT-based rewards (if introduced) are not clearly covered by “money game” definitions and could serve as loopholes.

● Penalties and Enforcement: Some analysts note that maximum sentences (3–5 years) are modest compared to penalties for organized crime, potentially inviting minimal risk-taking by violators. Moreover, ground-level enforcement (police action, banking compliance) will be crucial but challenging given India's wide access to digital finance. If banks or intermediaries covertly process payments, or if alternate payment networks arise, the ban's efficacy could be diluted. In sum, the Bill's passage signals a major policy shift: it prioritizes consumer protection and e-sports growth over unregulated betting revenue. Its success will depend on careful implementation, international cooperation (to curb offshore sites), and possibly subsequent amendments to close unforeseen gaps.

The central authority and uniform rules benefit regulators and law enforcement by simplifying oversight. By plugging gaps in enforcement (and closing illegal sites), the government hopes to recover revenue that was leaking offshore.



Representative image

PENALTY LADDER
Rs 1 crore fine / 3 years' jail for offering an online money-gaming service (first offence). Repeat offence: Rs 2 crore / 3–5 years.
Advertising a banned money game: up to Rs 50 lakh / 2 years; repeat: up to Rs 1 crore / 3 years.
Facilitating payments for money games (banks, intermediaries, etc.): up to Rs 1 crore / 3 years.
Cognizable & non-bailable: offences under Sections 5 & 7 (offering games, enabling payments).
Warrantless search & arrest powers for authorised officers (Section 16).
Budget for the new Authority: Rs 50 crore initial set-up + Rs 20 crore/year recurring (Financial Memorandum).
Scale of the problem (govt estimate): ~450 million people in India lose ~Rs 20,000 crore each year to real-money gaming.
Size of India's gamer base: ~488 million online gamers (2024), per FICCI-EY.

RAJASTHAN'S MEENA JEWELRY: CRAFTING ROYALTY IN EVERY HUE

TDG NETWORK

Meena jewelry of Rajasthan is a perfect blend of history, artistry, and cultural significance. Its rich legacy, intricate designs, and vibrant colors make it a prized possession for jewelry enthusiasts and collectors worldwide. Whether worn for special occasions or simply as an appreciation of fine craftsmanship, Meena jewelry continues to shine as a beacon of Rajasthan's royal heritage and artistic brilliance.

THE ORIGINS OF MEENA JEWELRY

The origins of Meena jewelry trace back to the Mughal era when artisans from Persia brought the art of enameling to India. The word Meena itself is derived from the Hindi word Meenakari, which refers to the process of decorating metal surfaces with colored enamels. It is believed that during the Mughal reign, emperors favored the use of this technique to adorn their jewelry, and over time, it became deeply rooted in the culture of Rajasthan.

The Meena technique involves infusing vibrant colors into the jewelry by applying enamel on the metal surface and firing it at high temperatures. The result is an array of mesmerizing hues that are not only visually stunning but also durable and long-lasting. This meticulous process made the jewelry a prized possession, especially among royalty.

CRAFTSMANSHIP AND TECHNIQUES

Creating Meena jewelry is



a highly specialized art that requires immense skill, patience, and precision. The process begins with the shaping of the metal, typically gold, silver, or copper, into intricate designs. Artisans then etch out specific areas on the jewelry where the enamel will be applied. These areas are filled with various colors of enamel, which are

made by grinding glass into fine powder, adding metal oxides, and mixing it with a binder to form a paste.

The jewelry is then fired in a furnace at high temperatures to fuse the enamel to the metal. This process requires great expertise, as the right balance of heat is crucial to ensure that the enamel does not crack or

discolor. After firing, the piece is polished to perfection, often with intricate detailing and additional embellishments like precious stones or pearls.

POPULAR TYPES OF MEENA JEWELRY

Meena jewelry comes in various forms, each showcasing unique designs and



features. Some of the most popular types include:

Meena Bangles: These colorful bangles are a staple in Rajasthani jewelry. Often designed with floral motifs, they are available in vibrant colors and are worn by brides and women for festive occasions.

Meena Necklaces: Elaborate necklaces adorned with

enamel work are a hallmark of Rajasthani Meena jewelry. These necklaces, sometimes embedded with precious stones like diamonds and emeralds, are often worn by royal families and are passed down through generations as family heirlooms.

Meena Earrings: The earrings, typically in the shape

of jhumkas (traditional bell-shaped earrings), are designed with fine enamel work in beautiful patterns and are often accompanied by small dangling pearls or gemstones.

Meena Rings: Rings crafted using the Meena technique are equally popular, and they often feature intricate designs, ranging from floral patterns to motifs inspired by nature and animals.

SYMBOLISM AND SIGNIFICANCE

Meena jewelry holds a deep cultural significance in Rajasthan. It is considered an emblem of prosperity, beauty, and grace. For women, wearing Meena jewelry is believed to bring good luck and protect them from negative energies. The vibrant colors used in Meena pieces are symbolic of life, nature, and the cosmos, with each color often carrying a particular meaning.

For example, red symbolizes love and passion, while green represents fertility

and wealth. Blue is associated with tranquility and spirituality, and yellow symbolizes joy and celebration. Therefore, each piece of Meena jewelry is not just a visual delight, but also an auspicious symbol imbued with meaning.

MEENA JEWELRY IN MODERN TIMES

While Meena jewelry has its roots in history, it has evolved over time and remains an important part of modern fashion. Contemporary artisans have adapted traditional designs to suit modern tastes, often incorporating elements of both traditional and contemporary styles. Whether it is a modernized Meena choker, a fusion of Meena with diamonds, or a Meena-studded bracelet, the essence of this ancient art form continues to captivate jewelry lovers around the world.

In Rajasthan, Meena jewelry is not just a commercial product but a form of cultural expression. Artisans who create these pieces often pass down the craft through generations, ensuring that the intricate techniques of Meena jewelry are preserved for posterity. Many jewelry houses in Rajasthan continue to produce these masterpieces, and they are highly sought after by both domestic and international buyers.

This exquisite form of jewelry that has stood the test of time is and yet stands out. Known for its fine craftsmanship and brilliant enamel work, Meena jewelry is not just an accessory but a symbol of royal heritage and tradition in Rajasthan.

Rajasthan's heritage: A journey through culture, tradition, and identity

TDG NETWORK

Rajasthan, often called the "Land of Kings," is a state where the past is not just remembered but lived every day. From the intricate architecture of palaces to the colorful festivals and traditional attire, the heritage of Rajasthan is not only reflected in its history but is also a defining feature of its modern lifestyle. The state's rich legacy is deeply intertwined with its culture, social practices, and daily life, creating a harmonious blend of old-world charm and contemporary vibrancy.

THE INFLUENCE OF ARCHITECTURE: A TESTAMENT TO ROYALTY

Rajasthan's architecture is one of the most evident markers of its heritage. The majestic forts and palaces scattered across the state, such as the Amer Fort in Jaipur, Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur, and the City Palace in Udaipur, speak volumes about the royal grandeur that once existed in this land. These structures, with their towering walls, ornate carvings, and sprawling courtyards, were not just fortresses but symbols of power, wealth, and artistic brilliance.

Even today, the influence of this royal architecture is seen in the design of modern buildings, homes, and hotels. The intricate jharokhas (overhanging enclosed balcony), jaali work (lattice screens), and chhatris (elevated, dome-shaped pavilions) are often incorporated into the construction of contemporary spaces. This integration of heritage with modern living is a testament to how Rajasthan's cultural past continues to influence

its present lifestyle.

TRADITIONAL ATTIRE: A LIVING TRADITION

One of the most visible reflections of Rajasthan's heritage in daily life is the traditional attire. The vibrant colors, intricate embroidery, and ornate jewelry of Rajasthani clothing are not just a part of ceremonial wear but are deeply ingrained in the region's way of life. The bandhani (tie-dye) saris and dupattas, leheriya fabrics, gota patti work, and zari embroidery all reflect the region's cultural richness and artistry.

Rajasthani women often wear ghagras (long skirts) paired with cholis (blouses) and odhnis (head coverings), decorated with mirror work, beads, and stones. Men, on the other hand, are seen in dhotis, safas (turban), and kurtas. This attire is worn not only during festivals or weddings but also in everyday life, especially in rural areas. The colors and styles vary from region to region, with distinct patterns for cities like Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Udaipur. Even in modern times, Rajasthanis continue to wear these traditional clothes on special occasions, ensuring that their heritage is not lost.

CUISINE: THE TASTE OF HERITAGE

Rajasthani cuisine is a reflection of the state's harsh desert climate and royal history. The food is rich, spicy, and bursting with flavors, much like the state's culture. Dishes such as dal baati churma, gatte ki sabzi, laal maas, ker sangri, and mirchi vada are not just local favorites but are a symbol of Rajasthan's heritage.

The royal kitchens, dur-



ing the time of the Maharajas, were known for their opulence, and even today, the culinary traditions of the royal families influence modern-day cuisine. Dal baati churma, a dish made of lentils, wheat flour, and ghee, continues to be a staple in Rajasthani households. Many families still follow the traditional way of cooking in chulhas (wooden stoves) or sangri (clay ovens), especially dur-

ing festive seasons. The use of traditional spices, ingredients like ajwain, hing, kasuri methi, and the emphasis on preserving seasonal produce, are all rooted in the state's long history of culinary practices.

FOLK ARTS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP: PRESERVING IDENTITY

Rajasthan's heritage is further reflected in the intricate

folk arts and crafts that are practiced across the state. Block printing, tie-dye, blue pottery, minakari (enamel work), meena jewelry, and bandhej (tie-dye fabrics) are just a few examples of the artistic traditions that have been passed down through generations. These crafts are not only sold in local markets but are also worn, used, and displayed in homes, keeping the heritage alive.



For instance, blue pottery, a traditional art form brought to Rajasthan by the Mughals, is used in daily life in the form of decorative items, crockery, and tiles. Similarly, kathputli (puppet) shows are an important form of entertainment, showcasing the state's folk culture and history. In rural Rajasthan, women continue to wear leheriya sarees and gota patti jewelry on a daily basis, while men adorn themselves with kalis (decorative cloth pieces) and safo (headgear).

Even the art of tattooing, known as Godna, is a form of personal expression that has deep ties to Rajasthan's heritage. Women in Rajasthan have traditionally used tattoos as a way to symbolize their identity, social status, and life experiences.

FESTIVALS: A LIVING HERITAGE

Rajasthan is a land of fes-

tivals, where the richness of its culture and heritage is celebrated with enthusiasm and grandeur. From the colorful Gangaur and Teej festivals to the majestic Pushkar Camel Fair and the grand Diwali celebrations, festivals in Rajasthan are a reflection of the state's history, religious diversity, and social structure.

During festivals, the traditional attire, folk music, dance performances, and colorful processions are a living testament to the state's heritage. The Kalbeliya dance of the snake charmer community, the Ghoomar dance, and the dhol beats continue to be an integral part of Rajasthan's social fabric. The folk performances at festivals showcase the stories of valor, love, and life in Rajasthan, passed down from generation to generation.

SPIRITUALITY:

A CULTURAL AND PERSONAL FOUNDATION

Rajasthan's lifestyle is also deeply rooted in spirituality, reflected in the state's many temples, mosques, and gurdwaras. The state's rich spiritual history is a testament to the diverse faiths that have shaped its cultural identity over centuries. The architecture of these sacred spaces, like the Brahma Temple in Pushkar and the Nathdwara Temple, is a blend of local tradition and religious influence.

Even in the modern era, many Rajasthanis begin their day with prayers and rituals, keeping alive the spiritual practices of their ancestors. The way of life is often centered around devotion and respect for religious traditions, which are considered to be an integral part of personal and community identity.

A STATE THAT LIVES ITS HERITAGE

Rajasthan's lifestyle is an exquisite reflection of its rich heritage. The ancient palaces, traditional clothing, vibrant festivals, unique cuisine, and intricate craftsmanship all showcase the state's deep-rooted history and culture. More than just a state, Rajasthan is a living testament to the beauty of preserving heritage while embracing modernity. The lifestyle here is not just about daily routines but about carrying forward the legacy of a land where royalty, artistry, and tradition are an inherent part of life itself. In Rajasthan, the past is not something to look back at—it is something that is continuously woven into the present, creating a vibrant, living tapestry of culture.

ISRAEL BOMBARDS GAZA CITY AHEAD OF PLANNED OFFENSIVE

AGENCIES
CAIRO/JERUSALEM

The Israeli military maintained its pressure on Gaza City with heavy bombardments overnight, residents said, ahead of a Thursday meeting between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ministers on plans to seize the enclave's largest city.

The military a day earlier called up 60,000 reservists in a sign that the government was pressing ahead with the plan, despite international condemnation. However, one military official said that most reservists would not serve in combat and that the strategy to take Gaza City had not yet been finalised.

Calling up tens of thousands of reservists is also likely to take weeks, giving time for mediators to attempt to bridge gaps over a new temporary ceasefire proposal that Hamas has accepted, but the Israeli government is yet to officially respond to.

The proposal calls for a 60-day ceasefire and the release of 10 living hostages being held in Gaza by Hamas militants and of 18 bodies. In turn, Israel would release about 200 long-serving Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

The Israeli government has restated that all of the remaining 50 hostages held by militants in Gaza must be released at once. Israeli officials believe that around 20 of them are still alive.

In a sign of growing despair at conditions in Gaza, residents staged a rare show



Displaced Palestinian women fleeing northern Gaza ride with their belongings as they head south, amid an Israeli military operation, in Gaza City. Agencies

Many malnourished children will die in Gaza City operation: UNRWA

GENEVA: "If there is no crisis plan, then they [the children suffering from malnutrition] will certainly be condemned," Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said.

The head of the UN Palestinian refugee agency on Thursday voiced concern

that children suffering from malnutrition in Gaza would die if emergency provisions are not immediately put in place during Israel's Gaza City military operation.

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said that its data showed

a six-fold increase in the number of children suffering from malnutrition in Gaza City since March.

"We have a population that is extremely weak that will be confronted with a new major military operation," he told a Geneva press club meeting.

of protest against the war on Thursday.

Carrying banners reading "Save Gaza, enough" and "Gaza is dying by the killing, hunger and oppression," hundreds of people rallied in Gaza City in a march organised by several civil unions.

"This is for a clear message: words are finished, and the time has come for action to stop the military operations,

to stop the genocide against our people and to stop the massacres taking place daily," said Palestinian journalist Tawfik Abu Jarad during the protest.

The Gaza health ministry said at least 70 people had been killed in Israeli fire in the enclave in the past 24 hours, including eight people in a house in Sabra suburb in Gaza City.

A statement from the Palestinian Fatah movement said one of those killed in Sabra was a Fatah leader and former militant, along with seven members of his family. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The plan to seize Gaza City was approved this month by the security cabinet, which Netanyahu chairs, even

though many of Israel's closest allies have urged the government to reconsider.

Netanyahu will hold a meeting on Thursday to approve operational plans, according to a source close to the prime minister.

He intends to launch the operation as soon as possible, which would include issuing warnings to residents to leave Gaza City, the source said.

Even as the military begins its preparations to launch the assault on Gaza City, Israeli officials have indicated that there is time for a ceasefire to be reached.

Netanyahu is under pressure from some far-right members of his coalition to reject a temporary ceasefire and instead to continue the war and pursue the annexation of the territory.

In Gaza City, thousands of Palestinians have left their homes as Israeli forces have escalated shelling on the Sabra and Tuffah neighbourhoods. Some families have left for shelters along the coast, while others have moved to central and southern parts of the enclave, according to residents there.

"We are facing a bitter-bitter situation, to die at home or leave and die somewhere else, as long as this war continues, survival is uncertain," said Rabah Abu Elias, 67, a father of seven.

"In the news, they speak about a possible truce, on the ground, we only hear explosions and see deaths. To leave Gaza City or not isn't an easy decision to make," he told Reuters by phone.

Suspended Thai PM testifies in court ahead of ouster ruling

AGENCIES
BANGKOK

Thailand's suspended prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra testified on Thursday in a case seeking her removal from office over her handling of the kingdom's border row with Cambodia.

Paetongtarn, daughter of controversial but influential billionaire ex-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, is accused of failing in her duties by not standing up for the country properly in a call with former Cambodian leader Hun Sen, audio of which was leaked online.

The Constitutional Court, which ousted her predecessor as prime minister a year ago in a separate ethics case, will rule on Friday next week whether Paetongtarn should be thrown out of office.

The court suspended her from office last month and summoned her to answer questions in the case on Thursday -- her 39th birthday.

Dressed in a black business suit, Paetongtarn greeted reporters as she arrived at court in Bangkok with Prommin Lertsuridej, a top adviser who is named in the case with her.

She answered judges' questions for around an hour and a half, but the court has issued an order banning any reporting of what was said during the hearing.

As Paetongtarn left the court, she smiled and waved at a small group of supporters outside.

The case centres around her call in June with Hun Sen, Cambodia's longtime ruler and father of its current premier, which focused on the two neighbours' then-brewing row over their disputed border.

In the call, Paetongtarn addressed Hun Sen as "uncle" and referred to a Thai military commander as her "opponent", sparking a furious reaction in Thailand.

Iran holds military drills after big losses in war with Israel

AGENCIES
DUBAI

Iran on Thursday launched its first solo military exercises since its June war with Israel, state media reported, seeking to reassert an image of strength after suffering heavy losses.

Navy units of Iran's regular armed forces fired missiles and drones at open water targets in the Indian Ocean under the "Sustainable Power 1404" drill, state television reported.

"These drills take place around a month after the Iran-Russia drill under the name Casarex 2025 which took place in Iran's northern waters (Caspian Sea). The Sustainable Power drills... are in Iran's southern waters," state TV said.

Israel attacked Iran in a 12-day air war which the United States briefly joined, pounding key nuclear installations and killing top military commanders and nuclear scientists.



An Iranian missile is launched during a military exercise in an undisclosed location in Iran.

Israel largely destroyed Iran's air defences during the war and much of its stockpile of ballistic weapons is believed to have been damaged by Israeli strikes.

Since then, the Islamic Republic has said it is ready to counter any future attacks. "Any new adventure by the enemy will be faced with a strong slap," the Defence Ministry said in a statement on Thursday.

U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened to strike Iran again if it revives

nuclear facilities including uranium enrichment plants.

Tehran suspended negotiations with Washington aimed at curbing the country's nuclear ambitions after the Israeli and U.S. airstrikes. Iran denies any intent to develop atomic bombs. Iran believes the moment for "effective" nuclear talks with the U.S. has not yet arrived, its top diplomat said on Wednesday, though Tehran would not completely cut off cooperation with the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

China races to build world's largest solar farm to meet emissions targets

AGENCIES
TALATAN, CHINA

Chinese government officials last month showed off what they say will be the world's largest solar farm when completed high on a Tibetan plateau. It will cover 610 square kilometers (235 square miles), which is the size of Chicago.

China has been installing solar panels far faster than anywhere else in the world, and the investment is starting to pay off. A study released Thursday found that the country's carbon emissions edged down 1% in the first six months of 2025 compared to a year earlier, extending a

trend that began in March 2024.

The good news is China's carbon emissions may have peaked well ahead of a government target of doing so before 2030. But China, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, will need to bring them down much more sharply to play its part in slowing global climate change.

For China to reach its declared goal of carbon neutrality by 2060, emissions would need to fall 3% on average over the next 35 years, said Lauri Myllyvirta, the Finland-based author of the study and lead analyst at the

Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

"China needs to get to that 3% territory as soon as possible," he said.

'Moment of global significance'

China's emissions have fallen before during economic slowdowns. What's different this time is electricity demand is growing -- up 3.7% in the first half of this year -- but the increase in power from solar, wind and nuclear has easily outpaced that, according to Myllyvirta, who analyzes the most recent data in a study published on the U.K.-based Carbon Brief website.



"We're talking really for the first time about a structural declining trend in China's emissions," he said.

China installed 212 gigawatts of solar capacity in the

first six months of the year, more than America's entire capacity of 178 gigawatts as of the end of 2024, the study said. Electricity from solar has overtaken hydropower



A man competes in the Slackline King championship final more than 1,000 metres above the Huangshizhai gorge, Zhangjiajie, China.

Lebanon releases Israeli citizen held in detention for a year

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

An Israeli citizen detained in Lebanon has been returned to Israel after more than a year in detention, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said on Thursday.

There was little information given about the man, identified as Salah Abu-Hussein, an Arab citizen of Israel. His imprisonment had not garnered public attention in Israel or Lebanon. Israeli media reported that the man's family had reported him missing around a year ago and was unaware he was in Lebanon.

Four Lebanese security and judicial officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the case, said the man had entered the country illegally by crossing the land border between the two countries and was then caught by Lebanese security officials.

At the time of his crossing, Israeli forces and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah were engaged in ongoing low-level clashes in the border region, which escalated



into a full-scale war in September 2024. It was halted by a U.S.-brokered ceasefire two months later.

Abu-Hussein's release was negotiated in secret over the past few months in cooperation with the Red Cross, according to Gal Hirsch, Netanyahu's coordinator for the Hostages and the Missing, who is also Israel's point of contact for the hostages in Gaza.

On Thursday, Lebanese Authorities handed Abu-Hussein to Hirsch at the Rosh Hanikra crossing between Lebanon and Israel, which is not open to the public. Lebanon and Israel do not have diplomatic relations and Israeli citizens are prohibited from entering

Lebanon under Lebanese law, with rare exceptions for Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship.

Netanyahu hailed the return of Abu-Hussein. "This is a positive step and a sign of things to come," he said after Abu-Hussein returned.

There was no official comment from the Lebanese government on his release.

A group advocating for Lebanese citizens held in Israeli prisons denounced the move. The Representative Committee of Lebanese Prisoners and Freed Prisoners said in a statement that 19 Lebanese citizens are imprisoned in Israel and called the release of the Israeli citizen by Lebanon "blatant betrayal."

Grand ceremony, parade mark 60 years of Chinese Communist Party rule in Tibet

AGENCIES
BEIJING

With leader Xi Jinping looking on, China marked 60 years of Communist Party rule in Tibet on Thursday with speeches and a parade in front of the 17th-century Potala Palace, the home of the Dalai Lama until he fled to India in 1959.

Speakers hailed economic development in the remote region in the foothills of the Himalayas and stressed the need to fight separatism. Opposition to Chinese rule has been largely quashed by a decades-long campaign of repression that has imprisoned Buddhist monks and demolished some monasteries.

"Tibetan affairs are China's internal affairs,



Chinese President Xi Jinping waves to people from a vehicle as he arrives at Lhasa in western China's Tibet Autonomous Region to attend an event to mark the 60th anniversary of the consolidation of Beijing's long-contested rule over the Himalayan territory.

and no external forces are permitted to interfere. All schemes to split the motherland and undermine stability in Tibet are doomed to fail," senior Communist Party leader Wang Huning told a crowd of 20,000 flag-waving people in a large public square.

Communist forces occupied Tibet in 1951, two years after emerging victorious in a civil war and taking control of China. The anniversary marked the government's establishment of the Tibet autonomous region in 1965. It is called Xizang in Chinese.

US-EU DEAL: 15% TARIFF ON 70% EU GOODS

Zero tariffs on U.S. cars, industrial goods exported to EU

AGENCIES
BRUSSELS

On Thursday, American and European Union officials unveiled a sparse outline of a trade deal that would levy a 15% import tax on roughly 70% of European goods exported to the United States, while leaving key categories—such as wine and spirits as well as steel—unresolved and signaling that talks will continue on those and a host of other important sectors.

Both sides stressed that the document is only “a first step in a process that can be further expanded to cover additional areas.” The negotiations span the vast range of goods traded between the two economies, which together constitute the largest bilateral trading relationship in the world, accounting for about \$2 trillion in annual trans-Atlantic business. The 3½-page text is a

KEY POINTS

- US-EU outline sets 15% US import tax on ~70% of EU goods; wine/spirits and steel unresolved; talks to continue and expand.
- Covers the world’s largest bilateral trade flow—about \$2T in annual trans-Atlantic business
- Text is 3½ pages, a political (non-binding) commitment—unlike typical, legally binding, hundreds-page trade pacts.



President Donald Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen talk after reaching a trade deal at the Trump Turnberry golf course in Turnberry, Scotland Sunday, July 27, 2025. (AP Photo)

A tiny, non-binding 3½-page outline still imposes a 15% levy on ~70% of EU exports while granting zero tariffs to U.S. industrial goods.

political commitment rather than a legally binding agreement, a sharp contrast to the typical format of trade pacts that run to hundreds

of pages and carry legal force.

Core provisions include a 15% tariff on most EU goods; a zero tariff on U.S. cars and other industrial goods shipped to the 27-member EU; and a set of exemptions from the 15% rate for aircraft and aircraft

parts, generic pharmaceuticals, and pharmaceutical ingredients, with additional sectors to be added for goods deemed crucial to each other’s economies. Those goods would face lower tariffs than they did before President Donald Trump’s tariff onslaught.

ICC, France, Belgium slam US for sanctions on judges

AGENCIES
AMSTERDAM

The International Criminal Court (ICC), along with France and Belgium, has strongly condemned the US for imposing sanctions on ICC judges and prosecutors, labelling it a “flagrant attack” on the court’s judicial independence.

In a statement on Wednesday (local time), the ICC deplored the US sanctions, vowing to continue its mandate undeterred, calling on its 125 member states to provide “firm and consistent support” for its work in delivering justice for victims of international crimes.

“These sanctions are a flagrant attack against the independence of an impartial judicial institution which operates under the mandate from 125 States Parties from all regions. They constitute also an affront against the Court’s



The International Criminal Court in The Hague on March 12. (Reuters)

States Parties, the rules-based international order and, above all, millions of innocent victims across the world,” ICC stated.

According to the statement issued by the US Department of State, the sanctions targeted four ICC officials, including Judges Kimberly Prost from Canada and Nicolas Guillou from France, along with Deputy Hawkins Deputy Prosecutors Nazhat Shameem Khan from Fiji and Mame Mandiaye Niang from Senegal.

Prost was sanctioned to authorise the ICC for an investigation into US personnel in Afghanistan, while Guillou authorised the ICC for the issuance of arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Israeli Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant for alleged charges related to Israel’s military activity in Gaza. Shameem Khan and Niang are being sanctioned for continuing the ICC’s actions against Israel.

Netherlands sends Patriots, 300 troops to Poland

AGENCIES
AMSTERDAM

The Netherlands has announced the deployment of approximately 300 troops and advanced air defence systems, including two Patriot systems, a NASAMS system, and anti-drone capabilities, to Poland from December 1 to bolster NATO’s Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) logistics hub in addition to providing support to Ukraine amid the Russian conflict. According to a statement released by the Dutch Ministry of Defence on Wednesday (local time), the move aims to protect NATO territory and deter Russian aggression amid the ongoing conflict. “From December 1, Defence will deploy two Patriot air defence systems, one NASAMS, and anti-drone systems, along with approximately 300 military personnel. This integrated unit will secure the logistical centre of the NATO Security



The Netherlands will deliver air defence in Poland. X post/ @DefensieMin

Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) in Poland,” the Dutch Ministry of Defence said in a post on X. The deployment is part of a broader effort to safeguard the NSATU hub in Poland, which facilitates the delivery of military equipment to Ukraine. Dutch Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans emphasised the strategic importance of the deployment, stating, “The Ministry of Defence provides advanced

capabilities. These are scarce, but the Netherlands is capable of providing them. This deployment contributes to three important goals: defending NATO territory, discouraging Russian aggression, and providing continued support to Ukraine. This way, we keep the Russian threat as far at bay as possible.” As per the statement, the integrated unit will provide layered air defence to counter potential threats, including ballistic and cruise missiles, fighter jets, helicopters, and drones. “This is an integrated unit comprising three different capabilities. In addition to both Patriots, it includes a Nasams air defence system and anti-drone systems. With this, the Netherlands, together with partners, provides layered air defence against potential threats from ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, fighter jets, helicopters, and drones,” the statement added. The Ministry further noted that the deployment will start on December 1 this year and will continue till June 1, 2026.

FBI arrests fugitive Cindy Rodriguez Singh who fled after murdering son

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

A coordinated operation between the US law enforcement and Indian authorities led to the arrest of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s one of the Top 10 Most Wanted Fugitive list, Cindy Rodriguez Singh, in India for the murder of her six-year-old son. FBI, in coordination with Indian authorities and INTERPOL, arrested Cindy Rodriguez Singh in India. She has been transported to the United States. The FBI will hand her over to the Texas authorities, Fox News reported. FBI Director confirming the same noted that she was on FBI ‘Top 10 Most Wanted



FBI Top-10 fugitive Cindy Rodriguez-Singh, 40, arrested. X post/ @scoopjefferson

to Avoid Prosecution and Capital Murder of a person under 10 years of age, Kash Patel said in a post on X. “FBI has arrested another Top 10 Most Wanted Fugitive: Cindy Rodriguez Singh. Singh is wanted on state charges of killing her six-year-old son. She will face charges of Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution and Capital Murder of a person under 10 years of age,” FBI Director Patel said. According to Kash Patel, Singh lied to authorities about her son’s whereabouts in March 2023 and fled to India. “In March of 2023, authorities in Everman, Texas conducted a welfare search

for Singh’s child after he had not been seen since October 2022. Singh allegedly lied to authorities about his whereabouts, and then two days later, boarded a flight to India -- and we believe has not been back to the United States since,” Kash Patel said. Patel said that Singh was charged in October 2023 in the District Court of Tarrant County, Fort Worth, Texas, and in November, authorities issued a federal arrest warrant for the charge of Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution. Kash Patel lauded the efforts of the FBI and Indian law enforcement authorities that led to the arrest.

US judge rejects DOJ bid to unseal Epstein grand jury records

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

A federal judge has denied a request by the US Department of Justice (DOJ) to unseal grand jury transcripts and exhibits from the investigation into sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, CNN reported. Judge Richard Berman said that the Justice Department failed to overcome long-standing precedent that keeps grand jury materials sealed, stressing that the sealed records were minimal compared to the broader investigation files already held by the DOJ. “The information contained in the Epstein grand jury transcripts pales in comparison to the Epstein investigation information and materials in the hands of the Department of Justice,” Judge Berman wrote in his order. According to CNN, the DOJ declined to comment on the ruling. The decision comes at a time when the Trump administration



Jeffrey Epstein. X post/ @RYboating

has faced growing political and public pressure to release more documents related to Epstein, especially after senior officials had earlier promised greater transparency. Berman, however, suggested the DOJ should make broader disclosures instead of pursuing narrow grand jury releases, writing, “The Government is a logical party to make comprehensive disclosure to the public of the Epstein files. By comparison, the instant grand jury motion

appears to be a ‘diversion’ from the breadth and scope of the Epstein files in the Government’s possession.” Earlier this year, Attorney General Pam Bondi distributed binders on Epstein’s case to right-wing social media influencers at the White House, but the material was criticised for lacking new revelations. By May, the DOJ began reversing its earlier promises to release further documents, a shift that coincided with Bondi reportedly alerting former President Donald Trump that his name appeared in the files, CNN reported. On July 7, the DOJ issued an unsigned memorandum stating it would not release any more Epstein-related documents. The move, described by critics as opaque, has provoked frustration not only among Democrats but also members of Trump’s political base, who accuse the department of undermining public trust by withholding information.

Putin ready for Zelenskiy meet, legitimacy hurdle

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin is willing to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, but only after all issues are worked through and with clarity on Zelenskiy’s authority to sign a peace deal, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Thursday. Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump met Friday in Alaska for the first Russia-U.S. summit in more than four years and discussed how to end the deadliest war in Europe since World War Two.

After the Alaska summit, Trump said Monday he had begun arranging a meeting between the Russian and Ukrainian leaders, to be followed by a trilateral summit with the U.S. president. Asked whether Putin would meet Zelenskiy, Lavrov replied: “Our president has repeatedly said that he is ready to meet, including with Zelenskiy.” He added



Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov attends a meeting with India’s Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar at Zinaida Morozova’s Mansion in Moscow, Russia August 21, 2025. (Reuters)

a caveat: “With the understanding that all issues that require consideration at the highest level will be well worked out, and experts and ministers will prepare appropriate recommendations. And, of course, with the understanding that when and if—hopefully, when—it comes to signing future agreements, the issue of the legitimacy of the person who signs these agreements from the Ukrainian side will be re-

solved.”

Putin has repeatedly questioned Zelenskiy’s legitimacy, noting his term was due to expire in May 2024 but no new presidential election has been held because of the war. Kyiv says Zelenskiy remains the legitimate president. Russian officials say they worry that if Zelenskiy signs a deal, a future Ukrainian leader could contest it on the grounds that his term had technically expired.

Zelenskiy said this week Kyiv would like a “strong reaction” from Washington if Putin is unwilling to sit down for a bilateral meeting.

WAR OR PEACE?

European leaders say they are skeptical that Putin truly wants peace, but they are seeking a credible way to ensure Ukraine’s security as part of a potential peace deal with minimal U.S. involvement. Lavrov countered that it is clear neither Ukraine nor European leaders want peace. He accused the “coalition of the willing”—including Britain, France, Germany and Italy—of trying to undermine progress made in Alaska. “They are not interested in a sustainable, fair, long-term settlement,” he said of Ukraine, adding that Europeans are focused on achieving Russia’s strategic defeat. “European countries followed Zelenskiy to Washington and tried to advance their

agenda there, which aims to ensure that security guarantees are based on the logic of isolating Russia,” he said, referring to Monday’s gathering of Trump, Zelenskiy and leaders of major European powers at the White House.

Lavrov said the best security-guarantee option for Ukraine would be based on the 2022 Istanbul discussions between Moscow and Kyiv. Under a draft of that document seen by Reuters, Ukraine was asked to accept permanent neutrality in exchange for international security guarantees from the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council: Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States. Any attempt to depart from the failed Istanbul talks would be hopeless, Lavrov said. At the time, Kyiv rejected the proposal on the grounds that Moscow would effectively have had veto power over any military response to come to its aid.

Italy arrests Ukrainian over 2022 Nord Stream gas pipelines sabotage

AGENCIES
BERLIN

A Ukrainian man was arrested at a holiday bungalow in Italy on Thursday on suspicion of coordinating attacks on three Nord Stream gas pipelines in 2022, marking a breakthrough in an episode that sharpened tensions between Russia and the West. Described by both Moscow and the West as an act

of sabotage, the explosions largely severed Russian gas supplies to Europe, prompting a major escalation in the Ukraine conflict and squeezing energy supplies on the continent. No one has taken responsibility for the blasts and Ukraine has denied any role.

The arrest comes just as Kyiv is engaged in fraught diplomatic discussions with the United States over how

“Politically we are firmly on Ukraine’s side and will continue to do so,” said Justice Minister Stefanie Hubig when asked if the arrest would affect Berlin’s ties to Kyiv.

to end the war in Ukraine without giving away major concessions and swathes of its own territory to Russia. “Politically we are firmly on Ukraine’s side and will continue to do so,” said

Justice Minister Stefanie Hubig when asked if the arrest would affect Berlin’s ties to Kyiv. “What is important for me is that Germany is a country of laws and crimes in our jurisdic-

tion are fully investigated.” An official in the Ukrainian president’s office said he could not comment as it was not clear who had been arrested. The official reiterated Ukraine’s denial of any role in the blasts.

The suspect, identified only as Serhii K. under German privacy laws, was part of a group that planted devices on the pipelines near the Danish island of Bornholm in the

Baltic Sea, a statement from the prosecutor’s office said. He and his accomplices set off from Rostock on Germany’s northeastern coast in a sailing yacht to carry out the attack, it said. The vessel had been rented from a German company with the help of forged identity documents via middlemen, it added. Authorities acted on a European arrest warrant for the suspect, who faces charges

of collusion to cause an explosion, anti-constitutional sabotage and destruction of important structures. Carabinieri officers arrested him overnight in San Clemente in the province of Rimini on Italy’s Adriatic coast, where he was supposed to spend a few days with his family. “Once his presence had been verified, the Carabinieri surrounded the

bungalow and launched a raid, during which the man surrendered without resistance,” a Carabinieri statement said, adding the suspect was 49 years old. A police official told Reuters the suspect was arrested because, when providing documents at a hotel check-in, an alert flagging he was wanted popped up at police headquarters, which dispatched a Carabinieri patrol.

LAKME FASHION WEEK RETURNS WITH 2025 DELHI EDITION THIS OCTOBER

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Fashion lovers in Delhi, who recently witnessed a successful run of India Couture Week, will soon be treated to a new edition of Lakme Fashion Week (LFW).

According to a release, LFW, in partnership with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), is all set to return for its 2025 Delhi edition, scheduled from October 8 to October 12. The 5-day gala will be held at The Grand, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi.

The Mumbai edition earlier this year marked the beginning of the platform's 25th anniversary celebra-



Lakme fashion Week (Image Source: LFW)

tions with a gala tribute to its legacy. The celebration now moves to the capital, as the event prepares to host its upcoming showcase in New Delhi.

With its bi-annual format in Mumbai and New Delhi, the platform has been

instrumental in shaping India's fashion narrative both locally and globally. Backed by Lakme, Reliance Brands Ltd., and FDCI, the upcoming edition promises a dynamic and immersive celebration of Indian design, with a focus on sustainabil-

ity, diversity, and the future of fashion.

Sunanda Khaitan, Vice President, Lakme India, shared, "Lakme Fashion Week has stood at the forefront of shaping the narrative of Indian fashion and beauty for over a quarter of a century. As we look ahead to a new season, we are not only honouring that legacy but also evolving it with fresh ideas, deeper purpose, and a steadfast commitment to innovation. Each edition serves as a catalyst for the industry, setting benchmarks, launching talent, and reimagining the possibilities of fashion in a global context. With every step forward, Lakme Fashion Week reaffirms its role as a



Image Source Tammanah Bhatia social media account. (Instagram)

Neil Nitin Mukesh, Divya Khossla starrer comedy thriller 'Ek Chatur Naar' teaser out

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

The teaser for Neil Nitin Mukesh starrer comedy thriller 'Ek Chatur Naar' is out, giving viewers a first glimpse of the film that promises humour, suspense, and mind games.

The film also stars Divya Khossla in a lead role.

The teaser, released on Thursday, offers a mix of comedy and chaos with Ravi Kishan's voiceover giving an idea of what is described as a story full of clever tricks and unexpected turns. Directed by Umesh Shukla, the film appears to revolve around a game of wits where



A screenshot from the motion poster.Credit: X/@TSeries

nothing is as simple as it looks.

Earlier this month, the makers had unveiled the motion poster of the film, introducing Neil and Divya's characters. In the poster, Divya was seen cutting vegetables with a mysterious look on her face, while Neil, appeared

sharply dressed in a suit, holding a gun with a sly smile.

Sharing the poster on Instagram, Neil Nitin Mukesh had written: "Samajhne mein waqt lagega... par jab samajh jaoge toh der ho chuki hogi."

Ek Chatur Naar is produced by Umesh Shukla,

Ashish Wagh, and Zee-shan Ahmad. The film will hit theatres on 12 September 2025.

Neil was last seen in the musical drama 'Hai Junoon- Dream, Dare, Dominate'. Directed by Abhishek Sharma, the movie also starred Jacqueline Fernandez, Sumedh Mudgalkar, Siddharth Nigam, Yukti Thareja, Aryan Katoch, Priyank Sharma, Kunwar Amar, Mohan Pandey, Elisha Mayor, Sanchit Kundra, Sanatana Roach, Devangshi Sen, Anusha Mani, Bhavin Bhanushali, Arnav Magoo, and Yukti Thareja in pivotal roles.

Gia Manek marries long-time friend, fellow actor Varunn Jain



Photo Credit: Giaa Manek Instagram

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Popular television actor Gia Manek, who is best known for her roles in 'Saath Nibhaana Saathiya' and 'Jeannie Aur Juju,' has married her long-time friend and fellow actor Varunn Jain.

The couple shared the happy news with fans through Instagram, posting pictures from their wedding ceremony. In the photos, Gia looked graceful in her traditional bridal attire, while Varunn matched her in a coordinated outfit.

Along with the pictures,

Gia wrote, "With the grace of Divine and Master's and with all the love showered, we've stepped into this forever union -- hand in hand, heart to heart. We were two friends, today we're husband & wife. So grateful for the love, blessings and wishes from all our loved ones who made this day so special. Cheers to a lifetime of laughter, adventure, memories, and togetherness as Mr. & Mrs Gia & Varunn.

Gia and Varunn, who were once co-stars in 'Tera Mera Sath Rahe,' remained close friends over the years.

Gia rose to fame as "Gopi Bahu" in 'Saath Nibhaana Saathiya,' a role that made her a household name. She later charmed her fans as Jeannie in 'Jeannie Aur Juju.' She made her OTT debut with the film 'Kaam Chalu Hai' opposite Rajpal Yadav.

Varunn Jain, on the other hand, began his career in 2010 with 'Kaali - Ek Agnipariksha.' He became well-known for playing Mohit Rath in 'Diya Aur Baati Hum' and was also remembered for his role as Chirag Modi, Gia's on-screen brother-in-law, in 'Saath Nibhaana' Saathiya.

Lucky Ali's India tour concert announced, to kick-start on Nov 2

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Singer Lucky Ali has a musical tour lined up this winter.

The 'O Sanam' hitmaker is all set to kick-start his India tour from Delhi on November 2. He will also perform in Kolkata (November 22), Bengaluru (December 6), Hyderabad (December 13), and Ahmedabad (December 30).

The tour will be held under the banner "Re: Sound by Jet ALive." Tickets for Jaipur, Guwahati, Mumbai,



Singer Lucky Ali- Image Source:ANI

and Pune will go live soon.

Earlier this year, in an interview with ANI, Lucky Ali, who is best known for his iconic songs like 'O Sanam', 'Safarnama', and 'Ek Pal Ka Jeena', applauded the growing number of live music concerts in India, seeing them as a great platform for artists to perform and express themselves.

He said, "It's (India) is aware of all its talents. Everybody gets a space to perform and everybody gets a space to express themselves. So, in that way, India

is very accepting of its artists and art."

After a hiatus of nine years from the silver screens, Lucky Ali made a comeback last year with his collaboration with 'The Local Train' for the song 'Tu Hai Kahaan' from the film 'Do Aur Do Pyaar'

Following his unforgettable contribution to the classic soundtrack Safarnama from the film 'TamaSha', Lucky Ali once again captivated audiences with his timeless voice, evoking nostalgia and stirring hearts.

Prime Video, Maddock films seals multi-year deal

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

If you enjoyed watching the Varun Dhawan and Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer Badlapur back in 2015, then there's some exciting news for you!

A sequel may be in the works. Yes, you read it right. On Thursday, Prime Video India announced its multi-year post-theatrical licensing deal with Maddock Films, securing worldwide exclusive streaming rights to highly anticipated upcoming titles from the Indian production house.

Interestingly, the list features 'Badlapur 2'. However, it is unclear whether the film will feature a new cast

or if Varun Dhawan and Nawazuddin Siddiqui will reprise their roles.

"The slate also includes the highly anticipated Sidharth Malhotra, Janhvi Kapoor-starrer Param Sundari that premieres in theatres on 29th August



Maddock Films

2025, as well as Shiddat 2 and Badlapur 2, expansions of two highly successful franchises," read a press note.

The broader licensing collaboration also includes the Sriram Raghavan-directed Ikki starring Agastya Nanda, in addition to several other films to be announced soon.

Speaking about the partnership, Dinesh Vijan, CEO & founder, Maddock Films, said, "We've always believed in telling stories that surprise, entertain, and resonate--and in working with partners who share that belief. Prime Video has consistently championed cinema that transcends languages, geographies, and formats.

Hrithik Roshan praises Saba Azad's musical drama first look

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Saba Azad and Soni Razdan-starrer musical drama 'Songs of Paradise' will be out on August 29. On Thursday, the makers shared the first look of the project, revealing that it will stream on Prime Video from August 29. Interestingly, the film's first asset garnered a shout-out



Image Source Instagram.

Saba Azad and Soni Razdan-starrer musical drama 'Songs of Paradise' will be out on August 29.

from Saba's boyfriend and actor Hrithik Roshan.

Taking to Instagram, he shared the motion poster and captioned it, "beautiful." Directed by Danish

Renzu, and produced by Shafat Qazi and Danish Renzu, the film also features Zain Khan Durrani, Sheeba Chaddha, Taaruk Raina, and Lillete Dubey.

Hariharan awarded with honorary doctorate, calls Arijit 'very good singer'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Legendary singer Hariharan, often called the "King of Ghazals," has been honoured with a prestigious recognition. Techno India University in Kolkata, on Wednesday evening, awarded him the Honorary Doctorate of Literature for his remarkable contribution to music.

Speaking about the recognition, Hariharan expressed his feelings of "joy" and said



Image Source Hariharan Social media

it was a special moment for him. "This is a matter of joy. It's my privilege and hon-

our to receive an honorary doctorate of literature from Techno India University. The other recipients, who are big names in their respective fields, also came here..." the veteran singer told ANI.

Hariharan also shared his thoughts on the new generation of singers. Praising Arijit Singh, the singer said he truly admires his talent. "I like Arijit Singh. He is from Bengal and he is a very good singer," Hariharan said warmly.

Delhi HC reserves order on sanjay bhandari's plea against fugitive economic offender tag

TDG NETWORK

The Delhi High Court on Thursday reserved its order on a petition filed by UK-based arms consultant Sanjay Bhandari, challenging a trial court's decision declaring him a Fugitive Economic Offender under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna reserved the verdict after hearing detailed arguments from both sides.

BHANDARI'S ARGUMENTS

Appearing for Bhandari, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal argued that the trial court's declaration should



be stayed, as its immediate effect would be the seizure of his properties. He contended that once a person is branded a fugitive, he is effectively stripped of the

right to pursue legal remedies in India.

Bhandari's legal team also pointed out that his stay in the United Kingdom is lawful and protected by a

London High Court ruling, which blocked his extradition to India on grounds of potential threats to his safety in Delhi's Tihar Jail. Earlier, Senior Advocate

With the court reserving its decision, the focus now shifts to Justice Krishna's verdict, which will determine whether the trial court's declaration stands or is stayed.

Maninder Singh, who also represented Bhandari in the matter, had termed the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) application vague and lacking jurisdiction. He further argued that the agency failed to establish the mandatory Rs 100 crore threshold of alleged undisclosed foreign assets required under the FEO Act. Singh also highlighted that the UK High Court had already discharged Bhandari and no

fresh warrants were pending against him.

ED'S OPPOSITION

The Enforcement Directorate, represented by Advocate Zoheb Hossain, strongly opposed Bhandari's plea. Hossain argued that the trial court's declaration could not be deferred merely on request.

"The only objective of the FEO Act is that this man comes back to India to face

the law," he told the court, opposing even the issuance of notice on Bhandari's stay application.

The ED maintained that Bhandari had willfully evaded proceedings in India and was holding undisclosed foreign assets exceeding Rs 100 crore. It further submitted that the refusal of a UK court to extradite him had no bearing on proceedings under Indian law.

TRIAL COURT'S DECISION

In its earlier order, Additional Sessions Judge Sanjeev Aggarwal had declared Bhandari a Fugitive Economic Offender on the basis of the ED's application. The trial court held

that he had deliberately avoided returning to India to face charges and continued to conceal substantial foreign assets.

With the court reserving its decision, the focus now shifts to Justice Krishna's verdict, which will determine whether the trial court's declaration stands or is stayed.

The case carries significant implications, not only for Bhandari's legal standing and property rights but also for the broader enforcement of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, enacted to bring back individuals accused of high-value financial crimes who evade Indian jurisdiction.

SC Declines urgent hearing of plea challenging MCD notification on picking of stray dogs

TDG NETWORK

The Supreme Court on Thursday declines to urgently list a plea challenging a notification issued by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) regarding the pickup and relocation of stray dogs.

A bench comprising Justices J K Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi declined the request for early hearing when a lawyer mentioned that an application had been filed in the matter.

The application argued that the MCD had issued the notification despite the apex court already reserving its order on the issue.

EARLIER OBSERVATIONS BY THE COURT

On August 14, a 3-judge bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and NV Anjaria had reserved its order on an interim prayer seeking a stay on the August 11 directions of the Supreme Court. During the hearing, the court had observed that the stray dog menace in Delhi-NCR was largely due to the "inaction" of local authorities.

The controversy stems from an August 11 order passed by a separate 2-judge bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan. In its directive, the bench



Representative image.

While the matter was under consideration before a 3-judge bench, the MCD issued its notification to implement the August 11 order, prompting the fresh plea challenging the move.

instructed authorities in Delhi-NCR to immediately start picking up stray dogs from all localities and shift them to designated shelters.

THE BENCH FURTHER DIRECTED THAT:

Stray dogs should be housed in shelters and not released back into public spaces.

Authorities must establish adequate shelter homes within eight weeks.

Compliance reports on the creation of such infrastructure must be submitted to

the court.

The directions were issued in response to rising cases of stray dog attacks, particularly those resulting in rabies infections among children.

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

Court had taken suo motu cognizance of the stray dog problem on July 28 following several reports of dog bite incidents in the national capital region. The court had then sought measures

to prevent such attacks and ensure public safety.

While the matter was under consideration before a 3-judge bench, the MCD issued its notification to implement the August 11 order, prompting the fresh plea challenging the move.

With the plea not finding urgency for early listing, the matter is expected to be heard as per the court's schedule. The reserved order of the three-judge bench remains awaited and is likely to decide the scope and implementation of the August 11 directions.

For now, the MCD notification stands, and local authorities remain bound by the directive to pick up and shelter stray dogs across Delhi-NCR.

TDG NETWORK

Rajesh Khimji, accused of attacking Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, has been remanded to 5 days' police custody.

He was produced before Duty Magistrate Arvind Tomar at his residence late on Wednesday.

Before the hearing, Khimji underwent a mandatory medical examination at Aruna Asif Ali Hospital and was later referred to LNJP Hospital.

After hearing the submissions of the Delhi Police, Magistrate Tomar granted the 5-day custody remand. Khimji will be presented before the court again once the remand period ends.

INCIDENT & ARREST

Originally from Rajkot, Gujarat, Khimji was arrested by the Delhi Police shortly after he allegedly attacked CM Rekha Gupta during a public hearing at her official residence in Civil Lines. A case has been registered against him under relevant sections at the Civil Lines Police Station.

The incident shocked political and administrative circles in the capital. Police officials confirmed that necessary precautions were taken during Khimji's court production, as a group of lawyers affiliated with a political party had gathered at the court premises. A heavy police force was deployed to maintain law and order and



Social Media Account

Gupta described the assault as a "cowardly attempt" to derail her commitment to public service. She also thanked people for their support, adding, "I express my heartfelt gratitude for your immense love, blessings, and good wishes."

ensure his safety.

CM REKHA GUPTA'S RESPONSE

Following the attack, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta issued a statement expressing her shock but also reassuring citizens about her recovery. "The attack on me during this morning's public hearing was not just an attack on me, but a cowardly attempt on our resolve to serve Delhi and work for the welfare of the people. Naturally, I was in shock after this attack, but now I

am feeling better. I request all my well-wishers not to trouble themselves by coming to meet me," she wrote in a post on X.

Gupta described the assault as a "cowardly attempt" to derail her commitment to public service. She also thanked people for their support, adding, "I express my heartfelt gratitude for your immense love, blessings, and good wishes."

POLITICAL & PUBLIC REACTIONS

The attack has sparked

widespread condemnation across the political spectrum. Leaders from various parties have termed it an attack on democracy and the safety of elected representatives. Citizens and party workers have also expressed concern for the Chief Minister's safety, urging authorities to strengthen her security arrangements.

With the accused now in police custody, the investigation is expected to focus on the motive behind the attack and whether others were involved. The Delhi Police and Intelligence Bureau are jointly interrogating Khimji to determine if the incident was premeditated.

For now, CM Rekha Gupta has assured the public that the incident will not deter her from continuing her work for the welfare of Delhi's citizens.

Sambhal Temple-Mosque Row: UP Court cets Aug 28 to hear case

TDG NETWORK

A civil court in Chandausi on Thursday deferred the hearing of the ongoing Shahi Jama Masjid-Harihar temple dispute to August 28. The matter came up before Civil Judge (Senior Division) Aditya Singh.

During the hearing, the Muslim side filed an application arguing that since the dispute is already pending before the Supreme Court, the trial court does not have jurisdiction to continue proceedings. Following this submission, the court adjourned the matter to August 28 and directed that objections, if any, be filed by that date.

MUSLIM SIDE'S STAND

Advocate Qasim Jamal, appearing for the mosque management, confirmed filing the application along with a judgment related to the Places of Worship (Spe-



File Photo

cial Provisions) Act, 1991.

"It was directed that till the Supreme Court hears the matter, no religious disputes should be heard by any other court. Neither any case can be heard nor any action taken when the apex court has already imposed a stay till the next hearing," Jamal told reporters. He added that allowing the trial court to proceed would amount to

a violation of the Supreme Court's guidelines.

HINDU SIDE'S POSITION

On the other hand, advocate Shri Shri Gopal Sharma, representing the Hindu petitioners, maintained that the case should proceed before the trial court despite the submissions of the opposite side.

The Hindu petitioners, represented by advocates Hari Shankar Jain and Vishnu Shankar Jain, had filed the suit on November 19, 2023, claiming that the mosque was constructed over a pre-existing Harihar temple.

COURT RULING

The Muslim side had earlier challenged the maintainability of the case in

On the other hand, advocate Shri Shri Gopal Sharma, representing the Hindu petitioners, maintained that the case should proceed before the trial court despite the submissions of the opposite side.

the Allahabad High Court. However, on May 19, the high court upheld the trial court's order permitting a court-monitored survey of the disputed site and directed the proceedings to continue.

BACKGROUND & VIOLENCE

Following the original petition, a court-ordered survey of the mosque premises was carried out on November 19, 2023, and again on November 24. The second survey triggered significant unrest in Sambhal district, leaving four people dead and 29 police personnel injured.

In the aftermath, the police registered cases against several individuals, including Samajwadi Party MP Ziaur Rahman Barq and mosque committee head Zafar Ali. An FIR was also lodged against 2,750 unidentified persons in connection with the violence.

The trial court will next hear the matter on August 28, when objections to the jurisdictional challenge are expected to be filed. The outcome will likely depend on how the Supreme Court's pending proceedings intersect with the trial court's authority in the sensitive dispute.

Arbitration: Powering India's Infrastructure Growth Amid Policy Shifts

NILAVA BANDHOPADHYA

India is witnessing a historic infrastructure boom, with capital investment reaching a record Rs 10 lakh crores in 2023-24, an 800% jump over the past decade. Mega initiatives like PM Gati Shakti, National Infrastructure Pipeline, and Bharatmala Pariyojana are reshaping connectivity, with the sector projected to contribute 15% to GDP and generate 70 million jobs by 2030. However, such complex projects inevitably face disputes over contracts, delays, and payments. Arbitration has emerged as the preferred mechanism, offering speed, expertise, confidentiality, and global enforceability. With India being a signatory to the New York Convention, arbitral awards enjoy recognition in over 160 countries, boosting investor confidence and FDI inflows. Yet, recent government policies—such as the Ministry of Finance's 2024 directive limiting arbitration and Delhi PWD's 2025 order removing arbitration clauses—threaten this progress. Rolling back to court litigation risks delays and investor concerns. Instead, India must strengthen arbitration through institutional mechanisms, sectoral experts, and curbing frivolous challenges, ensuring it remains central to driving infrastructure growth.

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The author is Nilava Bandhopadhyaya, Senior Partner, Zeel Gondiya, Associate and Shuti Singh, Associate at S&A Law Offices

NEOADJUVANT THERAPY FOR HER2 POSITIVE BREAST CANCER: CASE STUDY

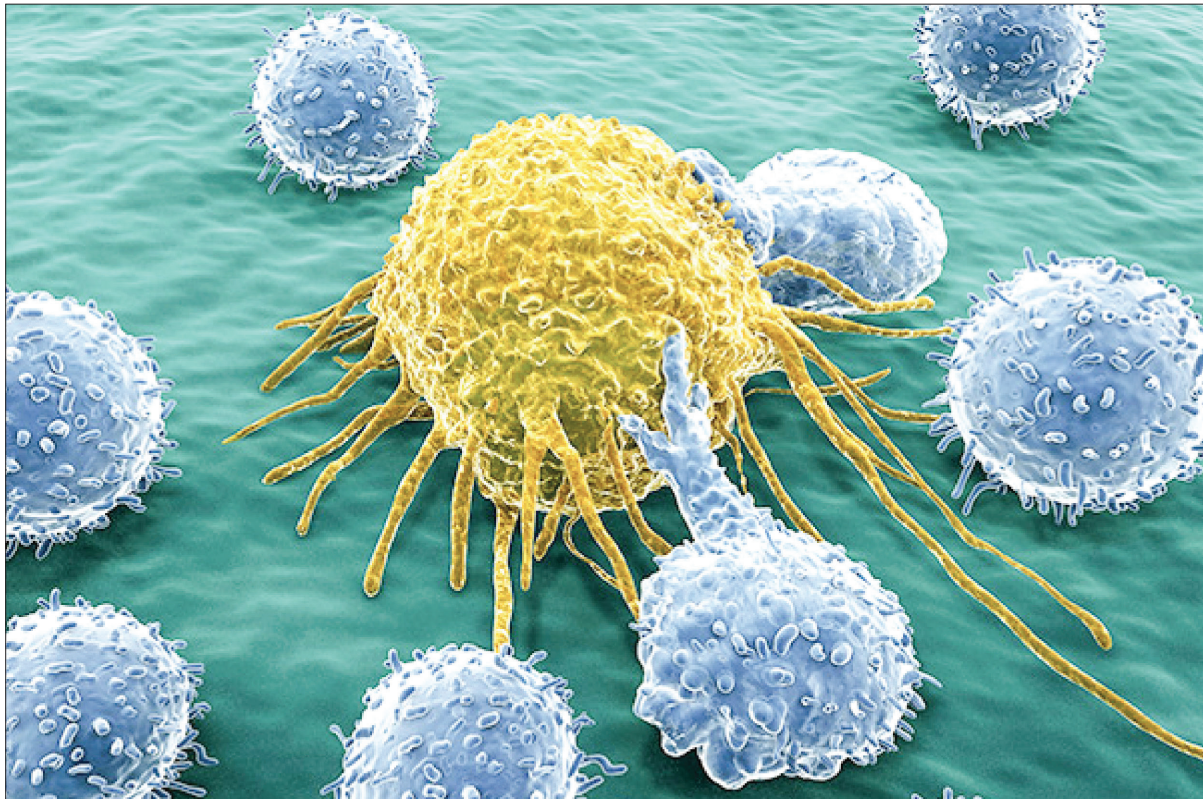
TDG NETWORK

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation, in 2022, around 2.3 million women were diagnosed with this disease. About 15% to 20% of all breast cancer cases are **HER2-positive (human epidermal growth factor receptor 2-positive)**. HER2-positive breast cancer is more aggressive and spreads faster than other types of breast cancer. HER2 is a protein crucial for cell growth, but in HER2-positive breast cancer, cancer cells have this protein in excess, causing them to multiply more aggressively than normal breast cells. This leads to poorer outcomes.

Dr. Mandeep Singh Malhotra says, "It is very important to give the right information to patients and their families for better outcomes. With the right treatment sequence, it is possible to offer better care to patients."

TREATMENT FOR HER2 POSITIVE BREAST CANCER

According to researchers from the European Society for Medical Oncology, it is essential to personalise the treatment of patients diagnosed with this type



of breast cancer. Advances in targeted therapy have significantly improved prognosis. **Neoadjuvant therapy**, a treatment given before surgery, has become a crucial strategy in managing HER2-positive breast cancer.

Dr. Malhotra explains, "Nowadays, when we talk about HER2-positive breast cancer, we talk about targeted therapy and dual targeted therapy involving both trastuzumab, a monoclonal antibody that binds to HER2 receptors, and pertu-

zumab, another monoclonal antibody that blocks a different region of the HER2 receptor." When combined with chemotherapy, this approach helps shrink the tumour and improves surgical outcomes when surgery is recommended.

BENEFITS OF NEOADJUVANT THERAPY

Neoadjuvant therapy in HER2-positive breast cancer can drastically improve long-term outcomes. For best results, however, the

regimen must be personalised. Factors such as tumour size, stage, hormone receptor status, and overall health are carefully considered. Regular monitoring and adjustment of treatment are also essential.

Dr. Malhotra says, "The concept of neoadjuvant therapy in aggressive HER2-positive breast cancer consists of giving both chemotherapy and targeted therapy. Even at early stages, if we give NT and then operate, we are able to prognosticate — meaning, we can determine beforehand if the

response to chemotherapy is there or not. Those who respond are called responders and they have better prognosis, while non-responders have a higher chance of the cancer coming back."

WHY NEOADJUVANT THERAPY IS PREFERRED BEFORE SURGERY

Dr. Malhotra further explains, "If we do upfront surgery in these patients, we lose the chance of prognostication. If the patient is in the good category, they can be reassured



Dr Mandeep Singh Malhotra

that their chances of recurrence are less. Poor category patients can be identified early, and measures like escalating chemotherapy or targeted therapy, intensive follow-ups, and newer tests such as liquid biopsy can be done in advance to prevent recurrence."

He adds, "This is the main reason why, even in early-stage HER2-positive cancers, neoadjuvant therapy is preferred over upfront surgery. It is not that upfront surgery is not possible, but if we operate first, we lose the chance of prognostication. Moreover, even if surgery

is performed first, patients will still need chemotherapy and targeted therapy afterward. The overall treatment remains the same; only the sequence changes. With current data, we feel neoadjuvant therapy is actually superior because it allows better prognostication and helps us identify high-risk and low-risk patients early, so appropriate measures can be taken."

WHAT PATIENTS NEED TO KNOW

If a patient is diagnosed with HER2-positive breast

cancer, it is important to discuss all treatment options with the doctor. Surgery may not always be the first step.

According to Dr. Malhotra, "Even in early-stage breast cancer, with tumours less than 1 cm, like T1 or T2, I will not go for surgery first. I prefer to start with targeted chemotherapy. I often see patients who undergo surgery first and later are advised dual therapy. At this stage, they feel there is cost escalation, and they are confused and afraid the cancer might come back if they cannot afford trastuzumab or pertuzumab."

He further stresses, "It is better to offer neoadjuvant therapy before surgery. If this leads to a complete response (CR — the absence of invasive cancer in the breast and lymph nodes after therapy), our work is done. If the patient can afford treatment for some time and we achieve CR, it is acceptable to stop therapy at that point if cost becomes a concern. But we lose this opportunity if surgery is done first."

THE LAST WORD

Today, neoadjuvant therapy is crucial in managing HER2-positive breast cancer. Combining chemotherapy with HER2-targeted agents like trastuzumab and pertuzumab significantly increases the chances of reversing the cancer and improving long-term outcomes.

MORE THAN A PHYSICAL ILLNESS: BRAIN TUMORS AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

SANJINA BOSE

A brain tumor severely affects a person and their family; it goes much beyond just physical health. Physical illness has always been seen in connection with mental health, but when we talk about brain health, it is much more complex. Each area of the brain is linked to critical functioning. Patients with brain tumors experience a range of emotions, even depression and anxiety. Unlike other illnesses, a tumor has the capacity to affect cognition, memory, personality, and the entire being of the person. The location of the tumor, say, if it's in the frontal lobe may affect personality and could lead to impulsivity.

A tumor in the temporal lobe could affect memory. Navigating the course of treatment is very uncertain; the constant fear of whether my abilities will stay intact or get back to normal can be highly distressing. Living in this grey area takes a toll on a person's mental health. Emotional pain in this case deserves the same attention as physical illness; addressing their fear and vali-

dating their emotions is of the essence. When patients are heard and provided adequate support not just for their medical condition but also for the emotional weight they carry, they begin to respond to treatment better. Seeking therapy can support mindfulness practices, values-based therapies, diving into the meaning of life, developing psychological flexibility to live a meaningful life, and seeing hope beyond the darkness.

Healing from impact of brain tumor isn't just physical, it is about wholistic recovery and rediscovering meaning in life. As Frankl said, "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." (Viktor E. Frankl in Man's Search for Meaning) The emotional journey of an individual facing a brain tumor diagnosis has no control over the disease but what we need to understand is that they need support with inner strength, finding meaning and adaptation is what supports them navigate this situation.

The author is the Clinical Psychologist at Lissun.



How modern diets are fueling a silent liver epidemic



DR. PANKAJ SHARMA

In today's fast-paced world, convenience often dictates our food choices. With the rise of fast food chains and ready-to-eat processed meals, diets high in refined carbohydrates, unhealthy fats, and sugars have become the norm. While these foods satisfy our cravings and save time, their long-term impact on health is alarming. One of the most concerning outcomes is the increasing prevalence of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD), which is now a leading reason behind rising surgical cases.

According to Dr. Pankaj Sharma, Director Dept of Bariatric, General and Laproscopic Surgeon from Fortis Hospital Shalimar Bagh and Founder Shalya Clinic in Rohini New Delhi "the liver is one of the most vital organs for metabolism and detoxification. Unfortunately, modern diets rich in fried, sugary, and processed foods are damaging it silently. We are witnessing younger patients coming in with fatty liver disease, which was once seen mainly in older adults."

THE LINK BETWEEN FAST FOOD AND FATTY LIVER

Fast food items like burgers, fries, pizzas, sugary beverages, and packaged snacks are often calorie-dense but nutrient-poor. They are loaded with trans fats, refined flour, and high levels of fructose corn syrup. These components promote fat deposition in the liver, leading to NAFLD.



The increasing popularity of fast food and processed diets is directly fueling the rise in fatty liver cases and the need for surgical interventions.

When excess fat accumulates in the liver, it begins to impair its normal functions. Over time, this can progress to more serious conditions such as non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

Dr. Pankaj Sharma explains, "The biggest problem with fatty liver is that it is a silent disease in its early stages. Patients do not experience pain or discomfort, so they ignore lifestyle changes until the liver damage has already advanced."

WHY SURGICAL CASES ARE RISING

Traditionally, fatty liver was managed through diet, exercise, and lifestyle modifications. However, the growing severity of cases has led to an increase in

surgical interventions. Bariatric surgery, in particular, has shown significant benefits in reducing liver fat by promoting weight loss and improving metabolic health.

"Obesity is a major risk factor for fatty liver," Dr. Sharma highlights. "Nearly 70–80% of obese individuals are likely to develop fatty liver disease. With the obesity epidemic rising due to unhealthy diets, we are seeing more patients requiring surgical solutions like bariatric surgery to not just lose weight but also to reverse fatty liver changes."

OTHER HEALTH RISKS LINKED TO DIET-INDUCED FATTY LIVER

Patients with NAFLD are also at higher risk of developing

conditions such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases. The burden on healthcare systems is increasing, with more patients needing hospitalization and surgical care.

Dr. Sharma notes, "What many people don't realize is that fatty liver is not an isolated problem. It is part of a larger metabolic syndrome. If left untreated, it significantly raises the chances of heart disease, kidney issues, and even cancers. Surgery, in some cases, becomes a necessity when lifestyle measures fail."

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

While surgical options are available and effective, preventing fatty liver through dietary awareness remains the best strategy. Reducing intake of fast foods, sugary beverages, and fried items, while incorporating more whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins, can help protect the liver.

Dr. Sharma advises, "Make

conscious choices about what you eat. Home-cooked meals, regular exercise, and maintaining a healthy weight are the keys to avoiding fatty liver. Surgery should be seen as a last resort, not the first line of treatment."

The increasing popularity of fast food and processed diets is directly fueling the rise in fatty liver cases and the need for surgical interventions. While bariatric and laparoscopic surgeries offer life-changing benefits for patients with severe conditions, the larger message remains clear — prevention is the best medicine.

"Your diet today shapes your liver health tomorrow. Every meal you choose can either protect your liver or push it closer to disease. The decision lies in your hands" aptly concluded Dr. Pankaj Sharma.

Dr. Pankaj Sharma, Director Dept of Bariatric, General and Laproscopic Surgeon from Fortis Hospital Shalimar Bagh and Founder Shalya Clinic in Rohini New Delhi

NO BILATERAL SPORTS TIES WITH PAK, BUT INDIA WILL PLAY IN ASIA CUP: GOVT

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry on Thursday declared that India and Pakistan will not have any bilateral sporting ties even on neutral venues as per an unprecedented new policy but the cricket team won't be stopped from playing the Asia Cup next month as it is a multi-lateral engagement. The ministry unveiled the new policy with regard to India's international engagements with emphasis on Pakistan. A well-placed ministry source said that the policy, which bars Indian athletes from travelling to Pakistan and likewise disallows neighbouring sportspersons from coming here for bilaterals, is effective immediately.

Asked if Indian teams will be allowed to travel to Pakistan for any multi-lateral competitions, the source said, "In that scenario, we will examine the case before deciding anything."

"Even in multi-lateral events, we can't leave our athletes in lurch. After all, Pakistan is a country that has no hesitation in declaring that it is a dumpster and can hit the shining Mercedes that is India," he added.

In the detailed policy that has been uploaded on the ministry's official website, the government named Paki-



Indian cricket team (File photo)

stan, which currently stands accused of being behind the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people leading to a military showdown between the arch-foes in May after India launched 'Operation Sindoor'.

"India's approach to sports events involving Pakistan reflects its overall policy in dealing with that country," states the ministry policy.

"In so far as bilateral sports events in each other's country are concerned, Indian teams will not be participating in competitions in Pakistan. Nor will we permit Pakistani teams to play in India," it added.

"India and Pakistan cannot play bilateral even if it is planned in America. No bilaterals," asserted a ministry source.

However, multilateral engagements will not be affected and the Asia Cup-bound team will travel to the UAE next month for the eight-team tournament starting September 9, despite social media outrage.

"We will not stop Indian cricket team from playing in Asia Cup as it is a multilateral," the ministry source said. "For multilateral cricket, we will not come in the way unless the host is Pakistan," he added.

Asked if the policy could be revised if the ties between the two countries improve, a ministry source said, "At this point, it looks unlikely."

The policy makes it clear that India, which is aspiring to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games and the 2036 Olympic Games, will abide by the Olympic Charter and its philosophy of inclusivity to present itself as an amiable host of global events.

This is precisely the reason why the government agreed to grant visas to Pakistani hockey players for next month's Asia Cup in Bihar even though they refused to travel citing security con-

cerns.

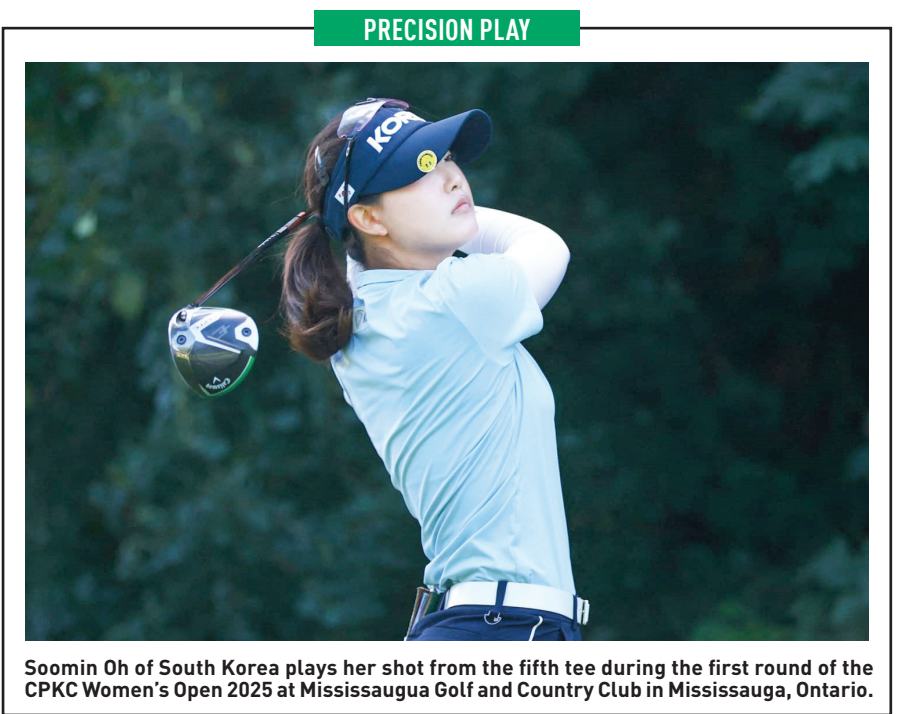
"With regard to international and multilateral events, in India or abroad, we are guided by the practices of international sports bodies and the interest of our own sportspersons.

"...Indian teams and individual players will take part in international events that also have teams or players from Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistani players and teams will be able to participate in such multilateral events hosted by India," the policy stated.

"To position India as a preferred destination for hosting international sporting events, the visa process for sportspersons, team officials, technical personnel, and office-bearers of International Sports Governing Bodies shall be simplified," it added.

The ministry said that for office-bearers of International Sports Governing Bodies, a multi-entry visa shall be granted on priority basis for the duration of their official tenure, subject to a maximum period of five years.

"This shall facilitate their smooth movement into and within the country, in accordance with international norms. Due protocol and courtesies, as per established practice, shall be extended to the Heads of International Sports Governing Bodies during their visits to India," it stated.



Soomin Oh of South Korea plays her shot from the fifth tee during the first round of the CPKC Women's Open 2025 at Mississaugua Golf and Country Club in Mississauga, Ontario.

Vishal TK breaks men's 400m national record in stunning run

AGENCIES
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu quarter-miler Vishal Thennarasu Kayalvizhi on Thursday smashed the men's 400m national record while winning gold with a time of 45.12 seconds on the second day of the National Inter-State Senior Athletics Championships here on Thursday. The 21-year-old ran a stunning race to leave behind his rivals way behind at the finishing line to cement his status as the numero uno quarter-miler of the country. He bettered the previous national record of 45.21 seconds which was in the name of Muhammed Anas since 2029.

Vishal's earlier best was 45.57 seconds while finishing fourth at the 2025



Asian Championships in May in South Korea where he was a member of India's gold-winning mixed 4x400m relay team and silver-winning men's 4x400m relay quartet.

With his 45.12 seconds timing after a scorching

run, Vishal became the fourth fastest Asian 400m runner of the season, behind Yuki Joseph Nakajima (44.84 seconds) of Japan, Ammar Ismail Ibrahim (44.90 seconds) of Qatar and Liukai Liu (45.06 seconds) of China.

Abhinav Shaw shines as India leads Asian Shooting Championship

AGENCIES
SHYMKENT (KAZAKHSTAN)

Teenaged Indian shooters grabbed four of the five gold medals on offer to dominate the fourth day of the 16th Asian Shooting Championship, taking the country's medal tally to 26 medals, here on Thursday.

India now have won 14 gold, six silver and as many bronze medals, firmly cementing their position at the top of the standings.

Abhinav Shaw began the gold rush for India, first teaming up with Naraen Pranav (third with 631.1) and Himanshu (fourth with 630.9), to shoot 628.1 in qualification, not only clinching a spot in the final for himself but also ensuring that the trio's tally of 1890.1 was an Asian as well as a junior world record, apart from the gold for India. He then shot a thrilling final, beginning fifth on the grid after the first five-shot series to take the lead after the second. The end stage was a battle of attrition with Lee Hyunseo, but the Indian showed admirable nerves after two high 9s on his 17th and 18th shots to pip the Korean by 0.1 in the end. The 21st shot with 10.9 was the icing



Mansi wins gold, Yashasvi claims silver in junior skeet for India

AGENCIES
SHYMKENT (KAZAKHSTAN)

Mansi Raghuwanshi won the gold medal while compatriot Yashasvi Rathore claimed silver in a 1-2 finish for India in the women's junior skeet competition of the Asian Shooting Championship here on Thursday. In the junior men's final, India's Harmehar Singh Lally bagged the silver medal with 53, while Jy-

otiraditya Singh Sisodiya settled for bronze with 43. Kazakhstan's Artyom Sedelnikov grabbed the gold medal with 53. Mansi shot 53 in the women's final to emerge champion while Yashasvi fired 52 to take the second place ahead of Kazakhstan's Lidiya Basharova (40). The other Indian in the fray, Agrima Kanwar (15), ended sixth and last in the final.

on the cake. At the shotgun ranges, Mansi Raghuwanshi triumphed in the junior

women's skeet final with a tally of 53 out of a possible 60 targets.

Ajay Singh re-elected Boxing Federation of India president

AGENCIES
GURUGRAM

Incumbent Ajay Singh was on Thursday re-elected president of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) for a third consecutive term after his comprehensive victory over Jasral Pradhan in the long-overdue polls.

The elections, postponed by more than six months amid legal wrangling, were conducted in the presence of Returning Officer Rajesh



Tandon and BFI interim committee head Fairuz Mohammed of Singapore, who was sent by World Boxing as its observer.

World Boxing President Boris van der Vorst and

Secretary General Mike McAtee, who were originally set to be observers, did not attend the polls.

The Sports Ministry and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) also didn't send any observers.

Singh, who is also the managing director of SpiceJet Airlines, won the contest 40-26. He will be joined by a new secretary general Pramod Kumar of Uttar Pradesh, who succeeds Assam's Hemanta Kalita.

Salima Tete to lead Indian women's hockey team at Asia Cup in Hangzhou

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Seasoned mid-fielder Salima Tete was on Thursday retained as captain of a 20-member Indian women's hockey team for the Asia Cup to be held in Hangzhou, China from September 5 to 14. The tournament assumes added significance as the winner will secure a direct berth in the 2026 FIH Women's Hockey World Cup.

India has been drawn in Pool B, where it will face Japan, Thailand, and Singapore. The team will open its campaign against Thailand on September 5, followed by a clash with Japan on September 6.

India will play their final pool-stage match against Singapore on September 8.

"We are excited about the squad we have selected for the women's Asia Cup in Hangzhou," Chief Coach Harendra Singh said in a press release issued by Hockey India.

The 23-year-old Salima has been an integral part



Indian women's hockey team in frame

India's Squad for women's Asia Cup	
GOALKEEPERS: 1. Bansari Solanki, 2. Bichu Devi Kharibam	
DEFENDERS: 3. Manisha Chauhan, 4. Udita, 5. Jyoti, 6. Suman Devi Thoudam, 7. Nikki Pradhan, 8. Ishika Chaudhary	
MIDFIELDERS: 9. Neha, 10. Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, 11. Salima Tete, 12. Sharmila Devi, 13. Lalremsiami, 14. Sunelita Toppo	
FORWARDS: 15. Navneet Kaur, 16. Rutaja Dadaso Pisal, 17. Beauty Dungdung, 18. Mumtaz Khan, 19. Deepika, 20. Sangita Kumari.	

of the team for a while after being appointed captain last year.

"The group has been training with great intensity, and we have tried to strike the right balance between experienced campaigners and young talent," Singh said.

"Our focus will be on play-

ing an aggressive and disciplined brand of hockey, and we believe this team has the capability to compete strongly against the best in Asia," he added.

Emphasising the stakes, Singh said the side cannot afford a mis-step in any of the matches.

Iga Swiatek enters US Open back at No. 2 in the rankings and back on top of her game

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

On the day last month that Iga Swiatek resoundingly announced to the world that she was, most definitively, back at her best — ready once again to dominate her opponents and, indeed, all of women's tennis — she already was looking ahead.

"After a few days of celebrating," Swiatek said, just hours into her status as a Wimbledon champion by virtue of a 6-0, 6-0 victory in the final there, "I'm going to need to get back on hard

courts and grind and grind and grind."

The work is paying off.

As she now goes to the U.S. Open, which starts in New York on Sunday, it's only fair to look at Swiatek the way the world did not all that long ago: as a player with the talent and mindset to succeed on all surfaces, in all conditions, against all players.

The 24-year-old from Poland who already owns six major titles — and needs only an Australian Open trophy to complete a career Grand Slam — has returned to her elite status, not to



Poland's Iga Swiatek celebrates with the trophy after beating Amanda Anisimova of the U.S. to win the women's singles final at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (File photo)

mention returned to No. 2 in the rankings, behind

only Aryna Sabalenka and ahead of Coco Gauff.

It means Swiatek, who ceded the top spot to Sabalenka last October and slid as low as No. 8, couldn't face the 2024 champion at Flushing Meadows until the final.

"Wherever Swiatek's ranked, she's playing like a No. 1 again," was the observation from three-time major champion Lindsay Davenport on Tennis Channel's telecast of the Cincinnati Open final on Monday.

That's when Swiatek defeated Jasmine Paolini 7-5, 6-4 with the help of nine aces to complete a run through the hard-court

tournament without dropping a set. That allowed Swiatek to earn her 11th career title at a WTA Masters 1000, the second-highest total (behind only the 13 for Serena Williams) since 2009.

This latest triumph also gave Swiatek her second trophy in her past three events — the other came on the grass courts of the All England Club on July 12 — following a drought of more than a year without so much as reaching a final anywhere.

Yes, it wasn't all that long ago that Swiatek was deal-

ing with a difficult stretch, on the court and off it.

In addition to the disappointing-for-her results, there was the not-insignificant matter of a doping case connected to a tainted sleeping aid and an agreed-upon ban of one month.

"It wasn't easy," Swiatek said. But she got through it all and is playing with the sort of freedom that was missing for some time and the mental toughness that she proudly symbolized Monday by jutting her index finger at her temple on the way up to the net for a handshake after closing

things out against Paolini with an ace.

It was a performance that showed off key traits Swiatek possesses.

The bigger-than-ever serve. The imposing forehand. Point-altering court coverage, all anticipation and tiny steps.

"You're playing amazing," Paolini told Swiatek during the trophy ceremony.

It's noteworthy that she's doing so on faster surfaces these days, after being mistakenly labeled by some as a clay-courtier, based on her four titles at Roland-Garros.