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**'INDIA WINNING WITHOUT BUMRAH IS JUST COINCIDENCE, HIS QUALITY EXCEPTIONAL'**

# PM TO VISIT TO CHINA AMIDST SHIFTING GLOBAL ALIGNMENTS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit China later this month to attend the SCO Summit, marking a key step in thawing India-China ties.

ABHINANDAN MISHRA  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit China from 31 August to 1 September to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Heads of State Summit in Tianjin. This marks his first visit to China since the 2020 Galwan Valley clashes, which triggered a deep freeze in bilateral ties and accelerated India's strategic alignment with the United States, as New Delhi sought to counterbalance China's aggression.

The visit comes at a time when India-China relations are gradually normalising after more than four years of military and diplomatic



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping's meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit, in October 2024. (File Photo)

KEY ISSUES LIKELY DISCUSSED

- Trade imbalance
- Border disengagement follow-up
- FDI norms and security clauses
- SCO cooperation on terror and regional connectivity
- De-hyphenation from Pakistan

## QUICK TIMELINE: INDIA-CHINA RESET

- 2020 - Galwan clashes
- 2021-2023 - Border standoff, minimal dialogue
- Oct 2024 - Modi-Xi meet at BRICS (Kazan), disengagement roadmap agreed
- Oct 2024 - Depsang & Demchok patrolling deal signed
- June 2025 - Kailash Mansarovar Yatra resumes
- Aug-Sep 2025 - Modi visits Tianjin for SCO Summit

# India slams 'unjust' U.S. tariff hike amid ongoing Russian oil row

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

In a sharp escalation of trade tensions, India on Wednesday condemned the United States' decision to impose an additional 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports, calling the move "unfair, unjustified, and unreasonable". The response came shortly after U.S. President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order increasing the total tariff burden on Indian goods to 50 per cent, citing India's continued purchase of Russian oil as the primary reason.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) strongly rebutted the decision, stating that India was being selectively targeted, despite other nations such as China and Turkey also continuing large-scale energy trade with Russia. "The United States has in recent days targeted India's oil imports from Russia. We have already made clear our position on these issues, including the fact



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump

TRUMP'S TARIFF JUSTIFICATION

- India fuelling Russia's war via oil buys
- Claims resale of Russian oil for profit
- Tariffs on Indian imports hiked to 50%
- Additional 25% duty effective in 21 days
- Exemptions for goods already in transit
- Cites national security and foreign policy concerns

INDIA HITS BACK

- MEA: Move is unfair, unjustified, unreasonable
- Oil imports driven by energy needs of 1.4 billion
- Points to China, Turkey's higher Russian oil trade
- No similar U.S. tariffs on those countries
- India vows to protect national interest

that our imports are based on market factors and done with the overall objective of ensuring the energy security of 1.4 billion people of India," said the MEA in a statement. "It is extremely unfortunate that the U.S. should choose to impose additional tariffs on India for actions that several other countries are also taking in their own national interest. We reiterate that these actions are unfair, unjustified and unreasonable. India will take all actions necessary to protect its national interests," the statement added.

According to data from the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (June 2025), China accounted for 47 per cent of Russia's crude exports, followed by India (38%), the EU (6%), and Turkey (6%). Meanwhile, Turkey emerged as the largest buyer of Russian oil products, purchasing 26 per cent, ahead of China (13%) and Brazil (12%). Despite these figures, neither China nor Turkey is facing similar

# 'Mockery of justice': SC slams Allahabad HC ruling

RAKESH SINGH  
NEW DELHI

On August 4, 2025, the Supreme Court of India delivered a sharp rebuke to Justice Prashant Kumar of the Allahabad High Court for upholding criminal proceedings in what was fundamentally a civil dispute, labelling the decision a "mockery of justice." The case arose from a commercial transaction that had been wrongly prosecuted as a criminal matter. Justice Kumar had justified the approach by arguing that civil remedies would be too time-consuming and costly.

The Supreme Court bench, comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan, rejected this reasoning as legally flawed, stressing that criminal law cannot be invoked to resolve civil disputes. The court set aside the High Court's order dated May 5, 2025, remanded the case for fresh consider-

ation by another judge, and imposed strict sanctions on Justice Kumar. These included barring him from handling criminal cases as a single judge, stripping him of all criminal case assignments until his retirement, and directing him to sit only on division benches under the supervision of a senior judge.

This ruling sheds light on a persistent problem within India's judicial system—where civil disputes, such as breaches of contract or property disagreements, are frequently mischaracterised as criminal offences like cheating or criminal breach of trust to exert pressure on the opposing party. Such misuse clogs the criminal justice system, delays genuine criminal cases, and undermines public trust.

The Supreme Court's intervention underscores the need for greater judicial clarity in distin-



An evening view of Lal Chowk illuminated Iconic Clock Tower and bustling with shoppers and tourists on sixth anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370, in Srinagar on Wednesday. ANI

# Manan Mishra slams Priyanka Gandhi over SC remarks

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP and senior advocate Manan Kumar Mishra on Wednesday said that a contempt petition will be filed against Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra over her recent remarks

following a Supreme Court observation concerning Rahul Gandhi. Mishra alleged that her public statements amounted to contempt of court.

Speaking to ANI, Mishra said, "She has committed contempt of court by making several statements before the media. Therefore,

we are going to file a contempt petition against her because she has been making such irresponsible comments without understanding what the Court intended to convey (to Rahul Gandhi). The petition will be filed by the Bar and the lawyers. The people of this country will

# Indian Army leads rescue ops after devastating cloudburst in Uttarakhand

TDG NETWORK  
UTTARKASHI

In the wake of a devastating cloudburst near Dharali, close to Harsil in Uttarakhand, the Indian Army has launched a swift and coordinated Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operation, with over 225 personnel on ground for search, rescue and relief.

As of 3 pm on Wednesday, the Indian Army confirmed three fatalities, with more than 50 people reportedly missing, according to the civil administration. Among the missing

## 190 rescued from Dharali; PM assures all help

Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami said around 190 people have been rescued from cloudburst-hit Dharali by Army teams. He noted that the disaster "completely destroyed everything" and debris continues to pose challenges. Damaged roads, power lines, and mobile networks are being restored. Dhami, who visited the affected area, said PM Modi has assured full support and that both Centre and state are committed to helping victims.



are nine Army personnel, including one Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO)

and eight jawans. The region remains completely cut off from both



Anchor Army personnel rescues a civilian following cloudburst, at Dharali in Uttarkashi on Wednesday. (Iadgpi XANI Photo)

## Rescue first priority in Uttarkashi: IG Garhwal

AJIT MAINDOLA  
UTTARKASHI

In an exclusive conversation with The Daily Guardian, IG Garhwal Zone Rajiv Swaroop said all agencies—Army, Police, ITBP, NDRF, and SDRF—are operating on a war footing in flood-rav-



Inspector General (IG) of Garhwal Range, Rajeev Swaroop

north and south due to multiple road breaches and a collapsed bridge. Key stretches near Bartwari, Linchigad and Gangrani have been washed away, paralysing movement in

the affected area. The civil helipad at Dharali is also non-functional following a mudslide. Seven Indian Army teams, equipped with Reco Radar, are actively con-

ducting search operations near Tekla, while trained rescue dogs are deployed in Harsil. Additional canine units are being mobilised from Remount and Veteri-

ary. The region remains completely cut off from both



# 'WITHHOLD MPS' SALARIES IF PARLIAMENT FAILS TO FUNCTION'

Public's hard-earned money being misused, says Daman and Diu MP

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha MP from Daman and Diu, Patel Umeshbhai Babubhai, expressed disappointment over the repeated disruptions in Parliament, stating that the ongoing tussle between the ruling party and the opposition is hampering the House's functioning. "It is unfortunate that the House is not functioning. It is sad that due to the fight between the ruling side and the opposition, this is happening. Due to this, I could not raise any important issues. Even today, the Lok Sabha functioned for 1.5 minutes. I demand that the government withhold MPs' salaries if Parliament fails to function. The public's hard-earned money is being misused."



Earlier today, several Members of Parliament from the INDIA bloc, including Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, staged a protest in the Parliament House complex on Wednesday, voicing strong

opposition to the Election Commission's voter roll revision in Bihar.

The protesting members, including Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, held a banner which read, "The SIR: Demand discussion

not deletion!". Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, "Have they become so weak? They are neither able to run the Parliament nor respond to Trump... We are only asking for a discussion. It is easy for them to resolve

this."

Meanwhile, the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) MPs also hold a protest in the Parliament premises with placards in their hands that read "Stop Insulting Bengal" Congress MP Renuka Chowdhury on Wednesday gave a Suspension of Business notice in the Rajya Sabha to hold a discussion on serious concerns related to the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar. Additionally, Congress MP Manickam Tagore on Wednesday moved an adjournment motion notice in the Lok Sabha seeking urgent discussion on alleged large-scale deletions and irregularities in the electoral rolls during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Bihar.

## Kharge writes to RS Deputy Chairman for discussion on SIR

ANAND SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday wrote to Deputy Chairman of the Upper House seeking a detailed discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of vote rolls in Bihar while dubbing it an "issue that is of paramount concern to crores of voters, especially those belonging to the weaker sections of the society".

In his letter to Hariyansh Singh, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Kharge said that on 21 July, 2023, the then Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Jagdeep Dhankhar, had given a ruling that "... this House is entitled to discuss everything under the planet with one restriction...". Kharge mentioned that Dhankhar had added that "this one restriction" relates to the conduct of any Judge of the Supreme Court or of a High Court in the dis-



charge of his duties...except upon a motion for presenting an address to the President praying for the removal of the Judge...". Further, the Chairman ruled that "...the concept of sub judice is totally misconceived...".

He also said that the deputy chairman will undoubtedly appreciate that the Chair is a continuing entity.

"You yourself have quoted rulings given by the Chair over the past many years in support of some of your decisions. It is clear from this ruling of the Chair that the

Rajya Sabha is entitled to discuss the issue of revision of electoral rolls, which is of fundamental importance in our democracy," the Congress leader said.

He also highlighted that the SIR of the electoral rolls is being undertaken by the Election Commission of India first in Bihar and to be taken up in West Bengal, Assam and other States. "Opposition MPs have been repeatedly asking for an urgent discussion in the House right from the first day of the current session," he pointed out.

## 'Not SIR but mass deletion programme', RJD slams EC

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Janata Dal MP Manoj Jha on Wednesday criticised Election Commission over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar ahead of the assembly election in state.

Speaking with media, Jha said, "This is not SIR but a mass deletion programme... This is seriously undemocratic."

Additionally, Congress MP Rajeev Shukla vowed that the Opposition will continue their protest against SIR, terming the



process as "vote theft."

"Our protest will continue. The people cannot tolerate this theft of votes," he said.

Reiterating the Opposition's demand for discussion on SIR in Parliament, TMC MP Saayoni Ghosh said that the Prime Minis-

ter and Home Minister are afraid of holding a discussion.

"We are protesting to demand a discussion. But our PM and HM are afraid of holding a discussion."

India bloc MPs, including Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, staged a protest in the Parliament House complex, voicing strong opposition to the Election Commission's voter roll revision in Bihar.

The protesting members, including Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, held a banner which reads "The SIR: Demand discussion not deletion!".

## SSC exam row: AAP MP moves suspension of business notice in RS

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh moved a Suspension of Business Notice in the Rajya Sabha under Rule 267 to discuss alleged irregularities in the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) Phase-13 examination held between July 24 and August 1.

In a formal notice, Singh highlighted multiple problems, including technical failures, errors in biometric verification and cancellation of scheduled exams. These issues have caused widespread confusion and distress among candidates.



Thousands of aspirants, particularly in Delhi, have taken to the streets demanding justice and accountability and justice. Singh expressed his concern over the impact of these lapses on future recruitment processes. Singh

said students are now anxious about the Combined Graduate Level (CGL) examination scheduled for August 13.

"There is also deep concern and fear about the upcoming Combined Graduate Level (CGL) examination to be held from August 13. It is worth mentioning that this is not the first time such incidents have happened. In the last decade, incidents like the cancellation of examinations, technical glitches and the leakage of question papers have occurred repeatedly, which have weakened the country.

## Akhilesh accuses UP Govt of not providing help in flood-hit area

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday expressed concern over the flood situation in Uttar Pradesh and accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led state government of failing to provide assistance to the affected people. Speaking to reporters, Akhilesh Yadav said that lives were being lost in various parts of the state due to floods and the state government "does not care". "People are losing their lives due to floods in many places in UP. The state government

do not care; they are not providing any help. I don't know how the government is functioning there," the SP chief said. On Tuesday, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated that heavy rainfall over the last 10 to 12 days had caused significant flooding in the Yamuna and its tributaries, impacting 21 districts across the state. The state government has announced financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh for families who have lost members in the floods, along with a house under the Chief Minister's Housing Scheme for those whose homes were destroyed.

## Congress MP Eden moves adjournment motion in LS over Bombay HC judge appointment

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Congress MP Hibi Eden on Wednesday submitted a notice for an Adjournment Motion in the Lok Sabha seeking a discussion on the recent appointment of a judge to the Bombay High Court.

In his notice, Eden raised concerns that the new judge previously worked as a spokesperson for a major political party, which has sparked questions about the judge's impartiality and in-



dependence.

"That this House do adjourn its business to discuss a definite matter of urgent

public importance, namely the appointment of a judge to the Bombay High Court, who previously served as a

spokesperson for a major political party, raising concerns about the judge's impartiality and independence," the notice read.

Eden, in his submission to the Lok Sabha Secretary-General, stated that the appointment could undermine the integrity of the judiciary and erode public trust in the legal system. He emphasised the need for an urgent discussion on this matter because it is important for maintaining the judiciary's fairness and independence.



Congress MP KC Venugopal, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi, and other opposition MPs hold a protest against SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar at Parliament premises on Wednesday. ANI

### GLIMPSES OF PARLIAMENT



Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann at the Parliament premises. ANI



Samajwadi Party MP Akhilesh Yadav, during a protest against SIR in Bihar. ANI



BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Saini. ANI



BJP MP Sambit Patra, Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi, Cong MP Praniti Shinde and others at Parliament. ANI



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session. ANI

## TMC MPs protest at Parliament premises over 'insult' of Bengal

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Trinamool Congress MPs carried out a protest in the Parliament premises on Wednesday over the alleged insult to Bengal. They held placards that read "Stop Insulting Bengal".

They also held portraits of national icons from Bengal, including Rabindranath Tagore and Subhas Chandra Bose

TMC has been conducting protest marches in West Bengal against the alleged targeting of migrants in the BJP-ruled States. The first such marches were conducted across the State on July 27, after CM Mamata Banerjee had called for protests every weekend until the next year's Assembly polls at a Martyrs' Day rally on July 21.

Mamata has alleged that the National Register of Citizens

(NRC) notices are being issued to legitimate Indian citizens simply because they are from her State. "It is deeply unfortunate that a deliberate, systematic attempt is now being made to criminalise our language. Questions are being raised on whether Bengali is even a language," the CM said in a post on X.

"Bengali-speakers are being hounded, hunted, and humiliated in BJP-ruled states. NRC notices are being issued to legitimate Indian citizens simply because they are from Bengal. They seem to have forgotten that without Bengali, there would be no National Anthem or National Song," she said. Earlier, Mamata accused the Delhi Police of describing Bengali as a "Bangladeshi language", calling it scandalous, anti-national and unconstitutional.

## Govt to set up Rs 500 cr AI Centre for education under NEP

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Minister of State in the Ministry of Education Dr. Sukanta Majumdar said that the government has framed the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to provide holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary education. In alignment with this vision, in the Union Budget 2025-26, the Government has announced establishment of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Education with a total outlay of Rs. 500 Cr.

A major thrust of the NEP 2020 is integration of technology in education—including Artificial Intelligence (AI)—as a cornerstone for transforming India's education ecosystem, he said while responding to the question

of Rajya Sabha member Kartikeya Sharma today.

NEP 2020 advocates for extensive use of technology in teaching and learning to deliver personalised and inclusive educational experiences.

This CoE is envisaged to drive innovation, research, and development in AI-enabled educational tools, to support expanding access to quality education across the country. Three Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in Artificial Intelligence, focusing on Healthcare, Agriculture, and Sustainable Cities have also been established.

These CoEs are led by premier institutions: IIT Kanpur, which leads sustainable cities, IIT Ropar, which leads the agriculture sector and IISc Bangalore, which leads healthcare sector, he said.



THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON MAHADEVI ELEPHANT VANTARA ROW

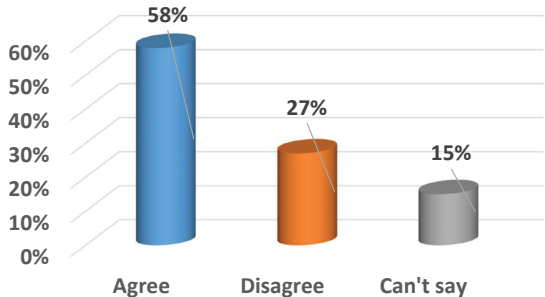
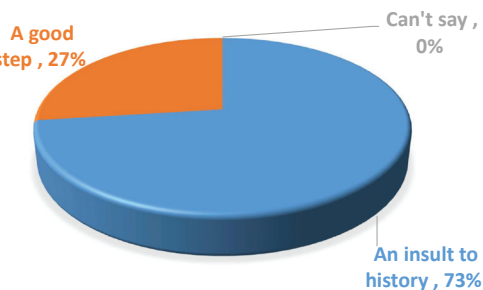
56% of respondents said shifting Hastini Mahadevi to Vantara is a conspiracy.

The India News Survey on the Mahadevi Elephant Vantara controversy reveals strong public sentiment. 73% view shifting Hastini

Mahadevi as an insult, while 64% oppose using elephants in religious rituals. Majority believe relocating the elephant might be a conspiracy,

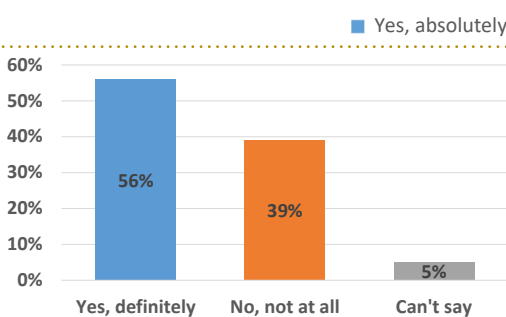
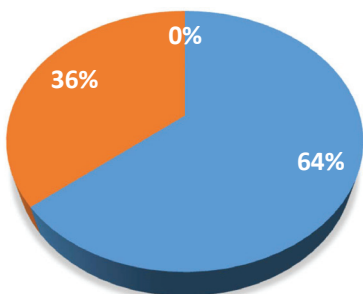
yet 61% support Vantara's role in conserving wild animals.

**Q1.**  
How do you view shifting Kolhapur's 'Hastini Mahadevi' to Vantara?



**Q2.**  
How do you view religious saints and Jain communities calling "Return Madhuri and Boycott Jio" as scams?

**Q3.**  
Is using elephants in religious rituals wrong?



**Q4.**  
Could shifting Hastini Mahadevi to Vantara be a conspiracy?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON UTTARKASHI CLOUD BURST

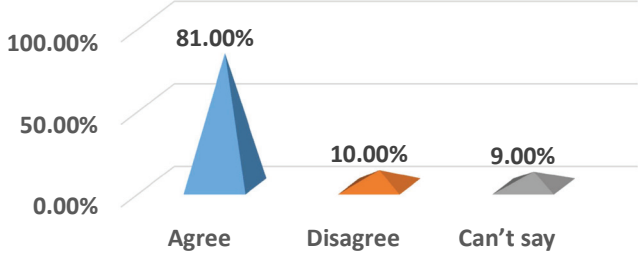
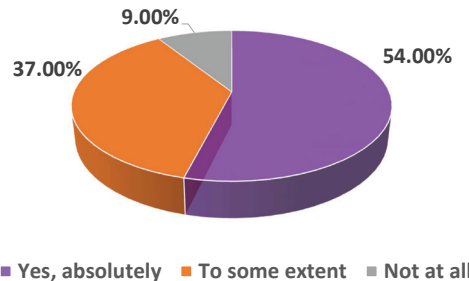
85% believe that glacier melting is the main reason behind the increasing incidents of landslides and floods.

A recent survey on the Uttarkashi cloud burst reveals growing concern over climate change and government preparedness. While 85% blame gla-

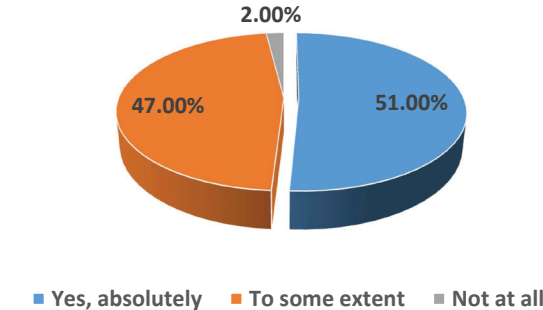
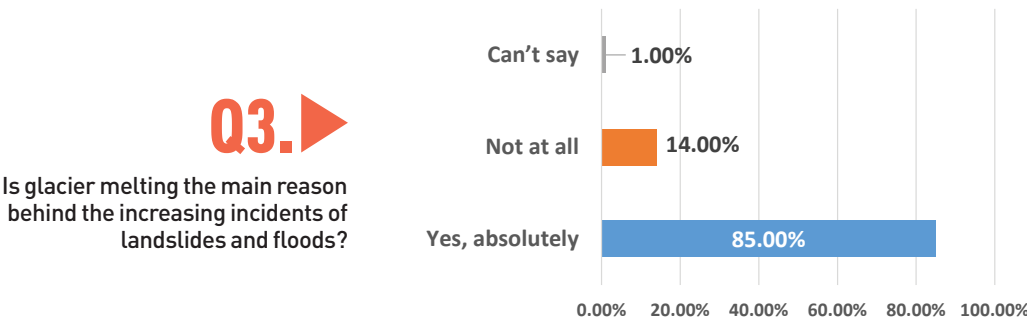
cier melting for disasters, 58% feel such events cannot be prevented. Though 51% support government efforts, 46% remain unconvinced.

Public demand for stronger, proactive disaster management and environmental action is evident.

**Q1.**  
Do you find the administration's response effective after the cloud burst in Uttarkashi?



**Q2.**  
Do you believe that rapid glacier melting is responsible for the increasing incidents of landslides and floods in the Himalayan region?



**Q4.**  
Has the central and state government taken all necessary measures to prevent such natural disasters?

India slams 'unjust' U.S. tariff hike

CONTINUED FROM P1

punitive tariffs from the U.S. Trump's Executive Order, issued late on Wednesday, invoked national security and foreign policy concerns. It claimed India's import of Russian oil—directly or indirectly—posed an “unusual and extraordinary threat” to the United States.

The initial 25 per cent duty, announced earlier, comes into effect on August 7. The additional 25 per cent will take effect 21 days from the signing of the order, applicable to all Indian goods entering U.S. territory—excluding shipments already in transit or meeting specific exemptions. “This rate of duty shall be effective with respect to goods entered for consumption, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 12:01 a.m. Eastern Daylight

TRUMP ENVOY MEETS PUTIN AMID SANCTIONS DEADLINE

- US President Donald Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow in a last-ditch bid to avert new US sanctions over the Ukraine war.
- The meeting follows Trump's warning that Russia must agree to a peace deal by Friday or face economic penalties — including “secondary tariffs” on countries buying Russian energy.
- Trump has expressed doubts about Putin's intentions. Witkoff's visit comes amid heightened tensions and increased US military posturing.

Time, 21 days after the date of this order,” the official proclamation stated. The Executive Order also leaves room for future revisions, depending on evolving geopolitical developments, possible retaliatory action by affected countries, or any steps taken by India or Russia to address the so-

called national emergency. The White House action follows a string of public remarks by Trump in recent days. On Tuesday, he told CNBC that India was “fuel-ling the war machine” by continuing Russian oil purchases, adding, “If they're going to do that, then I'm not going to be happy.”

PM Modi to visit to China

CONTINUED FROM P1

strain. A key turning point came during the October 2024 BRICS Summit in Kazan, where Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to a complete disengagement from all friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). This led to the 21 October agreement restoring pre-2020 patrolling norms in Depsang and Demchok, including resumed grazing rights and military withdrawal.

Since then, both sides have cautiously resumed structured engagement, with significant steps such as the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, visa reinstatement for Chinese nationals, and renewed backchannel dialogue on investment rules and supply chain frameworks.

According to officials familiar with the summit preparations, the visit “may help lay the groundwork

for a mutual economic calibration between India and China,” aimed at addressing long-standing concerns over trade imbalance, market access, and investment safeguards. While no immediate announcements are expected at the summit itself, structured dialogue is likely to follow in the near future.

This visit also comes against the backdrop of record-high bilateral trade, which continues despite ongoing geopolitical frictions. In FY2024-25, India imported \$113.5 billion worth of goods from China while exporting only \$14.3 billion—resulting in a massive \$99.2 billion trade deficit. This imbalance has been driven primarily by a surge in Chinese electronics, solar cells, and battery imports. In March 2025 alone, India's imports from China jumped over 25% year-on-year to \$9.7 billion, while exports to China declined by 14.5%.

The persistent economic asymmetry has intensified calls within India's strategic establishment for a more balanced and regulated trade framework. Suggestions include local production mandates, market share caps in sensitive sectors, and national security vetting of FDI proposals.

Adding to the complexity, the summit takes place even as the United States, under President Donald Trump, adopts an increasingly adversarial stance toward India. Trump recently lumped India together with China and Russia in a social media post while announcing steep tariffs on Indian goods—despite temporarily pausing hikes for certain partners. Indian officials have described this rhetoric as “deeply unhelpful,” especially at a time when New Delhi is managing multiple global partnerships.

Beijing, meanwhile, is expected to use the visit to

subtly de-hyphenate its relationship with India from that of Pakistan, reflecting a recalibrated regional approach. This is particularly significant given China's vocal and material support to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, while Washington maintained a studied distance—something that has not gone unnoticed in Indian strategic circles.

As reported by this newspaper in its March 2025 piece, “Mutual Need Doctrine: Why India Holds the Cards with China and the US,” India's status as one of the world's largest consumer markets gives it unprecedented leverage over both Beijing and Washington. With China grappling with slowing growth and industrial overcapacity, and the U.S. tech sector betting heavily on India's digital economy, New Delhi is uniquely positioned to demand new terms of engagement rather than passively

accept them.

The piece argued that inviting Chinese capital under a tightly regulated regime—with local sourcing requirements, market dominance thresholds, and profit reinvestment mandates—could help generate employment while reducing import dependence. At the same time, such an approach would protect India from overexposure to any single power bloc, while giving Beijing access to one of the world's largest markets—brimming with both hunger and capacity for consumption.

With External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh having already laid the groundwork during the SCO ministerial meetings in June, the Prime Minister's presence in Tianjin is being viewed as more than symbolic. It signals India's intent to engage—but on sovereign terms, with clarity and caution.

Indian Army leads rescue ops

CONTINUED FROM P1

nary Centres. Combat engineering teams are on-site to assist in clearing debris and restoring critical access routes. The Army helipad at Harsil has been declared operational, enabling three civil helicopters from Sa-hastradhara, in coordination with the SDRF, to land at Bhatwari and Harsil for casualty evacuation and delivery of relief supplies. Meanwhile, Chinook, Mi-17, and ALH helicopters are on standby at Jolly Grant, Chandigarh and Sarsawa, pending clearance for further troop and material airlifts. Despite difficult terrain and inclement weather, the Indian Army continues to assist the civil administration in ongoing relief efforts across the disaster-hit region.

IAF joins rescue ops in isolated Harsil valley

The Indian Air Force has launched a joint rescue mission in flood-hit Harsil, deploying Mi-17 and ALH Mk-III choppers from Bareilly and transport aircraft from Agra to Dehradun. Relief material was loaded overnight despite heavy fog and rain. The IAF is coordinating with the Army to conduct sorties during brief weather clearances.



Indian Air Force personnel land at Dehradun with relief and rescue material on Wednesday. (IAFANI Photo)

11 injured Army personnel airlifted to ITBP hospital

Uttarkashi Police confirmed that 11 injured Army personnel have been airlifted to the ITBP Hospital in Matli as part of ongoing relief and rescue efforts. Flash floods and landslides triggered by a cloudburst have wreaked havoc in Dharali, Sukhi Top, and Harsil, with operations continuing in full swing across affected zones.

'Mockery of justice': SC slams Allahabad HC

CONTINUED FROM P1

guishing between civil and criminal matters. It also signals a commitment to accountability, as evidenced by the unprecedented sanctions imposed on Justice Kumar. To prevent similar miscarriages of justice, judges in both High Courts and lower courts must prioritise a clear understanding of jurisdictional boundaries. Case studies like this should be used in judicial training to highlight the consequences of conflating civil and criminal law. High Courts across the country should issue clear guidelines or checklists to help determine whether a

dispute involves criminal intent or can be resolved through civil remedies. Further, appellate courts must exercise stricter scrutiny while hearing appeals or quashing petitions, and act promptly to dismiss baseless criminal proceedings. Lower courts should be equally vigilant at the stage of registering FIRs or issuing summons, rejecting complaints that lack prima facie evidence of criminality and referring civil matters to the appropriate forums. The Supreme Court's ruling serves as a wake-up call for the judiciary to address the misuse of criminal law in civil disputes and to uphold the integrity of the legal process.

Revanth Reddy slams Centre

CONTINUED FROM P1

the caste census and approving 42 per cent reservations in the state assembly,” he said. However, he noted that the two Bills, sent to the President over four months ago, remain pending without any response. Reddy termed the Centre's inaction “a serious affront to

the aspirations of backward communities”.

He further warned the BJP that failure to grant Presidential assent would confirm its anti-BC stance and added that the Telangana government had requested an appointment with the President but had yet to receive any response. Slamming the BJP, Re-

vanth Reddy said, “If the BJP government does not ensure approval for the BC Reservation Bills, the Congress will work towards removing it from power at the Centre.”

He said the Congress had been forced to protest both on the streets and in Parliament due to the Centre's continued indifference.

Manan Mishra slams Priyanka

CONTINUED FROM P1

not tolerate such irresponsible statements...” Mishra's comments came a day after Priyanka Gandhi defended her brother, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, in response to a stern observation made by the Supreme Court regarding his

remarks on the India-China border issue.

On Tuesday, reacting to the court's remarks, Priyanka Gandhi said the issue was being misinterpreted and emphasised that Rahul Gandhi holds the Indian Army in the highest regard. “They do not decide who a

true Indian is. It is the job of the Opposition leader — it is his duty — to ask questions and challenge the government. My brother would never say anything against the Army. He holds the Army in the highest respect. So, it is a misinterpretation,” Priyanka told ANI.



# DAY LIGHT DACOITY TAKING PLACE THROUGH SIR IN BIHAR: INDIA BLOC PARTIES

ANAND SINGH  
NEW DELHI

The INDIA bloc partners on Wednesday dubbed the special intensive revision of voter rolls in Bihar as day light 'dacoity' (robbery) and accused the government of not holding the discussion on the same in Parliament.

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge along with the members of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) partners addressed a press conference at Vijay Chowk outside Parliament and targeted the government for not holding a detailed discussion on the SIR exercise.

Speaking to media, Kharge said that INDIA bloc parties are united in demanding a discussion in Parliament on the voter roll revision exercise in Bihar as it is important to protect the voting rights of all Indians. He also pointed out that minorities, Dalits and tribals are facing the risk of losing their voting rights. "INDIA bloc parties want discussion in Parliament on SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar but government is un-



*Speaking to media, Kharge said that INDIA bloc parties are united in demanding a discussion in Parliament on the voter roll revision exercise in Bihar as it is important to protect the voting rights of all Indians.*

willing to do it," he alleged.

He also said that the opposition parties have been urging the speaker, chairman and the government again and again that the voting rights of people should not be stolen.... "That is what is happening in the SIR exercise," he alleged. While referring to the statements from the government and Chair

and Speaker in both the Houses of Parliament that the functioning of the Election Commission cannot be discussed in Parliament as it is an independent constitutional body. He said: "Everything under the sun can be discussed." "We want to have a discussion on it... They are in a way trying to cast doubt on the citizenship of individuals," he said.

Meanwhile, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Sagariika Ghose said they will continue protests inside and outside Parliament over the SIR issue. Ghose also raised concerns over "attacks" on Bengali-speaking people in BJP-ruled states and asserted that BJP is insulting Bengal and the Bengali language.

She said a march will be taken out to the EC office from Parliament on August 11 by the INDIA bloc parties. DMK's Tiruchi Siva also said that Parliament is not functioning for whole of session beside the discussion on Operation Sindoor. "We are insisting for a debate on SIR. On what basis the EC on the terms of

revising the voter rolls are deleting the voters," he asked. Asking for some documents that are not necessary and proof of citizenship, which is not in the perview of the Commission but under MHA, Siva said.

The DMK leader targeting the government said, "We are not disrupting the House, we are insisting for discussion. We are not undemocratic, we are fighting for the rights of citizens." Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) Manoj Jha alleged that through the SIR, day light dacoity is taking place in Bihar. He said, "In Parliament SIR should have been discussed. This is a day light dacoity (robbery)".

He also added that the Supreme Court directed the EC to include Aadhar, ration card, but they didn't use that. The press conference was also addressed by the Shiv Sena (UBT), Samajwadi Party, NCP-SP, CPI, CPI-ML, CPI-M, IUML and AAP among others. Earlier in the day, INDIA bloc partners had held a protest in Parliament over the issue which was also joined by Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and others. The Parliament has witnessed a stormy session with multiple adjournments in last 13 days over the issue of SIR in Bihar.

## Revanth's BCs dharna a flop show, says BJP; questions Rahul, Kharge's absence

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA  
HYDERABAD

The Telangana unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday dismissed Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's "BCs Dharna" in New Delhi as a failed political drama, citing poor attendance and the conspicuous absence of top Congress leaders. BJP State Chief Spokesperson N.V. Subhash termed the protest a "damp squib" that lacked both public traction and the support of the Congress high command. Speaking at a press conference in Hyderabad, Subhash took a sharp dig at the Congress leadership. "Even Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi distanced themselves from the event. What does that say about their real commitment to BC welfare?" he asked. He alleged that despite logistical efforts — including ferrying party supporters to the capital in a special train — the dharna failed to leave a mark. "Only a handful of leaders like Gaurav Gogoi and Digvijay Singh turned up. This clearly exposes the Congress's lack of

seriousness," he said. Subhash went further, accusing the Congress of using the 42% BC reservation demand as a smokescreen to secure a 10% quota for Muslims, calling it a betrayal of the BC community. "This is a backdoor move aimed at minority appeasement under the guise of BC empowerment," he claimed.

The BJP spokesperson also reminded the public of the Congress party's historical neglect of Backward Classes, particularly its failure to implement the Mandal Commission recommendations during its tenure at the Centre. "If Revanth Reddy is genuinely committed to BC upliftment, why hasn't he appointed more BCs to key positions in his Cabinet? Why didn't the Congress choose a BC leader for the Chief

Minister post?" Subhash questioned.

He further accused Revanth of resorting to "petty politics" by questioning Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BC credentials, stating, "He has now joined the ranks of Congress leaders who thrive on lies and propaganda."

Reiterating BJP's track record, Subhash said that the party has consistently elevated BC, OBC, SC, and ST leaders to powerful positions — both in the Centre and in BJP-ruled states. "Unlike the Congress, the BJP's actions speak louder than words when it comes to social justice," he added. "The people of Telangana are watching. This dharna was nothing more than a failed stunt meant to divert attention from Congress's own failures," Subhash added.

## Mamata Banerjee is threat to Indian democracy: BJP's Amit Malviya

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE  
KOLKATA

Reacting to Mamata Banerjee's refusal to act and record FIRs against State Government officials against whom the Election Commission had recommended action, the Bharatiya Janata Party launched a broadside against the West Bengal Chief Minister.

BJP's IT cell chief and Bengal co-minder Amit Malviya posted on social media platform X: "From shielding goons and corrupt officials to defending fake voter data manipulation in Moyna, Baruipur Purbia, and beyond — Mamata Banerjee is no longer just turning a blind eye. She is now leading the assault on fair and free elections. "Despite clear directives from the Election Commission of India (ECI) to register FIRs against EROs and AEROs for inserting fake voters, Bengal's Chief Minister refuses to comply.



Instead, she openly defies the EC, saying: "EC has instructed to suspend my officers. Asked to initiate an FIR, I won't do it. EC is the bonded labour of BJP."

"This is not just defiance — this is a constitutional crisis in the making.

"The system is broken. The law is mocked. Democracy is under threat.

"Let's be clear: The future of Bengal will be decided by Bengalis — not Ban-

gladeshi Muslims or Rohingyas".

Meanwhile, in a show of solidarity, the WBCS (Executive) Officers Association has passed a resolution affirming their allegiance to the Constitution of India and the authority of the EC.

Malviya further wrote: "Mamata Banerjee must understand: West Bengal is not her personal fiefdom. The Constitution reigns supreme, and the powers vested in the Election Commission are significant. No petulant Chief Minister can shield the guilty.

"Let her remember — she couldn't protect her own Ministers. She couldn't save Anubrata Mondal or Sheikh Shahjahan from prison. She will not be able to protect corrupt officers either."

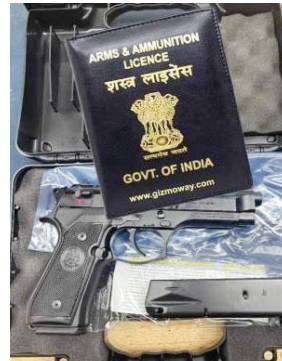
He said it was time the Election Commission "acts firmly, decisively, and without compromise — to restore public faith and ensure West Bengal gets the free and fair elections it deserves."

## Assam: Indigenous people to apply for arms license

NIBIR DEKA  
NEW DELHI

Assam's indigenous people will be eligible to apply for an arms licence in "sensitive areas" of the state. The government will get a portal through which they can apply for arms licences, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on August 6.

The arms license will be granted after proper scrutiny and a multi-layered process, he said. Taking to Social Media X, the Assam CM stated, "A dedicated portal is coming up where indigenous people, who perceive a threat



to their lives and reside in sensitive areas, can apply for Arms License."

Those who are "original inhabitants or Indigenous Indian citizens of Assam",

and "perceive a genuine threat to life and safety due to the vulnerability of the area of residence" are

eligible to apply, the post said. People who reside in vulnerable or remote areas, as notified by the district administration or assessed as such by authorised security agencies, are also eligible to apply, it added. The process of granting the license will include security assessment, verification and vetting, compliance with existing laws, non-transferability and periodic review along with monitoring and reporting, according to the post.

The state cabinet on May 28 had decided that arms licences would be given to indigenous people living in "vulnerable and

remote" areas to instil a sense of security in them. The CM had said some of these "vulnerable and remote areas" are Dhubri, Morigaon, Barpeta, Nagaon, South Salmara-Mankachar, Rupahi, Dhing and Jania. All of these places have large Muslim populations. Sarma had claimed that indigenous people living in such areas have been demanding an arms licence for safety purposes since the Assam Agitation period, which took place between 1979 and 1985. He had claimed that the Assamese people won't survive by doing agitation, but by taking "practical steps".

## Son fakes father's death for Rs25 lakh, exposed by alive father

VIPIN PARMAR  
NEW DELHI

In Faridabad, Haryana, the son held a tribute meeting to his alive father in greed of a compensation of Rs 25 lakh. He printed large posters and put them up in the village. Dancing with drums and instruments took a journey throughout the village, but he was surprised when the living father saw the video.

The father first made a video of himself being alive and sent it to the sarpanch. He then reached the village on Tuesday and held a panchayat. The son has been boycotted. The father alleges that the son wanted to kill him, so he had been missing from home for the last 9 months. Now the son is saying - this was the way to find a father. The case pertains to Panhera Kala, a village in Faridabad.

On August 3 at Panhera Kalan village in Faridabad, a man named Swami Rajendra Dev Maharaj organised a tribute meeting of his 79-year-old surviving



father Lalchand alias Lula. There were also 50 large posters in its village, which included the day, time and place of the tribute meeting. Roti was distributed at village temples. He took out a yatra with drums and instruments. Rajendra's explanation for this meeting was that his father had gone home 9 months ago for Govardhan Parikrama on a bicycle, but he moved from Govardhan to Banaras. From Benares he moved to the Mahakumbh. I was talking to my father until he reached Mahakumbh, but the conversation stopped from the day of the stampede at Mahakumbh. Rajendra said that after this, Mahakumbh went and searched for his father, but no clue was found. He thought his father had died in a stampede.

He then returned home from Mahakumbh. Here he held a tribute meeting for his father at the behest of the people. At the same time, some people in the village say that when Rajendra's father was missing from the house, he used to tell people that his father had died in Mahakumbh. In fact, many people lost their lives in the stampede during the Mahakumbh. To which the Uttar Pradesh government said that sadhus or people who have lost their lives. Rs 25 lakh each will be given to their families.

said he had switched off his number after leaving the house. Only one of his relatives had his new number. When the relative saw the video of the tribute meeting held by Rajendra, he called and informed him about the whole matter. He then called the village sarpanch and informed him about his arrival in the village. Lalchand then reached the village with several of his relatives.

## Woman ends life after alleged harassment by husband

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA  
HYDERABAD

A tragic incident unfolded in Telangana's Karimnagar district as a young married woman allegedly took her own life after recording a selfie video in which she blamed her husband for mentally harassing her over suspicion. The deceased has been identified as Shravya Rajanna, a native of Tadikal village in Shankarapatnam mandal of Karimnagar district. She was married to Dharmatej of Boinapalli mandal in Rajanna Sircilla district in 2020 after a love marriage. The couple was blessed with a son.

Following the birth of their child, Dharmatej left for Dubai for employment, while Shravya continued living in her native village. However, in recent times, Dharmatej allegedly began suspecting Shravya of speaking to other men and reportedly subjected her to frequent mental harassment over phone calls. Distressed



and emotionally shattered, Shravya consumed sleeping pills, leading to her death.

Before taking the extreme step, she recorded a selfie video where she emotionally explained that she wasn't speaking to anyone and was deeply hurt by the allegations made by her husband. The video has since gone viral, leaving many viewers in tears.

The deeply emotional visuals showed Shravya pleading her innocence and expressing the mental agony she was going through. Upon learning about her death, Dharmatej rushed to Tadikal from Dubai and broke down beside his wife's body.

## Huge crackdown on spurious life-saving drugs racket

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Six persons, including a kingpin, indulged in manufacturing, selling and supplying counterfeit lifesaving drugs/medicine have been arrested, police said.

Police said that the racket has a pan-India network at Moradabad, Deoria, Gorakhpur in UP, Panipat and Jind in Haryana, Baddi and Solan in Himachal Pradesh. Two factories involved in the manufacturing and packaging of these fake medicines were busted at Jind, Haryana and Baddi, HP.

Counterfeit/fake drugs of reputed companies were recovered in huge quantities, police said.

A major fake drug syndicate operating across multiple states has been busted by the Anti-Gang Squad (AGS) of Crime Branch, Delhi Police, with the arrest of six persons involved in the manufacture, supply and distribution of counterfeit life-saving medicines of renowned pharmaceutical



brands.

Acting on the initial input, on 30 July a trap was laid at the HP CNG Petrol Pump, Shyamnath Marg, Civil Lines, Delhi. A car was intercepted. Two occupants, Mohd. Alam and Mohd. Saleem from Moradabad, UP, were found transporting counterfeit medicines. Representatives of a pharmaceutical company confirmed on the spot that the packaging and stamping were not in accordance with company standards. Lab tests further confirmed the drugs to be counterfeit, police said.

Police further said that co-ordination was established

with legal representatives and technical experts to verify the authenticity of suspected products on the spot. The operation was initiated through systematic surveillance, followed by strategic interception at a fuel station.

This led to the unearthing of the entire counterfeit medicine racket, which expanded through subsequent raids and custodial interrogations across Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

Mohd. Alam (35), Mohd. Saleem (42), Prem Shankar Prajapati (25), Parmanand (50) and others have been arrested.



# CM DENIES AAP'S 'PHANSI GHAR' CLAIM, DEMANDS FUNDS BE RECOVERED

Delhi CM Rekha calls for formal inquiry, says every penny spent on renovation must be recovered

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday called for an inquiry into the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) claims regarding the existence of a 'Phansi-Ghar' (gallows chamber) on the Delhi Assembly premises, asserting that every penny spent on renovating the structure must be recovered.

Speaker Vijender Gupta clarified that the structure, which was renovated and inaugurated in 2022 by then chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, was in fact a "tiffin room" and not a colonial-era execution site as claimed.

Speaking during a discussion in the Assembly, Chief Minister Gupta said that Rs 1 crore had been spent on decorating what she termed the so-called 'Phansi-Ghar', and that the funds should be reclaimed.

"There should be a formal inquiry into the matter. The 'Phansi-Ghar' is nothing more than a fabrication propagated by former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal," she said. "An All-India Speakers' Conference



*Taking a jibe at Kejriwal, the chief minister said the AAP national convener "holds multiple degrees — in drama and psychology." She further claimed that the former chief minister was "highly skilled at manipulating public sentiment."*

is scheduled to be held in Delhi, and these misleading claims must be addressed and removed ahead of their visit."

Taking a jibe at Kejriwal,

the chief minister said the AAP national convener "holds multiple degrees — in drama and psychology." She further claimed that the former chief minister was

"highly skilled at manipulating public sentiment."

Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta stated that the building, which served as the Imperial Legislative Council during the British Raj, contained two tiffin rooms equipped with pulley-operated lifts — not execution chambers.

He added that maps of the building, with detailed room specifications including the tiffin rooms, are preserved in the National Archives.

## AAP MLAs marshalled out of Assembly over 'Phansi Ghar' row

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition Atishi and several Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs were marshalled out of the Delhi Assembly on Wednesday after a heated exchange erupted with BJP members over the authenticity of a purported British-era phansi ghar (execution chamber) located on the Assembly premises.

Speaker Vijender Gupta reiterated that the structure in question, which was renovated and inaugurated in 2022 by then Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, was in fact a "tiffin room" and not a colonial execution site as claimed.

Minister Kapil Mishra accused the previous AAP government of "tampering with history" and presenting a fabricated narrative. "They spent crores turning a tiffin room into a fake execution site, insulting our martyrs and misleading the public," he said during the discussion.



*Speaker Vijender Gupta reiterated that the structure in question, which was renovated and inaugurated in 2022 by then Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, was in fact a "tiffin room" and not a colonial execution site as claimed.*

Defending the AAP's claim, party MLA Sanjeev Jha argued that the historical significance of the site should not be dismissed outright, citing gaps in colonial records. "Historians

have differing views on such locations. In the 1912 map of this building, that is the only double-storey structure consistent with a hanging chamber," he said.

Jha further cautioned against what he called a "whitewashing of British tyranny" and claimed the controversy was being used to discredit former Chief Minister Kejriwal. He called for the materials from the site to be examined by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to ascertain its true nature.

As tensions escalated between the treasury and opposition benches, Speaker Gupta ordered Atishi and other AAP legislators to be marshalled out of the House.

## Speaker Vijender Gupta leads Assembly tour, says 'Phansi Ghar' is actually a colonial-era tiffin room

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing controversy over whether a room in the Delhi Assembly premises is a colonial-era Phansighar (gallows) or merely a tiffin room, Speaker Vijender Gupta on Wednesday conducted a guided tour of the site for



mediapersons to clarify the matter.

Speaking to reporters, Gupta said that the so-

*He further stated that the historic Delhi Assembly building was constructed in just eight months following the coronation of King George V in 1911. It originally served as the Imperial Legislative Council under British rule.*

called Phansighar was in fact a tiffin room, and that

there is a widespread misconception that it was used

to execute freedom fighters during British rule.

He further stated that the historic Delhi Assembly building was constructed in just eight months following the coronation of King George V in 1911. It originally served as the Imperial Legislative Council under British rule.

"In fact, the building

had two tiffin rooms, both equipped with pulley-operated lifts," Gupta said. He added that detailed maps of the building, clearly marking each room including the tiffin rooms, are preserved in the National Archives.

The room now referred to as Phansighar was inaugurated as such by then Chief

Minister Arvind Kejriwal on August 9, 2022.

The issue was also debated in the Assembly on Tuesday, with BJP legislators accusing the opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of misleading the public by falsely portraying the room as a colonial-era execution chamber.

## It is a historic moment: Sood on Education Bill tabling in Assembly

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood described the 'Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Bill, 2025' as a historic moment, stating that the people of Delhi are happy with the bill, which has been introduced for their benefit.

Speaking on the Education Bill, Delhi Minister Sood on Tuesday said, "The people are happy. It has been brought for their benefit. They (parents) can now attend the meetings where the fees of a school are determined. It is a historic moment."

The Bill was tabled on the first day of the Monsoon session of the Eighth Leg-



islative Assembly, which commenced on Monday and will continue until August 8. However, the session may be extended depending on the exigencies of legislative business.

On Monday, while tabling the Education Bill, 2025, in the Delhi Assembly, Cabinet Minister Sood stated that the legislation seeks to end the commercialisation of education and take action against those exploiting it for profit.

"Education is not a thing to be sold. This bill aims to halt the commercialisation of education. We are bringing the bill to take action against those mafias who are selling education..." Sood said while tabling the bill. The proposed law aims to regulate the arbitrary fee hikes by private schools in the national capital, providing relief to lakhs of students and their families.

This bill was initially scheduled to be presented

during the special session proposed on May 13-14, but the session could not be held.

Earlier on 16th April, show-cause notices were served to 10 schools regarding the arbitrary fee hike and to those schools that had not submitted their audit reports. The present Delhi government has already collected audited reports from 600 schools.

The Delhi Legislative Assembly is set to convene on Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. to take up a range of issues, including the consideration of the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Bill, 2025, and a short-duration discussion on alleged financial irregularities in a government scholarship scheme.

## Delhi launches 'Swachhata Portal' to track and share works under cleanliness drive

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has launched the 'Swachhata Portal' as part of the 'Delhi ko Kude Se Azaadi' campaign, a month-long cleanliness drive aimed at making Delhi one of the cleanest cities globally.

Delhi's Urban Development Minister Ashish Sood announced on Wednesday that under the "Delhi ko Kude Se Azaadi" cleanliness campaign, which runs from August 1 to August 31, the Urban Development Department has launched the "Swachhata Portal," said a release from the Office of the Minister of Education and Urban Development, Delhi.

On this portal, any institution, government office, or Resident Welfare Associa-



tion (RWA) can upload before-and-after photographs of cleanliness activities carried out in their respective areas. As per the release, Sood appealed to the people of Delhi to participate in this cleanliness campaign being run by the Delhi Government and cooperate in making Delhi a cleaner, better, and more livable city.

He emphasized that Delhi is not only the national capital but also a reflection of the country. If we wish to realize the vision of a developed In-

dia, the first step must be to make a metropolis like Delhi clean, eco-friendly, and appealing. This requires collective effort and participation from all citizens.

The Urban Development Minister further stated that as part of the cleanliness campaign, the Urban Development Department is organizing a competition for RWAs. Any Resident Welfare Association can participate by uploading photos of the cleanliness work carried out by them. Departments/

institutions/organizations/associations/RWAs must first register themselves on the Swachhata Portal (<https://swachhata.delhi.gov.in>), as per the release.

They are required to upload photographs taken before and after the cleanliness drives. Evaluation officials will examine the uploaded photos and will also conduct on-site inspections to assess the actual situation before awarding marks.

According to the official statement, explaining the process of participation, Shri Sood informed that anyone can go to the Swachhata Portal (<https://swachhata.delhi.gov.in>), register their institution or RWA for the cleanliness competition, and upload the before-and-after photos of their cleanliness activities.

## CM to gift SHG-made Rakhi gift hampers

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta will be presenting special Rakshabandhan gift packages, crafted by a self-help group (SHG) from Shahdara, to her cabinet colleagues and senior leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party on the occasion of the festival.

The specially curated gift packages include a rakhi, traditional sweets, as well as 'rol' and 'tilak', customary items associated with the Rakshabandhan ritual.

"To celebrate Rakshabandhan, we have created this product. The sisters from a self-help group in Shahdara have prepared these special gift packages. We will be gifting them to our party's senior leaders," Chief Min-



ister Gupta told reporters. She further said that the women from the group have also prepared sweets, 'sattu', 'dhoop', and 'agarbatti', all of which are included in the gift hampers.

"The work for self-help groups should expand so

that women can gain employment. People should consider gifting these packages. Our prime minister regularly speaks about the importance of self-help groups, and we will actively encourage and support them in the national capital," she added.

## Rekha Gupta inaugurates Delhi Book Fair, praises reading culture

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday acknowledged the growing influence of social media reels but emphasised that a strong community of book lovers still thrives. Speaking at the inauguration of the 29th edition of the Delhi Book Fair at Bharat Mandapam, she reaffirmed her government's commitment to supporting literary events that benefit both publishers and the reading public.

"Books are friends that stay with you unconditionally. Even in today's era, where social media reels dominate attention spans, there are



still people who genuinely love books," Gupta told the gathering. Highlighting India's ancient literary heritage, she said, "In Bharat, the tradition of reading and writing is age-old. A good book draws us into its world. We get lost in the characters and often learn from them." The Chief Minister assured continued support for such initiatives. "We will always support book fairs that help publishers and everyone associated with the literary community," she added.

## Two arrested for snatching earrings from elderly woman in Delhi

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Two men have been arrested for allegedly snatching a pair of gold earrings from an 80-year-old woman near a temple in Delhi's Farsh Bazar area, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place on August 2, when the elderly woman was returning home after offering prayers. The accused, identified as Suraj (28) and Neeraj alias Kashi (35), allegedly snatched her earrings while riding a motorcycle and fled the scene.

Following the incident, a case was registered at the Farsh Bazar Police Station. "During the investigation, CCTV footage from the



scene and nearby areas was analysed. The accused were seen riding a silver motorcycle, with the last two digits of the rear number plate deliberately smeared with mud and the front plate removed to avoid detection," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam.

Police traced the route taken by the suspects and, using technical surveillance, identified the motorcycle as registered in the name of Ramashankar, a resident of North Ghonda. Upon inquiry, Ramashankar disclosed that the motorcycle was used by his son, Suraj, who was currently absconding.



# SC SEEKS EC RESPONSE ON BIHAR'S 65 LAKH DELETED VOTERS

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Election Commission to file its response by August 9 on a fresh application of an NGO seeking disclosure of data of 65 lakh voters who were not included in the Bihar draft electoral roll after Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for an NGO, mentioned the matter before the apex court, saying no specific information has been given on who is dead and who has permanently migrated out.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N Kotiswar Singh asked the counsel for the Election Commission to furnish the details of deleted voters, the data which has been shared with the political parties, and give a copy to the NGO.

The Election Commission said all requisite information had been given to political parties.

The bench told Bhushan that the reason for deletion would come in the subse-

## BIHAR VOTER LIST CONTROVERSY

- Supreme Court asks EC to file detailed response by August 9
- NGO ADR demands clarity on deleted voters: dead, migrated, or untraceable
- EC claims political parties already received necessary information
- Petitions challenge new voter verification norms, final hearing on August 12



quent time, as it is now only a draft list.

However, Bhushan said that some political parties have been given a list of deleted voters, but they have not further clarified whether the voter is dead or has migrated.

"We will see every voter likely to be affected and get the required information. You (ECI) file a reply by Saturday and let Mr Bhushan look at it, and then we can see what is disclosed and what is not disclosed," Justice Kant said.

Association For Democratic Reforms, the NGO, which has challenged the June 24 order of the poll panel directing the

SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar, now sought direction from the ECI to publish the names of around 65 lakh deleted voters with a mention whether they are dead, permanently migrated or not considered for any other reason.

Bhushan claimed that 75 per cent of voters, who have filled the enumeration form, have not furnished any supporting documents mentioned in the list of 11 documents, and their names were included on the recommendation of the Booth Level Officer (BLO) of the Election Commission.

The apex court said it is starting the hearing on a

batch of petitions challenging the June 24 order of the poll panel on August 12, and the NGO can make these averments on that day.

"The application seeks direction for the ECI to publish a full and final assembly constituency and part/booth wise list of names and details of approx 65 lakh electors whose Enumeration Forms were not submitted along with reasons for non-submission (death, permanently shifted, duplicate, untraceable etc.)," the application stated.

It further sought direction "to direct the ECI to publish an assembly constituency

and part/booth wise list of electors on the Draft Electoral Rolls published on August 1, 2025, whose Enumeration Forms have been marked "not recommended by the BLOs".

The top court has fixed the hearing on August 12 and 13 of a batch of pleas challenging the Election Commission of India's move to conduct SIR of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar.

The petitions challenging the ECI decision were filed by RJD MP Manoj Jha, ADR, PUCL, activist Yogendra Yadav, Trinamool MP Mahua Moitra, and former Bihar MLA Mujahid Alam.

# Shah to lay foundation for Sitamarhi's Janki Mandir redevelopment in Bihar

TDG NETWORK  
PATNA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will lay the foundation stone for the redevelopment of the historic Janki Mandir at Punaauradham in Bihar's Sitamarhi district on August 8, officials confirmed on Wednesday. The site is revered as the birthplace of Goddess Sita and holds immense religious and cultural significance.

The foundation-laying ceremony will be attended by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, several Union ministers and other dignitaries. BJP spokesperson Niraj Kumar called it a "historic day for the people of Bihar," and noted that the event will take place amidst Vedic chanting. Spread across 67 acres, the Janki Mandir redevelopment project has a sanctioned budget of Rs 882.87 crore, approved by the Bihar cabinet on July 1. The Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC) will oversee its implementation, aiming to complete the work within



11 months.

Of the total sanctioned amount, Rs 137 crore will be used for the development of the old temple and its premises, while Rs 728 crore has been earmarked for tourism-related infrastructure. An additional Rs 16 crore has been allocated for comprehensive maintenance of the temple complex over the next 10 years. A nine-member trust led by the chief secretary has been formed to oversee the construction and redevelopment of the shrine. The project is envisioned as a major pilgrimage initiative, modeled on the comprehensive development of the Shri

Ram Janmabhoomi Tirth Kshetra in Ayodhya.

BJP spokesperson Niraj Kumar said that a large number of pilgrims, both domestic and international, already visit Punaauradham, which lies about 5 km west of Sitamarhi town. The planned redevelopment is expected to further enhance its religious and cultural appeal. The cabinet has also approved the appointment of Noida-based firm M/s Design Associates Inc. as the design consultant for the project. The firm was also involved in the master planning and architectural design of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya.

# Tejashwi had two voter IDs, how many did his supporters have: JD(U)

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Janata Dal (United) MP Sanjay Kumar Jha alleged that Opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav holds multiple Election IDs, suggesting a similar practice among his supporters. He further said there is no issue on the ground in Bihar regarding Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

"On the ground, there is no issue in Bihar. When the Opposition leader (Tejashwi Yadav) kept two Election IDs, then we don't know how many IDs his supporters must be having. This is the reason SIR is being done," he said.

A few days ago, a complaint was filed against the Leader of Opposition in the Bihar as-



sembly and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav at Digha Police Station in Patna, alleging that he holds two Electoral Photo Identity Cards (EPICs). The complaint was submitted by an advocate, Rajiv Ranjan, who has requested that appropriate legal action be initiated.

Earlier, Tejashwi Yadav alleged that his EPIC (Electors Photo Identity Card) number has been "changed."

Yadav had further raised

concerns over his name missing from the electoral roll, questioning how he would contest the upcoming elections. Despite possessing a valid EPIC number, Yadav claimed that his name could not be traced in the voters' list, sparking allegations of irregularities in the electoral process.

Addressing a press conference in Patna, Yadav had alleged, "My name is not there in the electoral roll. How will I contest the elections?"

Following this, the Electoral Registration Officer in Patna on Sunday asked him to provide the details of the EPIC card he mentioned during his press conference, so that the matter can be thoroughly investigated.

# Zero claims, objections by political parties so far to draft electoral rolls in Bihar: ECI

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) said on Wednesday that zero claims or objections had been filed by political parties since the publication of the draft electoral rolls in Bihar on August 1, up until 6th August (9 AM).

However, there are 3,659 claims and objections received directly from the electors with respect to the draft roll, said the ECI in a daily bulletin on the ongoing special intensive revision of electoral roll (SIR) in Bihar.

Forms received from New electors on attaining 18 years of age or above are 19,186.

As per the rules, the claims & objections are to be disposed of by the concerned Electoral Registra-



tion Officer/ Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (ERO/AERO) after the expiry of 7 days.

As per SIR orders, no name can be deleted from the draft list published on 1st August 2025, without passing a speaking order by the ERO/AERO after conducting an enquiry and after giving a fair and reasonable opportunity.

The Special Intensive Revision

(SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar has sparked a political row, with the opposition INDIA bloc alleging that the revision process could lead to the deletion of a large number of voters. They have been protesting in the Parliament, demanding a discussion over the Bihar SIR, since the start of this year's Monsoon Session.

On Friday, ECI released the draft electoral rolls for Bihar, following the completion of the Enumeration Phase under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2025. It said the public has one month to submit claims and objections, assuring that "no name will be removed from the draft voter list without a stated reason".

The poll panel said that 1.60 lakh Booth Level Agents (BLAs) nomi-

nated by District Presidents of 12 political parties actively participated in the process on the ground.

The commission enabled electors to verify their names through the official link using their EPIC numbers. They were also allowed to file claims and objections for inclusion or deletion of names through the same portal.

In a drive to ensure accurate and updated voter identity cards, the ECI urged all voters to submit new photographs to their Booth Level Officers (BLOs) by September 1, 2025.

According to data from the revision exercise in Bihar, around 35 lakh electors have either migrated permanently or could not be traced at their registered addresses.

# Swift action in MP's case sparks call for equal treatment

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police have solved the case of the gold chain snatching of Tamil Nadu MP R Sudha in Chanakya-puri, arresting one accused person, officials said on Wednesday. The stolen item has been recovered too.

After the Delhi Police posted about the case being solved on X, Congress MP from Tamil Nadu, R Sudha expressed gratitude for the arrest of the accused, but also hoped that the "common man gets the same treatment."

"The case of snatching of chain of Hon'ble Member of Parliament has been solved. The accused has been ar-



rested and the chain has been recovered. More details shall be shared in due course," Delhi Police posted on X.

Reacting to the update, the MP told ANI outside Parliament, "I am happy and thank Delhi Police, especially DCP, Commissioner. This is not a one case, there are so many pending cases like this. The police arrested the accused.

# Mamata refuses to heed EC's direction on officers for poll list violations

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE  
KOLKATA

A day after the Election Commission of India (ECI) ordered the suspension of five West Bengal Government officials over alleged voter list manipulation, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a fierce counterattack on Wednesday and vowed to defend her officers "at all cost".

Speaking at a public meeting in Jhargram during her second "Bhasha Andolan" (language movement) march, Banerjee accused the ECI of acting under the influence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and vowed to protect her officers at all costs.

The ECI's action came in response to a report from



the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer, which highlighted irregularities in the electoral rolls of Baruaipur Purba and Moyna Assembly constituencies. The poll body ordered the suspension of two Electoral Registration Officers (EROs)—Debottam Dutta Choudhury (Baruaipur Purba) and Biplab Sarkar (Moyna)—along with two Assistant Electoral Registration

Officers (AEROs), Tathagata Mondal and Sudipta Das, and a data entry operator. The suspensions were linked to the alleged fraudulent registration of 127 voters using forged documents. The ECI has also directed the filing of First Information Reports (FIRs) against all five and initiated disciplinary proceedings, citing potential criminal misconduct.

Banerjee, however, dismissed the ECI's move as illegal and politically motivated.

Government employees are being intimidated. Two officers were served suspension notices yesterday. Have the elections even been announced yet? Which law allows them to be suspended at this stage? It is our responsibility to protect you all. We will do that. We will not suspend them," she declared, addressing a charged crowd.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo accused the ECI of being "bonded labourers of the BJP" and acting as agents of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. "The Home Minister thinks whatever he says will happen," she alleged.

# Shiv Sena extends unconditional support to NDA for VP election



TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena has extended its unconditional support to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for the upcoming Vice Presidential election, announced Shiv Sena Chief and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

During his visit to New Delhi, Shinde affirmed that Shiv Sena remains one of the oldest and most trusted

allies of the NDA.

Shri Shinde, accompanied by all Shiv Sena MPs, called on Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah. Following the meeting, he addressed the media and highlighted key developments.

"Amit Shah ji has become the longest-serving Home Minister in the history of India, completing an uninterrupted term of 2,258 days. We met him to convey our heartfelt congratulations," Shinde said.

# Tripura CM engages with citizens through 'Mukhyamantri Samipeshu' initiative

TDG NETWORK  
AGARTALA

In a continued effort to promote transparency, accountability, and people-centric governance, Chief Minister of Tripura Manik Saha held another impactful session of the 'Mukhyamantri Samipeshu' initiative on Wednesday at his official residence.

The programme witnessed citizens from various districts of the state directly



presenting their grievances, concerns, and suggestions to the Chief Minister. With compassion and sincerity,

CM Saha patiently listened to each individual and assured them of prompt and appropriate action.

In a post on X, CM Manik Saha stated, "Addressing people's concerns through #MukhyamantriSamipeshu is a concrete step towards ensuring an inclusive and accessible government. In today's episode held at my official residence, citizens from various parts of the state directly shared their grievances and suggestions. I listened to each of them with utmost attention and

assured that appropriate actions will be taken. People's voices matter -- and under this initiative, every voice is being heard."

CM Saha said that this unique platform is rapidly becoming a cornerstone of inclusive governance in Tripura, ensuring that every citizen's voice is not only heard but respected. It reflects the government's strong commitment to addressing

grassroots-level issues and enhancing public trust in the administration.

He said that by fostering direct interaction between the public and the head of the government, the initiative underscores the core democratic principle that governance must always remain accessible, accountable, and people-first.

Earlier, CM Saha on Tuesday stressed the need to

promote the state's unique blend of traditional cultures as a means to achieve mental and spiritual well-being. Calling for culture to become a mass movement, the Chief Minister emphasised the importance of nurturing and modernising local traditions to engage the youth and preserve the region's heritage.

According to a release, he said that "culture plays the most important role

in achieving mental and spiritual peace, and efforts should be made to showcase the traditional mixed culture of the state to the world. For this, the development of culture should be turned into a mass movement"

CM Saha said this while speaking at the first meeting of the reconstituted State-level Cultural Advisory Committee at the Secretariat on Tuesday.



# INDIAN STOCK BENCHMARKS CONTINUE TO DIP OVER TRUMP TARIFFS UNCERTAINTY

Sensex and Nifty fell as investors stayed cautious amid Trump tariff surprises

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

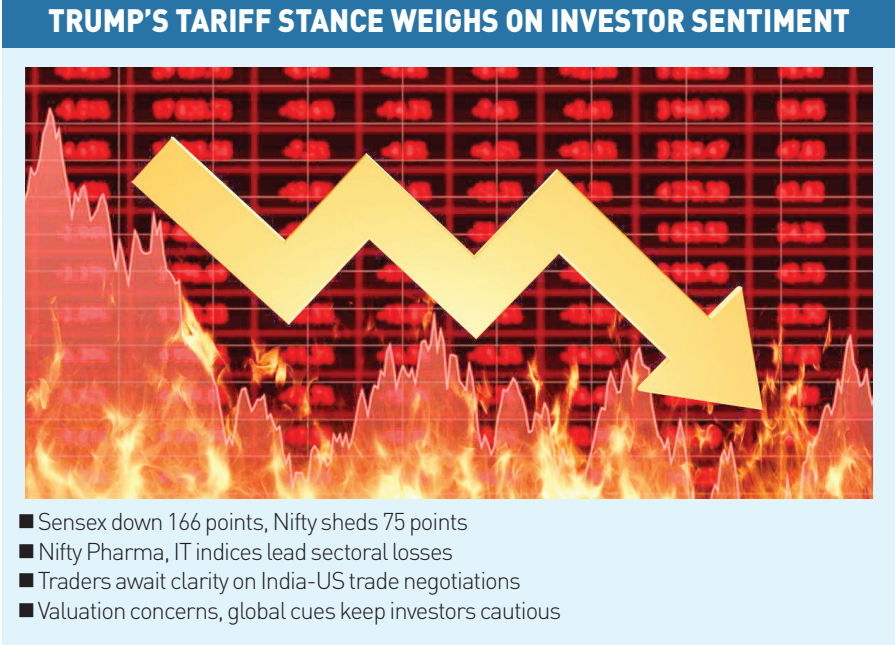
Indian stock benchmarks oscillated in a narrow range on Wednesday, ending the day marginally lower, highlighting widespread profit booking and cautious investor behaviour amid Trump tariffs uncertainty.

Sensex closed the day at 80,543.99 points, down 166.26 points or 0.21 per cent, while Nifty closed at 24,574.20 points, down 75.35 points or 0.31 per cent.

The RBI monetary policy announcements, largely in line with expectations, had hardly any impact on the markets.

Among the index constituents, Asian Paints and HDFC Life emerged as the top gainers, showcasing relative strength amid broader market weakness.

On the flip side, Wipro and Sun Pharma were the major



laggards, contributing to the downside.

“Sectorally, the market breadth was largely negative. Except for Nifty PSU Bank, all other sectoral indices ended in the red. Nifty Pharma and Nifty IT were

the worst performers, reflecting selling pressure in defensives and technology stocks,” Sudeep Shah, Head - Technical and Derivatives Research at SBI Securities, said.

“This tight range-bound

movement suggests that traders are awaiting a clear directional trigger before committing to fresh positions,” Shah added.

One of the key factors contributing to this cautious sentiment is the anticipation

surrounding further details of the ongoing trade negotiations between India and the United States.

“The lack of clarity on this front has kept both investors and traders on edge, leading to subdued volatility and limited price action,” Shah of SBI Securities asserted.

According to a recent report by Nuvama, India's equity markets are showing signs of fatigue as stretched valuations collide with slowing profit growth, undermining the country's appeal among emerging markets (EMs).

The benchmark indices have been facing substantial selling pressure at higher levels over the past few sessions, with analysts indicating uncertainty on the India-US new interim deal front, given President Donald Trump is vowing for additional tariffs over and above the already announced 25 per cent.

## US tariffs to impact \$8.1 bn of Indian exports: PHDCCI

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The US reciprocal tariffs will affect approximately USD 8.1 billion worth of India's exports to the US, while the overall impact on India's economy remains manageable, said an analysis by the Industry body PHDCCI.

Analysis indicates that there will be an estimated impact of only 1.87 per cent on India's total global merchandise exports and a negligible 0.19 per cent on India's GDP as a result of the 25 per cent tariff announced by the US on India.

The study added that the engineering goods could potentially be impacted worth USD 1.8 billion, while electronic goods (USD 1.4 billion), pharmaceuticals (USD 986 million), gems and jewelry (USD 932 million) and readymade garments will be impacted worth USD 500 million.

In a latest development, on August 5, US President Donald Trump once again announced that he would increase the tariff charged on imports from India from the current rate of 25 per cent “very substantially” over the next 24 hours due to New Delhi's continued purchases of Russian oil.



*Trump's announcement, made on his social media platform Truth Social, came days after he announced a 25 per cent reciprocal tariff on India and an unspecified penalty for importing oil from Russia.*

Trump had said on Monday that the United States will “substantially raise” the tariff paid by India for buying “massive amounts of Russian Oil”, stating that much of the oil purchased from Moscow is being sold in the open market “for big profits.”

Trump's announcement, made on his social media platform Truth Social, came days after he announced a 25 per cent reciprocal tariff on India and an unspecified penalty for importing oil from Russia.

Hemant Jain, President, PHDCCI, said, “The tariff challenge accelerates India's need for export sophistica-

tion and geographic diversification. Our strategy framework provides a roadmap for converting this disruption into an opportunity for long-term competitiveness enhancement.”

“While the 25% US tariff presents challenges, India's robust domestic demand and diversified economy provide resilience. Our analysis shows the impact, though significant in absolute terms, remains manageable at the macro level. This presents an opportunity for Indian businesses to accelerate market diversification and value addition strategies,” said Ranjeet Mehta, CEO & SG, PHDCCI.

## Paytm Money partners with JioBlackRock NFOs

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Paytm Money, a wholly-owned subsidiary of One97 Communications Limited (OCL) and a wealth-tech platform, has partnered with JioBlackRock Asset Management to offer easy access to its five Index Fund New Fund Offers (NFOs), directly through the Paytm Money app.

As a Direct Mutual Fund platform, Paytm Money offers zero commission on mutual fund investments, along with no hidden charges and zero cost on account opening.

Following the successful debut of JioBlackRock's initial NFOs, which saw robust retail participation with over 7,000 successful

transactions on the Paytm app, 45 per cent of these transactions were through SIPs.

The new NFO opened on August 5, 2025 and will close on August 12, 2025. Investors can access JioBlackRock Asset Management's five mutual fund schemes directly through the Paytm Money app: JioBlackRock Nifty 50 Index Fund; JioBlackRock Nifty Next 50 Index Fund; JioBlackRock Nifty Midcap 150 Index Fund; JioBlackRock Nifty Smallcap 250 Index Fund; and JioBlackRock Nifty 8-13 Yr G-Sec Index Fund.

Index funds offer a simplified investment approach by providing exposure to the broader market without the need to select individual securities.



## Goldman Sachs lowers India's growth rate on US tariff concerns

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

India's economic trajectory is facing fresh turbulence after U.S. President Donald Trump slapped a 25% “reciprocal” tariff on Indian goods.

In its revised outlook, Goldman Sachs lowered India's real GDP growth projection marginally by 0.1 percentage point for calendar year 2025 (CY25) to 6.5 per cent and by 0.2 percentage point for 2026 (CY26) to 6.4 per cent year-on-year.

However, the report adds that “In our view, some of these tariffs are likely to be negotiated lower over time, and further downside risk to the growth trajectory mainly emanates from the uncertainty channel.”

Even as growth slows, the brokerage firm noted that inflation is going down. It revises India's inflation forecasts lower by 0.2 percentage points for both calendar year 2025 and fiscal year 2026, now sitting at 3.0% year-on-year.

The cooling prices are

largely attributed to softening vegetable costs. But the report warns that these projections lie in “the left tail of India's historical inflation distribution,” pointing out that such low levels are rare and could be vulnerable to unexpected shocks.

The fallout isn't just limited to headline growth. While some of the imposed tariffs may be softened through negotiation over time, the broader impact stems from uncertainty.

“Further downside risk to the growth trajectory

clouded by the unpredictability of U.S.-India trade relations.

The report flags two key risks that could stall further easing: a swift and amicable resolution of the U.S.-India trade talks, or a sharper-than-anticipated rise in core inflation, particularly if it approaches the 4.0% threshold.

The RBI, however, in its policy statement announced on Wednesday, has kept the repo rate unchanged. The central bank has also maintained its growth projec-



mainly emanates from the uncertainty channel,” the report notes, underscoring how investor sentiment and business planning are being

tion of 6.5% for the current fiscal, but revised the CPI inflation downwards significantly from 3.7% to 3.1% for FY26.

## RBI holds rates steady, trims inflation forecast

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy interest rate unchanged on Wednesday as it appeared to have taken a wait-and-watch approach to assess the full unveiling of US President Donald Trump's trade policies as well as the transmission of past rate cuts.

The six-member rate-setting panel, headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, held the repurchase rate at



5.5 per cent in a unanimous vote and decided to continue with a ‘neutral’ stance.

While on-track monsoon rains and the approaching festival season are expected to provide buoyancy to the

economy, global trade challenges continue to linger, Malhotra said, announcing the decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Trump last month slapped a 25 per cent duty on all Indian goods entering the US from August 7, and on Tuesday threatened to substantially hike the tariff for New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil.

“Over the medium-term also, the Indian economy holds bright prospects in

the changing world order, drawing on its inherent strength, robust fundamentals, and comfortable buffers,” Malhotra said. “Opportunities are there for the taking, and we are making all efforts to create enabling conditions through a multi-pronged yet cohesive approach to policy making.”

The pause follows a 100 basis point (bps) cut in interest rate over three bi-monthly MPC meetings in 2025. The full transmission of the front-loaded 50 bps

rate cut effected in June is still awaited.

While keeping the repo rate unchanged, RBI revised its inflation forecast lower by 60 bps to 3.1 per cent. Malhotra flagged a rise in headline inflation towards the end of the year.

“CPI inflation is likely to edge up above 4 per cent in Q4:2025-26 and beyond, as unfavourable base effects and demand side factors from policy actions come into play,” he said.

## India poised to lead fast-growing economies in 2025-26: Deloitte

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India is well-positioned to maintain its lead among fast-growing economies in FY2025-26, Deloitte asserted in a report, citing the country's resilient capital markets, strong domestic consumption, digitally skilled workforce, and increasing trade partnerships.

According to the Deloitte report, India continues to outperform peer economies despite global uncertainty.



India's economy closed FY2024-25 with a formidable 6.5% expansion, powered by a sharp 7.4% surge in the final quarter. While this pace signals a moderation from the prior years' 9.2% and 7.6%, analysts stress that what it reflects is not a slowdown but a stabilisation following high base

effects.

The strength shown in private consumption, investment, services exports, and capital markets makes it clear that the country is well-positioned to maintain its lead among fast-growing economies in FY25-26.

Capital markets, despite enduring large capital outflows for much of the fiscal year, staged a sharp rebound from April 2025. Indexed MSCI data reveal that India's equity markets have not only recovered but have

doubled in value since 2019, surpassing most emerging market rivals. Domestic investors and a return of foreign portfolio flows have reaffirmed India's attractiveness as a long-term investment destination.

Meanwhile, domestic consumption accounted for over 61% of GDP during FY2024-25. Easing inflation, modest monetary policy easing, tax boosts and a growing urban middle-income class all fed into sustained consumer momentum. Deloitte high-

lights that this demand-side strength remains one of the economy's most durable pillars going into FY2025-26.

The report also underscores India's emergence as a global hub for high-skilled services, leveraging a digitally skilled, youthful workforce. With AI skill penetration second only to the US, and over 1,700 Global Capability Centers operating domestically, India is steadily building a reputation for innovation and resilience in services exports.

## TRAI issues advisory on fraudulent activities misusing its name

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued an advisory cautioning the public about a rise in cyber frauds and financial scams involving misuse of TRAI's name, the Ministry of Communications said in a release on Wednesday.

These include impersonation of TRAI officials through calls, messages, forged documents, and fraudulent letterheads to threaten or mislead individuals and coerce them into sharing personal information or transferring money.

The telecom regulator said that any such outreach allegedly in the name of TRAI is unauthorised and not associated with TRAI.

Citing such incidents, the telecom regulator said that a prominent example is the so-called ‘digital arrest’ scam, where callers impersonate TRAI or law enforcement officials and falsely accuse individuals of telecom or financial violations or criminal actions.

Victims are manipulated through fake legal docu-

ments, forged identities, and threats of arrest or account freezing, and are coerced to transfer money under the pretext of bail, fines, or verification.

TRAI reiterated that it does not initiate communication with customers regarding mobile number disconnection through messages or otherwise.



TRAI has also not authorised any third-party agency to contact customers for such purposes. No regulatory body conducts investigations or collects payments through phone calls, messaging apps, or video platforms.

TRAI has cautioned citizens about various frauds

falsely using its identity, including SIM deactivation threats, fake mobile tower rental offers, and forged documents demanding money.

The regulator clarified that it does not investigate individuals, seek personal or banking details, or issue threats.

TRAI urged the public to

## Mahindra CEO backs Govt amid US tariff row



India does not comply.

“For us, it is not very material,” Shah said when asked about the potential impact of US tariffs on the Mahindra Group, in an interview with PTI Videos.

Shah, who heads the USD 25 billion SUVs-to-software conglomerate, emphasised that the Indian government has consistently operated in a manner that keeps the

broader national interest in mind, and he remains confident that the issue will be resolved with a favourable outcome.

“Based on everything I've seen our government do, they've always kept the overall interest of India in mind and operated in a way where they can get good solutions. So, I have full confidence that this will be resolved and it will settle down to something that will be a very strong, positive outcome,” Shah said.

Indian officials are continuing negotiations with the US in pursuit of a bilateral trade agreement expected by October or November. The higher duties are being viewed as a temporary pressure tactic until a formal pact is reached.



# DR. MOHAN BHAGWAT’S DIALOGUE WITH ISLAMIC SCHOLARS: A STEP TOWARD INCLUSIVE REFORM AMONG MUSLIMS

OPINION

GOPAL GOSWAMI



In a significant move toward fostering interfaith dialogue and communal harmony in India, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Dr. Mohan Bhagwat recently met with prominent Muslim clerics and scholars in Delhi on July 24, 2025. The meeting, held at Haryana Bhawan, brought together senior RSS functionaries and influential Muslim leaders. This engagement has sparked widespread discussion about its implications, not only for Hindu-Muslim relations in India but also has the potential scope for Indian Muslim scholars in leading global Islamic reforms. As countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE push for progressive changes within Islam, Indian ulemas

are uniquely positioned to project a more inclusive, tolerant, and cooperative vision of the faith as they have a strong cult all over the world Muslims. However, this vision must address contentious issues such as the intolerance in Islamic teachings, the role of madrassas, and the need for mainstream educational integration to combat radicalism and promote peace.

Bhagwat's outreach to Muslim scholars is a continuation of the RSS's efforts to bridge the communal divide in India, a country with a diverse population where Muslims constitute 14.2% (approximately 172.2 million people) of the population, making India home to the third-largest Muslim community globally. The meeting aimed to promote dialogue between Hindus and Muslims, emphasising the need for reconciliation and mutual understanding for India's progress. The Chief Imam of the All-India Imam Organisation, Dr. Umer Ahmad Ilyasi, described the dialogue as positive, noting that it focused on ending hatred and fostering

unity. This initiative follows previous engagements, such as Bhagwat's 2022 meetings with Muslim intellectuals, which received endorsements from key Islamic bodies like Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and Jamaat-e-Islami Hind.

The importance of this meeting lies in its potential to address longstanding tensions between communities in India, particularly in light of recent incidents of communal discord. By engaging directly with Muslim religious leaders, the RSS, a prominent Hindu nationalist organisation, signals a willingness to move beyond historical mistrust and work toward a shared vision of national unity. The dialogue also reflects a broader recognition that India's diverse society requires collaborative efforts to address social, educational, and economic challenges faced by Muslims because of their orthodox culture. As Niaz Ahmed Farooqui of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind noted, the Muslim community faces significant backwardness in education and employment, which often takes a backseat to communal issues. Bhagwat's initiative could pave the way for addressing these structural challenges while promoting a narrative of co-existence. Institutions such as Darul Uloom Deoband, the Bareilly movement, and the Tablighi Jamaat, hold significant influence not only within India but also globally. Darul Uloom Deoband, established in 1866, is one of

the world's largest Islamic seminaries and the birthplace of the Deobandi movement, which adheres to the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam. The institution has influenced Islamic education and thought throughout by establishing thousands of madrassas worldwide, from South Africa to Malaysia. The Bareilly movement, founded in 1904 by Ahmed Razi Khan, represents a measure portion of India's Sunni population and emphasises traditional Islamic practices rooted in South Asian culture. The Tablighi Jamaat, founded by Muhammad Ilyas al-Kandhlawi in 1926, is a global missionary movement focused on establishing radical Islam based on Quran & Hadish, with a strong presence in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and South Africa.

These institutions have historically played a dual role: spreading Islamic teachings while also influencing in social and political spheres. For instance, Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, closely associated with Deoband, was a key player in the making of Pakistan. These institutions have also faced criticism for certain fatwas and practices perceived as regressive, such as bans on photography or restrictions on women working alongside men. Seeing this, their global reach positions Indian ulemas to lead reforms that could resonate worldwide, particularly in light of progressive changes in countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have undertaken significant steps to modernise Islamic practices, emphasising inclusivity and moderation. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 includes initiatives to curb extremist interpretations, promote women's rights, and foster interfaith dialogue. The UAE has also displayed a vision of "tolerant Islam," exemplified by the Abraham Accords and the establishment of interfaith centers like the Abraham Family House, construction of a Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi etc. These efforts show that reform within Islam is possible to its coexistence with other communities and civilisations with removing those atrocious and radical values of Islam including women's rights which is almost half of the population, focusing on economic progress, gender equality, and coexistence with other faiths.

Indian Muslim scholars can draw inspiration from these models while leveraging their own tradition. Institutions like Darul Uloom Deoband have already shown openness to reform, such as denouncing terrorism in 2008 and issuing fatwas against practices believed un-Islamic but they have contradicted many times. However, to lead global reforms, Indian ulemas must lead address contentious theological concepts like jihad, kafir (non-believer), and Darul Islam (land of Islam),

which critics argue fuel intolerance, division & enmity among communities. These terms are always exploited by extremist groups, whereas contradicted by many, this requires nuanced reinterpretation to align with modern values of equality and coexistence.

The belief that "almost every terrorist is Muslim" stems believed to-be from a complex interplay of geopolitical, social, and economic factors, but the fact of the matter is its solely religious doctrine. While it is not inaccurate to attribute terrorism to Islam's core tenets, certain interpretations of jihad and the binary of Darul Islam versus Darul Harb (land of war) have been co-opted by radical groups to justify violence. Indian scholars, with their deep understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, can help remove these narratives by emphasising Islam's teachings on peace, justice, and respect for all humanity.

Madrassas, particularly those affiliated with the Deobandi movement, have often been criticised for fostering radical ideologies. Reforming madrassa education can only be possible with removal of those atrocious verses of Quran and Hadith. Without doing so, its critical to countering radicalism and integrating Muslim youth into mainstream society. Incorporating subjects like science, mathematics, and vocational training alongside religious studies can equip students with skills for modern economies, reducing their vulnerability to extremist ideologies.

India's madrassa system is vast, with thousands of institutions educating millions of students. However, their isolation from mainstream education often limits opportunities for Muslim youth, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalisation. Initiatives to modernise madrassas, such as those in Uttar Pradesh, have introduced secular subjects, but broader implementation is needed. By aligning with national education standards and promoting critical thinking, madrassas can become centers of holistic learning rather than breeding grounds for divisive ideologies leading to terrorism.

Bhagwat's engagement with Muslim scholars aligns with the RSS's broader goal of nation-building through inclusivity. His meetings underscore the importance of dialogue in addressing communal tensions and fostering a shared identity. By engaging with influential Muslim institutions, Bhagwat is encouraging Indian ulemas to take a proactive role in reforming Islam from within, challenging narratives of intolerance, and promoting equality for women and non-Muslims.

For Indian Muslim clerics to lead global reforms, they must focus on several key areas:

**Theological Reinterpretation:** Scholars should revisit concepts like jihad and kafir, emphasising their contextual meanings and promoting interpretations that align with peace and coexistence & remove verses which are against a civilised society.

**Madrassa Modernisation:** Integrating mainstream education into madrassa curricula will empower Muslim youth and reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies.

**Interfaith Dialogue:** Continued collaboration with organisations like the RSS can build trust and dispel stereotypes, fostering a culture of mutual respect.

**Women's Empowerment:** Addressing gender disparities within Islamic institutions, inspired by reforms in Saudi Arabia, can enhance Islam's image as a progressive faith.

**Global Outreach:** Indian ulemas can leverage their institutions' international networks to promote a tolerant and inclusive Islam, countering extremist narratives worldwide.

Bhagwat's meeting marks a pivotal moment in India's journey toward communal harmony and positions Indian Muslim institutions as potential leaders in global Islamic reform. As India navigates its diverse social fabric, such initiatives can pave the way for a more united and progressive future both within the country and on the global stage.

*Gopal Goswami Ph.D. is a researcher, columnist, and social worker*

## India's AI revolution: Charting path for Viksit Bharat in healthcare, education

OPINION

DR KIRIT P. SOLANKI AND SABARISH CHANDRASEKARAN



In the pursuit of a Viksit Bharat—an empowered, developed India by 2047—technology is both a cornerstone and a catalyst. Guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, India's government is not simply embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is democratizing it, making advanced technology accessible to every citizen and sector. The IndiaAI mission stands testament to this ambition, with targeted interventions grounded in accountability, safety, fairness, and the unwavering protection of human rights and privacy.

**BUILDING INDIA'S AI FOUNDATIONS**

India's bold initiative to develop indigenous Large and Small Language Models, uniquely trained on Indian datasets, is pivotal. These foundational models are designed to decode not just the words, but the rich contexts,



dialects, and cultural nuances across healthcare, education, agriculture, climate, and governance. Leading homegrown AI startups—Sarvam AI, Soket AI, Gnani AI, and Gan AI—are on the frontline, promising models that will be open source, fueling India's vibrant startup ecosystem and ensuring innovations remain India-centric.

**SAFE, SCALABLE SOLUTIONS**

Central to this mission is the development of high-end AI infrastructure—massive GPU capacity to support research at scale, while the AIKosh datasets platform curates over 1,000 India-specific datasets and 200+ AI models. These resources are not just numbers: they are the backbone for inclusive solutions in health (such as AI-driven diagnosis of brain lesions), agriculture (Kisan Call Centre data powering farm

advisories), and education (multilingual Text-to-Speech in Indian languages). By ensuring privacy safeguards at every step, the mission ensures innovation without compromising citizens' rights.

**THE NEXT FRONTIER**

India stands at the cusp of revolutionizing medical and healthcare education via AI. From adaptive learning platforms personalizing content for students in every corner of the country, to virtual and augmented reality simulators for training doctors and nurses with real-life precision. The fruits are tangible—increased pass rates in medical licensing exams, more informed health workers, and rural clinics empowered by AI-driven diagnostic support.

Equally transformative is AI's potential in real-time language translation and content contextualization, making world-class resources available in Indian languages—a true democratization of knowledge.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE SYNERGY**

More than 30 AI-driven public interest applications, ranging from governance to climate, receive direct support under India AI. The IndiaAI Startups Global program, in collaboration with institutions like Station F and HEC Paris, is empowering Indian startups—PrivaSapien Technologies and Secure Blink among them—on the world stage, emphasizing cybersecurity and privacy.

India's approach to AI regulation is unique—a techno-

legal model that balances innovation and protection. The establishment of the IndiaAI Safety Institute, stakeholder-inclusive frameworks for Responsible AI, and robust legal provisions under the IT Act, Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, Digital Personal Data Protection Act, and IT Rules ensure that deepfakes, misinformation, and abuse are proactively curbed, not just reactively penalized. Investment in R&D at IITs further strengthens tools for deepfake detection, privacy, and cybersecurity.

India's strategy isn't just to legislate, but to innovate and set global benchmarks—an approach now recognized as India co-chairs the AI Action Summit and hosts the AI Impact Summit in February 2026.

**CONCLUSION**

India's journey in AI is more than narratives of technological catch-up—it's a story of responsible leadership, inclusivity, and global aspiration. By marrying policy with pragmatic innovation, and with an unwavering commitment to fairness and human rights, India is shaping AI not only as a tool for empowerment within its borders but as a beacon for the world.

As we move towards Viksit Bharat, India reaffirms that technology, when rooted in ethics and inclusion, is the true elixir for human advancement—redefining healthcare, education, and global collaboration for generations to come.

*Dr Kirit P. Solanki, former Lok Sabha MP and Sabarish Chandrasekaran, CEO and Co-Founder, MediSim VR*

## Beyond tariffs, toward transformation: The India-UK free trade milestone

OPINION

DR. MONICA B SOOD

In the vast continuum of international economic relations, there are moments that define not merely the trajectory of trade but the temperament of diplomacy. The recent India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is one such moment—more than a ceremonial accord, it is a substantive leap forward in how sovereign nations craft mutual prosperity in a multipolar world.

This agreement arrives at a pivotal juncture. India, today, stands on the cusp of monumental economic transformation. Under the governance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country has shifted from being a passive recipient of global investment to a proactive architect of global partnerships. The Make in India, Digital India, and Start up India missions have not only reshaped domestic enterprise but have also positioned India as a formidable player in emerging and advanced sectors alike.

Against this backdrop, the India-UK FTA is not a mere act of liberalisation—it is a strategic handshake between two democracies with shared histories and evolving ambitions. For India, it signals enhanced market access, regulatory easing, and the creation of a framework where goods, services, capital, and most crucially—ideas

can move freely.

Nowhere is the emotional and intellectual significance of this moment more deeply felt than in the corridors where policy was once only aspirational. I speak here not just as a commentator but as a participant in this journey. In October 2024, I addressed a conference in the House of Commons, UK Parliament, where I had the privilege of speaking about the future of India-UK bilateral relations by 2030 in the presence of Gareth Bacon, Member of Parliament for Orpington, England. It was there that I passionately articulated the urgency and potential of this trade partnership. I submitted a comprehensive memorandum to both British interlocutors and Indian economists, mapping out specific domains of collaboration—from digital trade and education to healthcare and climate technology.

To now witness the materialisation of that vision, through this meticulously crafted FTA, is not only deeply gratifying but, I dare say, a milestone in India's economic diplomacy.

This FTA has a broad scope and high ambitions. It slashes tariffs on key exports like textiles, engineering products, auto parts, and pharmaceuticals allowing Indian companies to compete on a more level playing field in the British market. In exchange, the UK gets access to the vast and ever-expanding Indian middle-class economy—now an increasingly sophisticated consumer and an increasingly ambitious and inventive producer.

However, this is where the deal is unprecedented when it comes to services and digital trade. India has a natural associate partner in the UK as they complement in information technology, legal and consultancy services, fintech and telemedicine; and the UK has a complementary regulatory and finance ecosystem. Under the agreement, seamless data flow across borders, mutual recognition of professional qualifications and liberalised visa regimes are a few aspects that provide a playing field to Indian professionals.

This is no small victory. This is indicative of a larger reality: India no longer has a comparative advantage in cheap labour; it has comparative advantage in skilled intellect, regulatory maturity, and technological agility.

In my memorandum, I had identified several sectors that required urgent convergence—education and research, healthcare innovation, defence and security cooperation, climate sustainability, and the globalisation of Ayurveda. Each of these has found resonance in the FTA's framework.

Education and research exchanges in particular—the possibility of British universities establishing collaborations or outposts or satellite campuses in India are now very much on the table. Moving beyond scholarships to well-defined, collaborative research—particularly in quantum computing, AI, and space sciences.

My suggestion of integrating Ayurvedic systems from India into the UK, as part of collaborative care models possibly through the National Health Service (NHS), is being adopted with exceptional support, and in the healthcare field. As holistic health continues to gain acceptance around the globe, Ayurvedic practices may also be used together with Western systems to relieve some of the burden on public health services, providing preventive and integrative approaches to chronic disease.

In the area of climate, both countries have pledged collaboration on renewable energy projects, transfers of technology, and breakthroughs in electric mobility—all essential to a planet whose health cannot be delegated or deferred.

This moment is not accidental. It is the product of vision, persistence, and strategic maturity. I am proud to have played a modest role in nudging this vision into reality from the floor of the House of Commons to the desks of Indian policymakers.

The India-UK trade deal is not simply a document, it is a statement of intent, a blueprint for transformation, and a symbol of two nations choosing convergence over complacency. As we look ahead to 2030, we are no longer writing a memorandum of hope. We are living its first chapters.

*Dr. Monica B. Sood is a socio-economic strategist, Speaker at the 2024 India-UK Conference held at the House of Commons, UK Parliament.*





Animal rights activists belonging to various organisations staging a 'Save Arikomban' protest march in the city on June 10, 2023. File photo

In 2023, Arikomban, a wild elephant known for raiding ration shops, was tranquilized and translocated from his forest home in Kerala amid public outcry. Though branded a “rogue” and blamed for deaths, locals defended him. His emotional departure, captured on video, transformed him from villain to victim, sparking protests and social media campaigns. After a second relocation, he finally settled in Tamil Nadu’s forests, healthy and free. Arikomban’s tale of conflict, compassion, and survival showed how naming a wild animal can humanize it—turning public attention into protection, and a wandering tuskier into a symbol of coexistence.

THE TIGRESS QUEEN OF RANTHAMBORE

Few wild animals have left a legacy as enduring as Machli, the legendary Bengal tigress of Ranthambore. With a distinctive fish-shaped mark on her face—hence the name Machli—she reigned over the park’s prime lake territory for nearly two decades, earning the title “Queen of Ranthambore.” Her fearlessness was the stuff of legend: taking down a 14-foot crocodile, protecting cubs from rival males, and continuing to raise litters even after losing her canine teeth. When she died of natural causes in 2016 at the age of 19, she was believed to be the most photographed tiger in the world.

Machli’s fame wasn’t just romanticized—it brought real value. Tourists from around the globe came hoping to spot her, with estimates suggesting she alone contributed nearly \$10 million annually to the local economy. In 2009, she became the first tiger in India to receive a “Lifetime Achievement Award” from a wildlife tourism body. Guides and forest staff, like Phool Chand who tracked her for ten years, spoke of her as if she were a friend.

So profound was her impact that in her final years, when Machli could no longer hunt, officials took the extraordinary step of feeding her—breaking traditional wildlife norms. The debate it sparked reflected



# NAME IN THE WILD— CONFLICTS AND HUMAN CONNECTIONS

*In India, a number of wild animals have become household names over the years, their lives and legacies entwined with our own. From majestic tigresses to gentle temple elephants, these creatures’ personal stories have captured public imagination. And through their names, they have bridged the gap between wildlife and people, influencing everything from school lessons and documentaries to court rulings and conservation policies.*

how much she meant to the public. Machli was no longer just a tiger; she was Machli—an individual with a story. Her death brought collective grief but also pride in her legacy. Today, her descendants still roam Ranthambore, and her story lives on in photographs, documentaries, and schoolbooks. More than a tourist attraction, Machli became a bridge between humans and wilderness—reminding us that behind every striped coat is a being with will, memory, and meaning.

WHEN CONFLICT MAKES A NAME

Not all iconic animal stories are comforting tales of triumph. Some, like those of Avni and Ustad, are rooted in tragedy and conflict, exposing the uneasy line between conservation and human fear.

Avni, a tigress from Maharashtra’s Yavatmal district, was officially known as T1 by forest officials. But conservationists gave her the name Avni—“Earth” in Hindi—hoping it would humanize her as tensions rose. Between 2016 and 2018, thirteen people were found dead in the forests where she lived with her two cubs. Suspected of being a “man-eater,” she became a figure of fear for local villagers, and a symbol of injustice for wildlife advocates who questioned the evidence. While courts debated and officials

struggled to capture her alive, a final decision was made: to shoot.

In November 2018, Avni was killed at night by a hired hunter, allegedly lured with bait. The operation was swift—and deeply controversial. Critics questioned the legality and urgency of the kill, especially given her status as a mother of young cubs. The cubs were later rescued, but the damage was done. Avni’s death triggered national outrage and shone a harsh light on India’s weak response systems for human-wildlife conflict. Experts pointed out that similar tigers had been rehabilitated peacefully elsewhere. Her name, once a plea for empathy, became a tragic reminder of how policy can fail when fear overrides science.

A few years earlier, another tiger, T-24 of Ranthambore, had already forced the nation to confront a similar dilemma. Better known as Ustad—“Master”—he was a dominant male who ruled a prime territory and was beloved by tourists and wildlife photographers. But after being implicated in four human deaths, including that of a forest guard, Ustad was captured and sent to a zoo enclosure hundreds of kilometers away.

This decision sparked public fury. Supporters argued the attacks happened within his territory, and that no

clear evidence proved Ustad had “lost fear” of humans. Protests erupted. Legal battles followed. Ustad’s fate became a national debate, culminating in court rulings that kept him confined. He died in captivity in 2022 after suffering health complications.

What united these two stories—Avni and Ustad—was not just their controversial ends, but the public’s emotional investment in them. Their names transformed them from wildlife data points into beings people could relate to. Their stories raised important questions: How should we treat animals once the public knows their names? Do laws allow for fairness and compassion once an animal becomes more than just a code?

Avni and Ustad, though gone, remain symbols—of policy gaps, of public consciousness, and of the fragile line between coexistence and control.

**NAMES, NARRATIVES, AND THE HUMAN CONNECTION**

Why do some wild animals get names while others remain anonymous, counted only as numbers in census reports or research logs? And when we *do* name them, what does it really change?

In wildlife conservation, naming an animal isn’t just a sentimental act—it’s a profound ontological shift.

The moment we call a tiger *Machli*, a lion *Cecil*, or an elephant *Arikomban*, the creature steps out of abstraction and into character. No longer just a data point or a species symbol, they become individuals—with stories, struggles, and sometimes, followers. This transformation matters deeply. It shapes how the public sees them, how policymakers react, and how conservation itself evolves.

Naming has the power to stir empathy. Studies have shown that humans are more likely to support the protection of individual animals when they know their names and backstories. *Machli*, the famed tigress of Ranthambore, became a global icon not only because of her beauty and strength, but because people knew her name, her cubs, her territory, even her old age struggles. Millions followed her updates online, unknowingly learning about tiger biology, habitat threats, and the economic value of ecotourism. Her fame brought in millions of rupees to the local economy, and arguably played a role in influencing Project Tiger’s public support.

Similarly, Arikomban, the rice-loving elephant of Kerala, didn’t just evoke curiosity; he ignited conversations about human-elephant conflict, forest fragmentation, and the ethics of translocation. His

name, meaning “rice tusk-er,” captured the imagination of both villagers and city dwellers. Media frenzy and public sentiment swayed political decisions. People demanded that he be relocated safely rather than killed. That attention, arguably, saved his life.

This phenomenon isn’t unique to India. Globally, names have transformed animals into ambassadors. *Cecil* the lion, studied for years in Zimbabwe, was killed by a trophy hunter in 2015. His death, because he had a name and a backstory, sparked global outrage and led to real policy changes—airlines refusing to transport hunting trophies, governments rethinking wildlife tourism. *Sudan*, the last male northern white rhino, became the face of extinction when he died in 2018. His name made people care. His story spurred investment in advanced technologies to preserve his species.

But naming can be a double-edged sword. In Assam, an aggressive wild elephant was dubbed *Laden*, invoking fear and demonization. Officials later tried to rename him *Krishna*, hoping to change public perception, but the damage was done. He died in captivity, a victim of both public panic and misplaced symbolism. Names, after all, reflect how we see animals—as friends, foes, or something in be-

tween.

Critics argue that focusing too much on named individuals distorts conservation priorities. What about the less charismatic species—the frogs, the snakes, the moths—that don’t get cute names or headlines? Others warn against anthropomorphism. In Arikomban’s case, experts cautioned that emotional responses driven by his name created unscientific pressure on the forest department, forcing action under public glare rather than long-term planning. Wildlife veteran P.S. Easa even suggested that naming conflict elephants might create “unnecessary emotions” that obstruct pragmatic solutions.

These concerns are valid. Yet, so is the counterpoint: **people fight to save what they love, and love often begins with a story.** A name anchors that story. It allows children to write essays, artists to draw, activists to protest, and ordinary citizens to care. Machli, Arikomban, Avni, Ustad—they are not just names; they are emotional entry points into larger ecological realities.

In India’s long journey of conservation, named animals have often sparked the biggest conversations. The golden jubilee of Project Tiger in 2023 was not just about forests—it was about icons like Machli who turned silent wilder-

nesses into places of pride. The public outrage that followed Avni’s killing or Ustad’s capture wasn’t just for a tiger—it was for *that* tiger, one with a name, a personality, and a story.

And therein lies the quiet power of a name. It turns “a tiger” into *this* tiger. It converts anonymity into individuality. In doing so, it demands that we pay attention—not to the species alone, but to life, the narrative, the right to exist.

When we remember Arikomban, Machli, or Cecil, we are not just reminiscing about wild animals—we are honoring a moment when our moral compass stretched to include them. Their names remind us that the fight for conservation is not just statistical; it is personal. And in that personal memory, perhaps, lies our best hope for a more compassionate coexistence.

**Naming in Indian Cultural and Religious Context**

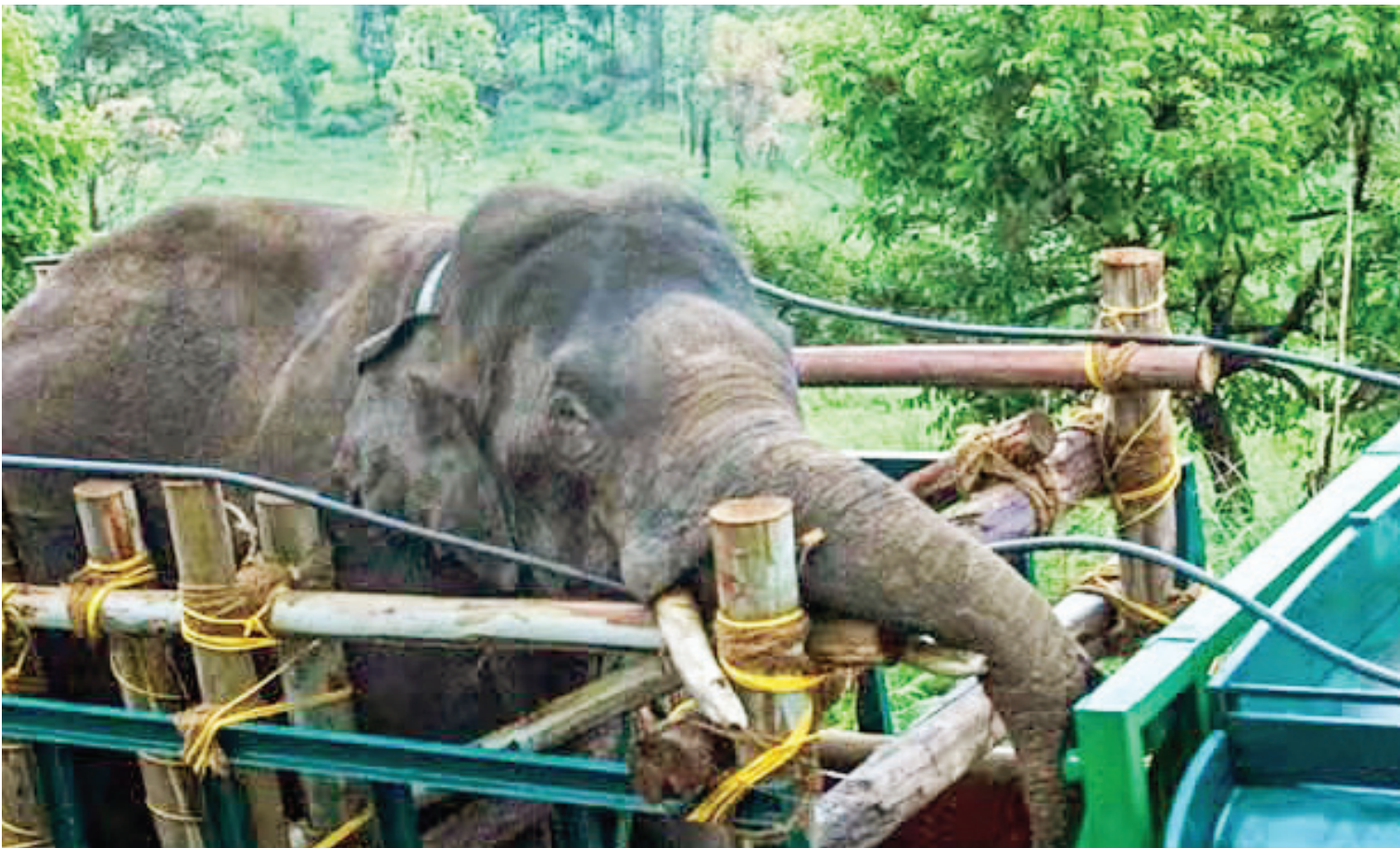
India’s relationship with named animals is rooted in its spiritual traditions. Elephants are sacred in Hinduism—symbolized by Lord Ganesha—and temple elephants like Guruvayur Keshavan are given names, rituals, and reverence. Cows, monkeys, snakes, and peacocks also hold divine associations and are often personified. Even crocodiles like Babiya in Ananthapura are honored protectors. Mythology and oral traditions have long assigned animals names and destinies, blurring the line between story and reality.

**Why Named Animals Matter Most in Danger**

Names gain power in moments of danger. When animals like Avni or Ustad are labelled threats, the name personalizes the conflict. Conversely, when vulnerable icons like Machli or Arikomban face harm, public empathy surges. A name turns an ecological issue into a narrative—one people remember, debate, and act on.



On 19 August 2016, India’s iconic tigress Machli (T-16), known as the “Tiger Queen” of Ranthambore, died on Thursday at the age of 19. Believed to be the world’s oldest wild big cat, she was given a ceremonial cremation at Aamaghati, attended by forest officials, administrators, and wildlife enthusiasts. File photo



Arikomban being moved out of Chinnakanal. File photo



Babiya, the only vegetarian crocodile in the world. He passed away in October 2022. Photo by Ananthapura lake temple official.

Compiled by  
Ruchira Talapatra



# HANDLOOM DAY: OUR TIMELESS HERITAGE, FROM SWADESHI TO SELF-RELIANCE



HEMENDRA SINGH

On 7 August 1905, a new chapter was added to the pages of the country's history in the form of the Swadeshi Movement, on this day a call was given from the Town Hall of Kolkata to adopt Swadeshi products. Underlining the importance of this historic day linking Swadeshi with self-respect, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the initiative to celebrate it as National Handloom Day in the year 2015.

The Swadeshi Movement gave a new consciousness to local products and especially handloom. The same image of self-respect and pride is also reflected in the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Vocal for Local' and this mantra is now becoming a symbol of India's steps towards self-reliance. Under the leadership of Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, the state government imbibed the Prime Minister's call of 'Vocal for Local' and



through its concrete policies, gave it a new texture in Rajasthan.

In the context of Rajasthan, the traditional art from the fineness of Kota Doria to Sanganer and Ajrak prints has not only created a rich

culture and civilization but is also weaving the fabric of the state's economy in the form of textile industry even today. Kota Doria and Sanganer print have made their distinctive presence felt in the international

fashion industry beyond the borders of the country. Keeping this in mind, the state government has implemented the 'Rajasthan Textile and Apparel Policy-2025' with the aim of establishing the state as a new



center of modern textile industry. Under this, provisions for adequate and attractive financial incentives have been made to connect traditions like handloom with the latest technology.

Along with this, the state government has also made the textile art products of Kota, Balotra, Bhilwara, Pali a part of programs like Panch Gaurav. Being the largest state of the country,

*The Swadeshi Movement gave a new consciousness to local products and especially handloom. The same image of self-respect and pride is also reflected in the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Vocal for Local' and this mantra is now becoming a symbol of India's steps towards self-reliance.*

different ecology, geographical conditions and unique culture are seen in all the regions of Rajasthan.

Through the Panch Gaurav program, the state government is promoting one specific crop, one botanical species, one product, one tourist destination and one sport in each district. Jaisalmer's beautiful Pilu Jaal (botanical species), Pratapgari's unique artwork of Theva Jewellery (product), Bikaner's fenu-greek (crop) with its unique fragrance, Nagaur's Meera Smarak (tourist destination) carving out the image of centuries-old heritage, archery (sport) showing the potential of Sirohi's excellent talents are examples of this. With the Panchdhara of conservation, promotion, encouragement, recognition and development of locality and uniqueness,

the local elements of all the regions of the state are now becoming 'Brand Rajasthan' in the country and abroad.

7 August reminds us that self-reliance is a matter of self-pride for our country. In the global scenario, when other countries are moving towards tariff policies, then the mantra of adopting local and indigenous products as a necessity rather than an option while preserving our timeless heritage becomes more relevant. The policies of the state government under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma are laying the foundation of a new and prosperous Rajasthan by balancing development and heritage in this direction.

*The Writer is Assistant Information and Public Relations Officer, Chief Minister's Public Relations Cell*

## Rajasthan's handlooms: Weaving tradition with timeless elegance

### TDG NETWORK

National Handloom Day in India is celebrated on August 7 every year to honor the handloom weavers and promote indigenous textiles. It commemorates the Swadeshi Movement launched in 1905. The day highlights the importance of sustainable fashion, supports rural artisans, and encourages the revival of traditional weaving practices across the country.

Rajasthan, the land of kings, deserts, and majestic forts, is equally renowned for its vibrant textile heritage. Among its many artistic treasures, handlooms of Rajasthan hold a special place — not just as a cultural expression, but as a living, breathing craft that has shaped the identity of its people for centuries. From the colorful Bandhani of Jodhpur to the intricate Kota Doria of Kota, and the robust woolen weaves of Bikaner, Rajasthan's handloom legacy is a story of tradition, resilience, and timeless beauty.

### A HISTORICAL WEAVE: ROOTS IN TRADITION

Rajasthan's handloom traditions date back to ancient times, flourishing under royal patronage and evolving with local needs and environments. The arid climate, social customs, and the nomadic culture of certain communities influenced the type of fabrics woven, the colors used, and the motifs created. Villages and towns became hubs of textile excellence, each developing unique weaving and dyeing techniques that continue to thrive today.

### MAJOR HANDLOOM TRADITIONS OF RAJASTHAN

#### 1. BANDHANI (TIE AND DYE): A SYMBOL OF CELEBRATION

One of the most iconic textile traditions of Rajasthan, Bandhani involves a complex tie-dye technique. The fabric is tied in intricate patterns using threads and then dyed in bright colors. Once untied, the cloth reveals stunning designs made up of small dots and circles, often arranged in floral or geometrical motifs.

Popular in cities like Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, and Sikar, Bandhani is used for turbans, sarees, dupattas, and ghagras. Red, yellow, green, and blue dominate the palette, with each color and pattern often associated with specific occasions such as weddings or festivals. The art is usually a community activity, passed down through generations, especially among women artisans.

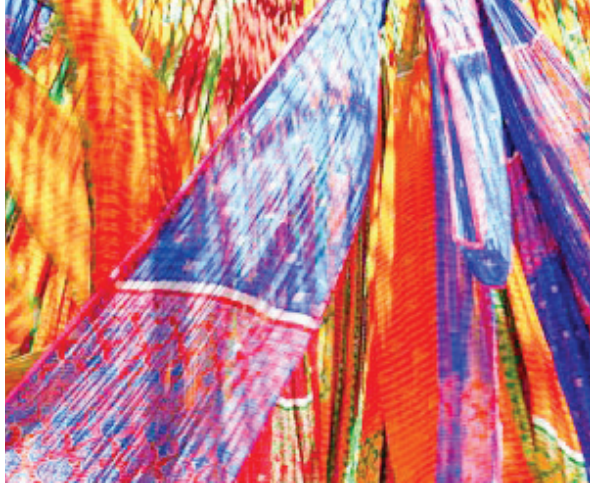
#### 2. KOTA DORIA: A DELICATE MASTERPIECE

Originating from Kota, Kota Doria is a delicate, lightweight fabric woven with cotton and silk yarns in a unique square-checked pattern known as "khats." Renowned for its transparency, softness, and breathability, it is a preferred choice for summer wear across India.

What makes Kota Doria special is the handloom technique employed by the Ansari weaver community, who migrated to Rajasthan centuries ago. Today, efforts by various NGOs and government bodies have helped revive and promote this art, enabling it to compete in global markets.

#### 3. WOOLEN WEAVES OF BIKANER AND BARMER

Given the harsh winters in Rajasthan's desert regions, wool weaving became essential in areas like Bikaner, Barmer, and Jaisalmer. Locally sourced



*Rajasthan's handloom traditions date back to ancient times, flourishing under royal patronage and evolving with local needs and environments. The arid climate, social customs, and the nomadic culture of certain communities influenced the type of fabrics woven, the colors used, and the motifs created.*

camel and sheep wool is woven into sturdy blankets (known as pattu), shawls, and rugs. These are often embellished with mirror work, embroidery, or colorful borders, making them functional and decorative.

In Barmer, woolen fabrics

are also used for traditional attire, often designed with regional embroidery techniques. These products have gained popularity for their ethnic appeal and durability.

#### 4. DABU AND BAGRU PRINTING: BLOCK

### PRINTING ON HANDLOOM

Although technically a printing technique, Dabu (mud resist printing) and Bagru (vegetable dye block printing) are frequently done on handloom fabrics. These art forms involve plac-

ing hand-carved wooden blocks in carefully aligned sequences over handwoven cloth and using natural dyes like indigo, pomegranate peel, and turmeric.

Centers like Bagru and Sanganer near Jaipur have become internationally

recognized for this art. The fusion of block printing with handwoven cottons and silks showcases Rajasthan's ability to innovate while preserving its roots.

### WEAVING LIVELIHOODS: THE ROLE OF ARTISANS

The handloom sector in Rajasthan is not merely an artistic pursuit but a major source of employment, especially for women in rural areas. Entire families are involved in the process — from spinning yarn to dyeing, weaving, and finishing. These crafts have empowered many artisans, giving them financial independence and a sense of pride in their cultural heritage.

However, despite its cultural significance, the handloom sector faces challenges such as competition from machine-made textiles, lack of market access, and diminishing interest among the younger generation. Yet, with the rise of conscious consumerism and interest in sustainable fashion, there's a renewed global interest in handcrafted, eco-friendly textiles.

### GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

To protect and promote Rajasthan's handlooms, both state and central governments have taken initiatives:

Geographical Indication (GI) tags have been awarded to several crafts like Kota Doria and Bagru prints.

Rajasthan Handloom Development Corporation and cooperative societies work to ensure fair wages, raw material supply, and market access.

Exhibitions and fairs such as the Rajasthan

Handloom Week, Dastkar haats, and Surajkund Mela have become platforms for artisans to connect with urban buyers.

Schemes under Skill India, Make in India, and One District One Product (ODOP) have also brought attention to these traditional crafts, integrating them into national and international markets.

### HANDLOOMS IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION

Modern designers and fashion brands are increasingly collaborating with Rajasthani weavers to create fusion wear, home furnishings, and accessories. Handloom sarees, dupattas, and stoles with Bandhani or Dabu prints have found a niche among urban consumers. Interior designers also use handwoven wool rugs and wall hangings as statement pieces.

This fusion of traditional aesthetics with contemporary design not only keeps the art alive but makes it appealing to the younger, global generation.

### PRESERVING A WOVEN LEGACY

The handlooms of Rajasthan are more than just fabric — they are carriers of stories, symbols of cultural identity, and a testament to human creativity. As the world moves towards sustainable and ethical fashion, Rajasthan's handloom industry stands as a beacon of tradition and craftsmanship.

Preserving this heritage requires continued support — from governments, designers, and consumers alike. By choosing handloom, we don't just buy a product; we invest in the hands that wove it, the culture it represents, and the future it secures.



# DOZENS KILLED SEEKING AID IN GAZA AS ISRAEL CONSIDERS FURTHER MILITARY ACTION

AGENCIES  
DEIR AL-BALAH, GAZA STRIP

At least 38 Palestinians were killed overnight and into Wednesday in the Gaza Strip while seeking aid from United Nations convoys and sites run by an Israeli-backed American contractor, according to local health officials. The Israeli military said it had fired warning shots when crowds approached its forces.

The latest deaths came as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to announce further military action — and possibly plans for Israel to fully re-occupy Gaza. Experts say Israel's ongoing military offensive and blockade are already pushing the territory of some 2 million Palestinians into famine.

Another escalation of the nearly 22-month war could put the lives of countless Palestinians and around 20 living Is-



Palestinians mourn their relative who was killed while trying to reach aid trucks entering northern Gaza Strip through the Zikim crossing with Israel, at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. Agencies

raeli hostages at risk, and would draw fierce opposition both internationally and within Israel. Netanyahu's far-right coalition allies have long called for the war to be expanded, and for Israel to eventually take over Gaza, relocate much of its population and rebuild Jewish settlements there.

U.S. President Donald Trump, asked by a reporter Tuesday whether he supported the reoccupa-

tion of Gaza, said he wasn't aware of the "suggestion" but that "it's going to be pretty much up to Israel."

At least 28 Palestinians were killed overnight and into Wednesday in the Morag Corridor, an Israeli military zone in southern Gaza where U.N. convoys have been repeatedly overwhelmed by looters and desperate crowds in recent days, and where witnesses say Israeli forces have repeatedly opened fire.

## ARMY CHIEF OPPOSES GAZA WAR EXPANSION

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM/CAIRO

Israel's military chief has pushed back against Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to seize areas of Gaza it doesn't already control, three Israeli officials said, as the prime minister faces increasing pressure over the war both at home and abroad.

During a tense, three-hour meeting on Tuesday, Eyal Zamir, the military chief of staff, warned the prime minister that taking the rest of Gaza could trap the military in the territory, which it withdrew from two decades ago, and could lead to harm to the hostages being held there, the sources briefed on the meeting said.

The Israeli military says it already controls 75% of Gaza after nearly two years

of war, which began when militant group Hamas attacked southern Israeli communities in October 2023. It has repeatedly opposed imposing military rule, annexing the territory, and rebuilding Jewish settlements there - policies advocated by some government members.

Netanyahu is under intense international pressure to reach a ceasefire in the coastal enclave, which has been reduced to rubble in the fighting. Most of the population of about 2 million has been displaced multiple times and aid groups say residents are on the verge of famine.

The U.N. has called reports about a possible expansion of Israel's military operations in Gaza "deeply alarming" if true.

# Pakistan starts deporting registered Afghan refugees, says UNHCR

AGENCIES  
PESHAWAR

Pakistan has started to deport documented Afghan refugees ahead of its deadline for them to leave, according to the United Nations, in a move that could see more than 1 million Afghans expelled from the country.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said that it had received reports of arrests and expulsions of legally registered Afghans across the country before Pakistan's September 1 deadline for them to leave.

The UNHCR said that sending the Afghans back in this way was a breach of Pakistan's international obligations.

"UNHCR is calling on the government to stop the forcible return and adopt a humane approach to ensure voluntary, gradual, and dignified return of Afghans," it said in a statement.

The voluntary return of the documented refugees shall commence forthwith, said a Pakistan's interior ministry order seen by Re-



## RUMOURS ABOUT ARMY CHIEF MUNIR BECOMING PREZ BASELESS: PAK ARMY

TDG NETWORK  
ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Army has denied as "baseless" the rumours that Army chief Asim Munir plans to become the next president.

The army's response came following rumours and a wave of disinformation on social media during the previous weeks that Munir plans to re-

place President Asif Ali Zardari.

Army spokesperson Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, in an interview with The Economist, made it clear that the army chief has no interest in the presidency and no such proposal is under consideration, the state-run PTV posted on social media on Wednesday.

uters. It said the formal deportation process will start after the deadline.

But Qaisar Khan Afridi, a spokesman for the UNHCR,

told Reuters on Wednesday that hundreds of legally registered Afghan refugees had already been detained and deported to Afghanistan

# Imran Khan's party organises nationwide protests for his release

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party Tuesday organised protest rallies in different parts of the country, demanding the release of former prime minister Imran Khan, who was arrested two years ago on corruption charges.

The party claimed that its more than 500 workers and supporters who took to the streets were arrested by police, mostly in Punjab province.

Khan, 72, was arrested on August 5, 2023, from his residence in Lahore after being convicted by a court in a corruption case. He has been incarcerated since his arrest due to conviction in other cases, and is being held at the Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi.



The call for the protest was given by Khan. His party claimed that supporters of the jailed leader responded by coming out in big numbers.

"Today, August 5, marks the second anniversary of the incarceration of former prime minister Imran Khan with all basic human rights revoked, no or very limited access to his legal team or family, no access to his political leadership other than

a couple of people now and then," senior party leader Zulfi Bokhari said in a statement.

Bukhari, who is the spokesperson of Khan for international relations as well as international media, said the government has imposed a ban on gatherings, blocking main highways, wrecking cars with party flags and raiding the residences of active party leaders and workers.

# China fights Chikungunya outbreak as thousands fall ill

AGENCIES  
TAIPEI, TAIWAN

Chinese authorities are using nets, spraying insecticide and even deploying drones to fight the mosquito-borne chikungunya virus, which has infected thousands of people.

Authorities had reported more than 7,000 cases of the virus as of Wednesday, mostly in the southern Chinese manufacturing hub of Foshan, some 170 kilometers (105 miles) from Hong Kong. The number of new cases appears to be dropping slowly, according to authorities.

It appears to be the largest chikungunya outbreak ever documented in China, according to Cesar Lopez-Camacho of the University of Oxford. The virus



is transmitted by infected mosquitoes and can cause fever and joint pain.

"What makes this event notable is that chikungunya has never been established in mainland China before," Lopez-Camacho said in a statement. "This suggests that most of the population had no pre-existing immunity, making it easier for the virus to

spread quickly."

Chinese state television has shown workers spraying insecticide around city streets, residential areas, construction sites and other areas where people may come into contact with mosquitoes. Workers sprayed some places before entering office buildings.

Unusually heavy rains and high temperatures

have worsened the crisis in China, and authorities are using drones to try to find standing water, where mosquitoes lay eggs.

Authorities also have threatened to fine people who don't empty water from outdoor receptacles. Residents can be subject to fines of up to 10,000 yuan (\$1,400) and have their electricity cut off.

Because of the virus, the U.S. has issued a travel advisory suggesting that Americans take extra precautions when visiting China's Guangdong province, where Foshan is located, as well as Bolivia and some island nations in the Indian Ocean.

Since the 2003 SARS outbreak, China has used strict measures to fight the

spread of viruses, including hard-line tactics during the COVID-19 pandemic. This time, patients are being forced to stay in hospital in Foshan for at least one week and authorities briefly enforced a two-week home quarantine, which was dropped because the disease cannot be transmitted between people.

Reports also have emerged of attempts to stop the spread of chikungunya with fish that eat mosquito larvae and even larger mosquitoes to eat the insects carrying the virus.

Officials have held meetings and adopted protocols at the national level in a sign of China's determination to eliminate the outbreak and avoid public and international criticism.

## WILD WHISPER



A Karen elephant keeper plays with a calf at the Elephant Freedom Village. Karen elephant keepers work to preserve traditional hill tribe methods of human coexistence with animals. Chiang Mai, Thailand. Agencies

# Pakistan will not develop closer ties with US at the cost of China: Experts

AGENCIES  
BEIJING

As US President Donald Trump has ramped up his country's ties with Pakistan, China's all-weather ally, Chinese strategic experts say Islamabad understands the limits given his strategy to contain Beijing's global influence. Last month, Pakistan's army chief, General Asim Munir, made his first official visit to China since assuming office as field marshal. His visit came shortly after a rare five-day trip to Washington, where he attended a private luncheon with Trump. That meeting culminated in Trump's announcement of enhanced US-Pakistan cooperation in various fields, including an oil deal.



According to a recent "Economist" article, the outcome of General Munir's US visit marks a shift in American foreign policy, with implications not only for India but also China and the Middle East.

During his time in Beijing, General Munir met with Vice President Han Zheng, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and senior members of the People's Liberation Army

(PLA), though not with President Xi Jinping. This contrasts with his predecessor, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who met Xi during his 2018 trip to China.

While official readouts from Munir's meetings emphasised diplomatic niceties and reiterated strong bilateral ties, Beijing's perception of the Trump-Munir rapport remains unclear -- especially given Trump's overt strategy

to curb China's rise as a global power.

Beijing has its concerns considering the decades-long investment fostering an all-weather relationship with Pakistan.

Two Chinese senior strategic experts PTI spoke to outlined for the first time China's view on the emerging new Washington-Islamabad strategic paradigm in the broader context of Trump's geopolitical strategy.

"Pakistan will not develop its relations with the US at the cost of its relation with China," Hu Shisheng, Director of the Institute for South Asian Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, said.

"Pakistan will not be that easily hooked by Trump,"

Hu, regarded as an expert on South Asian politics, said.

Jesse Wang, a research fellow at Huaxia South Asia Economic and Cultural Exchange Centre of China, said "on the surface, Trump's candy to Pakistan looks like a disturbance to China, but actually, cannot affect the structural stability of the Sino-Pak relationship".

"The US intervention has created short-term geopolitical noise but is unlikely to shake the foundation of China-Pakistan dependence," he said.

"For Pakistan, 'make profits both ways' economically is a rational choice, but its security and infrastructure lifelines are tied to China closely, and the strategic balance has not tilted," Wang said.

# Hiroshima marks 80 years since atomic bombing with global call for nuclear disarmament

TDG NETWORK  
AGENCIES

Thousands gathered in Hiroshima on Wednesday to mark the 80th anniversary of the world's first wartime use of a nuclear bomb, as survivors, officials and representatives from 120 countries and territories renewed calls for global disarmament, Al Jazeera reported.

On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped a uranium bomb, code-named Little Boy, over

the western Japanese city, killing roughly 78,000 people instantly. Tens of thousands more died by the end of the year from burns and radiation exposure. Three days later, Nagasaki was hit with a plutonium bomb, leading to Japan's surrender on August 15 and the end of World War II.

At Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park, located almost directly beneath the detonation site, delegates from a record number of international

countries and regions attended the annual memorial.

Reporting from the park, Al Jazeera's Fadi Salameh said, "The ceremony procedure is almost the same throughout the years I've been covering it. It starts at eight o'clock with the children and people offering flowers and then water to represent helping the victims who survived the atomic bombing at that time. Then at exactly 8:15... a moment of silence. After that,



the mayor of Hiroshima reads out the declaration of peace in which they call for the abolition of nuclear weapons around

the world."

School children from across Japan read the "Promise of Peace," delivering statements of

hope and remembrance. The ceremony also featured a message from the representative of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, urging global peace, Al Jazeera reported.

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui warned of "the dangers of rising global militarism," criticising leaders who insist nuclear weapons are essential for national security. "Among the world's political leaders, there is a growing belief that possessing nuclear

weapons is unavoidable in order to protect their own countries," he said, adding that the United States and Russia still hold 90 percent of the world's nuclear warheads.

"This situation not only nullifies the lessons the international community has learned from the tragic history of the past, but also seriously undermines the frameworks that have been built for peace-building. To all the leaders around the world: please visit

Hiroshima and witness for yourselves the reality of the atomic bombing."

Survivors of the bombings, known as hibakusha, once faced discrimination due to unfounded fears of disease and genetic effects. Their numbers have now fallen below 100,000 for the first time.

Japan maintains its commitment to nuclear disarmament but remains outside the UN treaty banning nuclear weapons, according to Al Jazeera.



# TRUMP SAYS VANCE MOST LIKELY TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT IN 2028

Trump suggested JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio could form a strong Republican ticket in 2028.

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump suggested on Tuesday Vice President JD Vance is “most likely” to secure the Republican party nomination for president in 2028.

Trump has avoided naming a preferred successor and said in February that, while Vance was “very capable,” it was too soon to make such calls.

Asked on Tuesday whether Vance was the heir-apparent to his Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement, Trump told reporters: “Well, I think most likely.”

“In all fairness, he’s the vice president,” he said.

The remarks followed speculation that Trump might attempt to defy constitutional limits and seek a third term.

“It’s too early, obviously, to talk about it, but certainly he’s doing a great job,” Trump said.

“And he would be probably favored at this point.”

Trump also floated the idea of Vance teaming up with Sec-



retary of State Marco Rubio to create a formidable Republican ticket.

“I think Marco is also somebody that maybe would get together with JD in some form,” Trump said.

Trump has suggested serving another term several times, despite the US Constitution limiting presidents to two terms.

T-shirts emblazoned with “Trump 2028” and “Rewrite the rules” continue to be sold on Trump’s official online store. However, Trump said on CNBC’s “Squawk Box” on Tuesday he would “probably not” seek a third term.

“I’d like to,” he said. “I’d like

to run. I have the best poll numbers I’ve ever had.”

Trump is the only American president to have been impeached twice -- first in 2019 for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress and then in 2021 for inciting an insurrection. He was acquitted by the Senate both times.

Vance, a former Marine and lawyer, has taken on a prominent role in the administration, acting as chief domestic policy advocate and key diplomatic envoy.

The vice president has suggested that he could run for president in the 2028 election, but only after consulting with Trump.

## US wants up to \$15,000 deposit from Zambians, Malawians for visa

The US will require citizens from Malawi and Zambia to pay a \$15,000 (£11,300) deposit for a tourist or business visa, according to the US state department.

The 12-month pilot programme aims to curb visa overstays “or where screening and vetting information is considered deficient”, according to a notice published by the state department. Officials say that citizens of countries other than Malawi and Zambia may soon also need to pay a similar deposit, which will be returned at the end of their visit to the US.

The US administration has taken several steps to further President Donald Trump’s agenda of stemming illegal immigration. Trump signed an execu-

tive order on the first day of his second term to this effect.

The state department notice, published on Tuesday, says: “Aliens applying for visas as temporary visitors for business or pleasure (B-1/B-2) and who are nationals of countries identified by the Department as having high visa overstay rates, where screening and vetting information is deemed deficient, or offering Citizenship by Investment, if the alien obtained citizenship with no residency requirement, may be subject to the pilot program. “Consular officers may require covered non-immigrant visa applicants to post a bond of up to \$15,000 as a condition of visa issuance, as determined by the consular officers.”



People take part in a tribute to the artist Frida Kahlo with 24 Mexican dancers and a 10-piece mariachi band to mark the launch of Billingham international folklore festival of world dance, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary year. Agencies

## Russia strikes Ukraine gas link to disrupt winter prep: Kyiv



AGENCIES  
KYIV

Russia has struck a gas pumping station in Ukraine’s southern Odesa region used in a scheme to import LNG from the U.S. and Azerbaijan, undermining preparations for winter, Ukrainian officials said on Wednesday.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the gas infrastructure had been attacked in the village of Novosilsk on the border with Romania, where the Orlovka interconnector, through which Ukraine receives gas via the Transbalkan route, is located.

“This was a deliberate blow to our preparations for the heating season, absolutely cynical, like every Russian blow to the energy sector,” Zelenskyy said on Telegram. Reuters could not independently confirm details of the attack.

Russia’s TASS news agency quoted the Russian defence ministry as confirming the attack on Ukraine’s gas transport system.

Ukraine has faced a serious gas shortage since a series of devastating Russian missile strikes this year, which significantly reduced domestic production.

Ukraine’s energy ministry said in a statement that the attacked station was used as part of a route connecting Greek LNG terminals with Ukrainian gas storage facilities via the Transbalkan gas pipeline.

It noted that it had already been used to deliver LNG from the United States and test volumes of Azerbaijani gas. “This is a Russian strike purely against civilian infrastructure, deliberately

## Two killed in Russian attack on holiday camp, Kyiv says

KYIV: A Russian attack on Wednesday that set ablaze a holiday camp in central Ukraine killed two people and wounded another dozen, local authorities said.

The central Zaporizhzhia region, which the Kremlin claims is part of Russia and is cut through by the front line, has been targeted in increasingly frequent and deadly Russian attacks. The emergency services posted images showing firefighters putting out flames in single-storey cottages and the bodies of those killed and hurt in the attack on the blood-stained ground.

The regional governor said two people were killed and that 12 were wounded, including four children. “There’s no military sense in this attack. It’s just cruelty to scare people,” President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media, adding that hundreds had been left without electricity after Russian attacks further south. Russian forces separately killed a man born in 1959 in the embattled town of Pokrovsk, an important logistics hub in the Donetsk region that Russia also said it annexed, according to local authorities.

There was no immediate comment on the strikes from Moscow, which launched the invasion of Ukraine early 2022 and denies its forces target civilians.

targeting the energy sector and, at the same time, relations with Azerbaijan, the United States and partners in Europe, as well as the normal lives of Ukrainians and all Europeans,” the ministry said.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev will meet U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington this week.

Russia has repeatedly denied targeting civilians since launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than three years ago, but says infrastructure such as energy systems are legitimate targets because they help Ukraine’s war effort. Earlier on Wednesday, the governor of the southern Odesa region reported an attack on the main gas pipeline.

Ukrainian energy officials did not say whether gas would continue to be pumped via the interconnector.

Kyiv says 0.4 million cubic metres of gas was scheduled to be pumped through Orlovka on Wednesday.

Last month, Ukraine pumped a small test volume of Azerbaijani gas through the Transbalkan route for the first time and announced plans to significantly increase gas imports from Azerbaijan’s SOCAR energy firm. Kyiv has called the route “extremely important”, as it provides access to liquefied gas from Greek and Turkish LNG terminals, Azerbaijani and Romanian pipeline gas and, potentially, to Bulgarian offshore gas.

## Poland’s new President vows to change nation’s Constitution

AGENCIES  
WARSAW

Karol Nawrocki’s inauguration as Poland’s new president on Wednesday has set the stage for a turbulent power struggle with Prime Minister Donald Tusk’s pro-European government and raised fears among Poland’s Ukrainian community.

The historian and author used his swearing-in speech to parliament to make his position clear: “No to illegal immigration, no to the euro.”

Nawrocki’s election campaign was marked by a rise in nationalist rhetoric and repeated criticism of Ukrainian refugees living in Poland. His victory has unsettled many at home and abroad.

His rhetoric is mak-



Poland’s President-elect Karol Nawrocki arrives for his swearing-in ceremony, with his wife Marta Nawrocka, at the parliament in Warsaw, Poland. Agencies

ing it easier for people to express anti-Ukrainian views, warned Oleksandr Pestrykov of the Ukrainian House Foundation in Warsaw – calling it a form of social segregation.

“Seeing Nawrocki speak in this way, someone who doesn’t like Ukrainians but would have been ashamed

to say so, can now say it openly,” Pestrykov said.

On the campaign trail, Nawrocki described Ukrainian refugees as “ungrateful” and a “burden on society”. His slogan “Poland First, Poles First” came with pledges to give citizens priority in healthcare and education, cut pensions

for Ukrainians and restrict benefits to Poles only.

Despite his hardline message, Nawrocki has also tried to appear as a unifier. In a video released before the inauguration, he urged Poles to “unite” and spoke of “a new chapter in the history of our beloved Poland”. He said he would be an “active president” from the outset, ready to propose laws and push government action. But cooperation with Tusk’s government may prove difficult.

The prime minister has already expressed doubts about Nawrocki’s intentions. “I have no doubt that Mr Nawrocki will do everything to annoy us,” Tusk said. He also warned that he would not let the president “demolish” his government.

## Russia arrests man accused of passing satellite secrets to US

AGENCIES  
MOSCOW

A man accused of passing Russian satellite secrets to the United States has been arrested for suspected treason and placed in pre-trial detention, a court in the Russian city of Kaliningrad said on Wednesday.

The court, in a statement on Telegram, identified the suspect only as “O” and said he was a former employee of a company producing electronic engines for space satellites.

It said he was suspected of collecting and storing information about the firm’s technology on behalf of U.S. intelligence services between July 2021 and December 2023. The man was placed in detention until September 30, the court said.

“Therefore Russia believes it has the right to take respective steps if necessary.” “Decisions on specific parameters of response measures will be made by the leadership of the Russian Federation based on an interdepartmental analysis of the scale of deployment of American and other Western land-based intermediate-range missiles, as well as the development of the overall situation in the area of international security and strategic stability,” the Foreign Ministry said.

## ‘No self-imposed ban on intermediate-range missiles’

AGENCIES  
MOSCOW

Russia has declared that it no longer considers itself bound by a self-imposed moratorium on the deployment of nuclear-capable intermediate range missiles, a warning that potentially sets the stage for a new arms race as tensions between Moscow and Washington rise again over Ukraine.

In a statement Monday, the Russian Foreign Ministry linked the decision to efforts by the U.S. and its allies to develop intermediate



range weapons and preparations for their deployment in Europe and other parts of the world. It specifically cited U.S. plans to deploy

Typhoon and Dark Eagle missiles in Germany starting next year.

The ministry noted that such actions by the U.S. and its allies create “destabilizing missile potentials” near Russia, creating a “direct threat to the security of our country” and carry “significant harmful consequences for regional and global stability, including a dangerous escalation of tensions between nuclear powers.”

It didn’t say what specific moves the Kremlin might take, but President Vladimir

Putin has previously announced that Moscow was planning to deploy its new Oreshnik missiles on the territory of its neighbor and ally Belarus later this year.

Asked where and when Russia could potentially deploy intermediate-range weapons, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that it’s not something to be announced in advance.

“Russia no longer has any limitations, Russia no longer considers itself to be constrained by anything,” Peskov told reporters.

## France’s biggest wildfire of summer has eclipsed size of Paris and is still spreading

AGENCIES  
PARIS

France’s biggest wildfire this summer was spreading quickly Wednesday in a Mediterranean region near the Spanish border after leaving one person dead, authorities said.

About 2,000 firefighters and several water bomber aircraft battled the blaze that broke out Tuesday afternoon in the village of Ribaute in the Aude region, a rural, wooded

area that is home to wineries.

The wildfire remained “very active” on Wednesday and weather conditions were unfavourable, the local administration said in a statement.

One person died in their home, nine others were injured, including seven firefighters, and at least one person was missing, the statement said.

The interior ministry said the fire had spread over 13,000 hectares (32,000

acres), an area larger than the French capital.

Jacques Piraux, mayor of the village of Jonquières, said all residents have been evacuated. “It’s a scene of sadness and desolation,” he told broadcaster BFM TV after he visited Wednesday morning to assess the damage. “It looks like a lunar landscape, everything is burned. More than half or three-quarters of the village has burned down. It’s hellish.” Residents



and tourists in nearby areas were requested to remain in their homes unless told to evacuate by firefighters. Two campsites were evacuated as a precaution.

French Prime Minister François Bayrou was expected to visit Wednesday afternoon, his office said.

Last month, a wildfire that reached the southern port of Marseille, France’s second-largest city, left around 300 people injured. Southern Eu-

rope has seen multiple large fires this summer. Scientists warn that climate change is exacerbating the frequency and intensity of heat and dryness, making the region more vulnerable to wildfires.

Europe is the world’s fastest-warming continent, with temperatures increasing at twice the speed of the global average since the 1980s, according to the European Union’s Copernicus Climate Change Service.



# 'TITANIC' PRODUCER LANDAU ON WHY MCCONAUGHEY DIDN'T GET ROLE IN FILM

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON DC

Actor Matthew McConaughey allegedly lost out on the role of Jack Dawson in 'Titanic' because he wouldn't let go of his Southern accent, according to a memoir written by the film's producer, Jon Landau, reported People.

McConaughey's accent did not resonate with the film's director, James Cameron, who told the actor, "That's great, now let's try it a different way," according to Landau's book.

But McConaughey felt otherwise, telling Cameron, "No. That was pretty good. Thanks," writes the producer. "Let's just say, that was it



for McConaughey," Landau wrote.

Finally, Jack was played by Leonardo DiCaprio, and it turned out to be an iconic role; however, McConaughey's career was not affected.

'Titanic' is a 1997 epic romantic disaster film written and directed by James Cameron. Incorporating

both historical and fictionalised aspects, it is based on accounts of the sinking of the RMS Titanic in 1912. The film stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet. It also features an ensemble cast of Billy Zane, Kathy Bates, Frances Fisher, Bernard Hill, Jonathan Hyde, Danny Nucci, David Warner, and Bill Paxton.

The Oscar winner has spoken about his audition for the iconic role in the past, saying on Rob Lowe's podcast 'Literally! with Rob Lowe' in 2021, "So I went and read with Kate Winslet, and it was not one of the auditions -- they filmed it so it was like an on-screen test time," reported People.

"After we left, you know, it was one of those ones where they, like, followed me, and when we got outside, they were like, 'That went great.' I mean, kind of, like, hugs. I really thought it was going to happen. It did not," he added.

McConaughey also confirmed at the time that he was never offered the role, despite rumours that circulated afterwards.

## Shibani hails Farhan Akhtar's '120 Bahadur' teaser

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

The official teaser for Farhan Akhtar's '120 Bahadur' was unveiled on Tuesday, drawing a mix of emotions from viewers. While many were impressed with Akhtar's portrayal of the brave and strong-headed Major Shaitan Singh Bhati, others cheered for the actor's much-awaited debut on the big screen.

Among them was Akhtar's wife, Shibani Akhtar, who also hailed the teaser on Instagram. Sharing the same on



her social media handle, Shibani wrote, "This is spectacular! Couldn't be prouder of you and your men @faroutakhtar love you."

She added, "Yeh wardi sirf himmat nahin, balidaan bhi maangti hai! Based on the incredible true story is a war forged in snow and

sealed with sacrifice. 120 Bahadur, teaser out now. Releasing in cinemas near you on 21st Nov, 2025. #120Bahadur #EkSauBeesBahadur #DadaKishanKijai."

The actor's sister, filmmaker Zoya Akhtar, also shared the teaser on Instagram, leading the line of applause for her brother.

Many other Bollywood celebrities also joined in the bandwagon including actor Arjun Kapoor, Rhea Chakraborty, Gajraj Rao, Farah Khan, and Sharvari, who heaped praise on the teaser.

## Airport Diaries: Akshay rocks salt & pepper look



AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar on Wednesday morning returned to Mumbai after spending some time in London.

His airport appearance was quite captivating as he nailed the salt-and-pepper look, donning an oversized grey sweatshirt that he paired with a grey hoodie and flowy pants.

Akshay's comfortable yet stylish outfit perfectly blends casual streetwear and subtle statement elements. The black beanie and tinted sunglasses added a cool, understated edge to his relaxed airport look.

Akshay also happily posed for the shutterbugs and briefly interacted with them in Marathi.

Meanwhile, on the work front, in the coming months, Akshay will

be seen in Priyadarshan's Bhooth Bangla. Bhooth Bangla is produced by Shobha Kapoor and Ektaa R. Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms, along with Akshay Kumar's production house, Cape of Good Films. The film is slated for a theatrical release on April 2, 2026.

He also has 'Haiwaan' in the pipeline with Saif Ali Khan. The film will be directed by Priyadarshan.

## Justin, Hailey's son Jack makes adorable debut in singer's 'Yukon' track

AGENCIES  
LOS ANGELES

Justin and Hailey Bieber's son, Jack Blues, has made his musical debut! While the little one still has a lot to go before showcasing his singing skills, he has started with an adorable appearance in his father's latest music video, 'Yukon'.

On Tuesday, Justin Bieber released the official music video for the song 'Yukon' off his latest album, 'SWAG'. The black-and-white video featured special appearances by his wife, Hailey,



and their 11-month-old son, Jack Blues.

The family's playful moments take centre stage

in the video, leaving fans amused.

The video opens with a close-up of Justin and quickly cuts to show him playing with his son before it once again switches to reveal Jack's legs kicking in the water.

Among other scenes were Justin kissing his son's toes, Hailey holding onto her son in the water, the family spending time on the boat, and another shot of Jack trying to reach out to the camera.

"What would I do if I didn't love you, baby?" Jus-

tin sings in the chorus.

While the video offers a lot of insight into the first look of the baby, whom the couple usually hides on social media, they made sure to keep his face concealed with the use of watermarks and props.

Notably, this is not the first time that the 'Baby' singer has brought on his son for musical endeavours. Earlier in July, Justin shared pictures of Jack at his music studio. In the post, Jack was seen exploring the surroundings, while the singer played guitar and looked on.

### BRAIN PICKING



I can respect different opinions, because everybody has a story.

—RICHACHADHA

(Indian Actress)

## MIB upholds CBFC certification of 'Udaipur Files'

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) has dismissed all revision petitions challenging the certification of the controversial film 'Udaipur Files: Kanhaiya Lal Tailor Murder', thereby clearing the path for its public release.

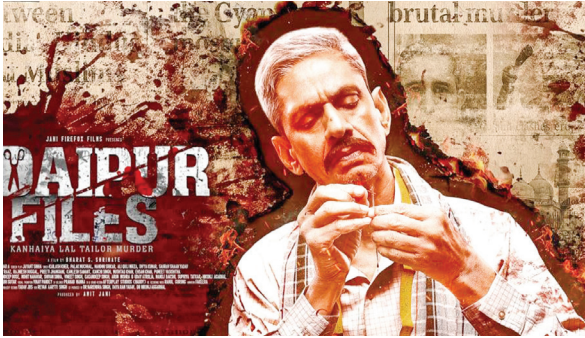
This decision follows weeks of legal disputes, multiple appeals, and widespread public attention stemming from the film's alleged communal undertones and its depiction of matters still under judicial consideration.

In its final ruling issued on August 6, 2025, the Ministry affirmed several key findings. The Revisional Authority determined that the Central

Board of Film Certification (CBFC) had followed due process and committed no procedural errors in granting certification. It noted that the filmmakers had complied with the 55 cuts required by the CBFC and had also carried out additional voluntary edits. Furthermore, the order highlighted that no new evidence or compelling arguments had been presented

to warrant a reversal of the certification.

Invoking Section 6(2) of the Cinematograph Act, 1952, the Ministry concluded that there was no legitimate basis to suspend or alter the classification of the film. It underscored that all concerned parties had been provided a fair chance to present their views during the proceedings.



## Sara, Bhumi, other celebs react to Uttarkashi cloudburst

AGENCIES  
DEHRADUN

Several members of the Indian film industry, including Sara Ali Khan, Sonu Sood, and Bhumi Pednekar, have expressed condolences to those affected by the cloudburst in Dharali, Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.

Sara took to Instagram and wrote, "My heart goes out to



everyone impacted by the incident in Uttarakhand. Praying for safety, strength and healing for all (sic)."

In another post, she provided emergency contact numbers to support ongoing relief operations.

"Uttarkashi District Emergency Operation Centre has issued the following emergency numbers: 01374222126, 01374222722, 9456556431,"

read the message. Actor Sonu Sood also expressed his concern over the tragedy.

"Heartbroken by the devastating floods & cloudburst in Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand. Prayers for every life affected. It's time the nation comes together -- while the govt does its part, we as individuals must stand up for every soul who lost a home, a living, a life," Sonu wrote on X.

## Kajol-starrer 'The Trial 2' to be released in September

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Actor Kajol is all set to reprise her role Noyonika in the second season of 'The Trial'.

On Wednesday, the makers shared details about the second season, revealing it will be out on JioHotstar on September 19, 2025.

Directed by Umesh Bist and produced by Banijay Asia, the series also stars Jisshu Sengupta, Sonali Kulkarni, Sheeba Chadha, Alyy Khan, Kubbra Sait, Gaurav Pandey,



and Karanvir Sharma.

Excited about the new season, "Professionally, it has been an incredibly enriching year for me - I've

had the chance to explore a range of characters & stories and among them, Noyonika remains especially close to my heart.





Photos: Tata Motors

# Tata gets ADVENTUROUS: Launches feature-rich variants of the Harrier and Safari

SYED SHIRAZ SHAH

Tata Motors has added two new variants of the Harrier and Safari. The company calls the new variants collectively as “Adventure X Persona” with which it claims to have brought in a complete package of adventure, performance, and features, offering greater value proposition and access to a robust and adventurous lifestyle to its customers. No, AWD or 4x4 isn’t offered. If you want an all-wheel-drive Tata SUV, then you’ll have to go with the electric Harrier QWD. The traditional-fuel Harrier and Safari still continue to be two-wheel-drive vehicles.

What the Adventure variants give you is a lot of features at a starting price of Rs. 18.99 lakh for the Harrier, and Rs. 19.99 lakh for the Safari. All prices mentioned on this page are ex-showroom. Please note that although Tata was kind enough to invite me to the launch, I couldn’t make it due to prior commitments, so all information in this

story is totally based on my understanding of their superfluous (as is the norm with almost every manufacturer) press release.

## WHAT IS THIS ADVENTURE PERSONA?

From what I could make out, it essentially comprises three variants in total: two for the Harrier and one for the Safari. So, while the Harrier gets Adventure X and Adventure X+ variants (Rs.18.99 lakh and Rs. 19.34 lakh, respectively), the Safari sees an addition of only the Adventure X+ (Rs. 19.99 lakh) variant. The press release doesn’t mention the difference in features between the X and X+ variants, which leads me to believe that the list of features provided is for the X+ variants. Let me share them all in the next section.

## ADVENTURE PERSONA FEATURES

Tata says that the Harrier and Safari Adventure Persona includes ADAS with Adaptive Cruise Control (AT), 360° HD Surround View, Trail Hold EPB with

Auto Hold, Trail Response Modes (Normal, Rough, Wet), a Land Rover-derived Command Shifter (AT), along with segment-leading features such as the Ergo Lux Driver Seat with Memory & Welcome function, a 26.03 cm Ultra-View

Tan oak-inspired leatherette, and the Harrier gets Onyx Trail interiors with black leatherette seats and tan accents in the cabin.

Apparently, there are new colour options as well but Tata hasn’t mentioned the exact shades. Also, the press

new Pure X persona which will offer enhanced value to the customers at a great price point.”

For reference the Pure X variants are currently priced at Rs. 17.99 lakh and Rs. 18.49 lakh for the Harrier and Safari, respec-

tively. The Pure X is placed just above the base variant, called the Smart, and you would certainly want to know the prices for the base Harrier and Safari, right? The Harrier Smart would cost you just Rs. 14.99 lakh and the Safari Smart will be yours for just Rs. 15.49 lakh

(yes, here the difference is only 50 thousand rupees between the two). The story wouldn’t be complete if I didn’t give you the prices of the top-end variants as well. The top-end variant of the Harrier is called the Fearless+ and it costs Rs. 24.44

among other things, will tell you the best variant to buy. In the meantime, I think it’s imperative for you to know what, Mr. Vivek Srivatsa, Chief Commercial Officer, Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd., said on the occasion. He said, “the Harrier

and intelligent capability—all while offering more value per car. Designed for those who seek authenticity, capability, and expression in equal measure, the Adventure X is positioned at a compelling price point in the segment, offering class leading features. Furthermore, with



Twin Screen System, Trail Sense Auto Headlamps, Aqua Sense Wipers, and Multi Drive Modes (City, Sport, Eco).

The interior themes are also different on these new variants. The Safari gets what Tata is referring to as Adventure Oak Interiors in

release says that along with the introduction of the Adventure X variants Tata has “reimagined the entire Harrier and Safari portfolio—making it smarter, sharper, and more aligned with what today’s SUV buyers want.” It also mentions that “the line-up also comes with the

tively. The Pure X is placed just above the base variant, called the Smart, and you would certainly want to know the prices for the base Harrier and Safari, right? The Harrier Smart would cost you just Rs. 14.99 lakh and the Safari Smart will be yours for just Rs. 15.49 lakh



lakh. The top-end variant of the Safari is called the Accomplished+ and it costs Rs. 25.09 lakh for the seven-seat version and Rs. 25.19 lakh for the six-seat version.

I will try to bring reviews of both the Harrier and Safari sometime soon, which,

and Safari have always stood for more than just mobility—they represent status, purpose, and a deep-rooted desire for an adventurous lifestyle. With the introduction of the Adventure X persona, we’ve modernised these icons for a new era—one that champions individuality, precision-crafted design,

this new persona, we have also reimagined the Harrier and Safari line completely, making the range more intuitive, streamlined, and value-rich than ever before in the high SUV space.” All that is great, Mr. Srivatsa, but how about AWD versions of the Safari and regular Harrier now?

# FORGOTTEN CHILD: Suzuki gives the Avenis a new dual-tone colour

SYED SHIRAZ SHAH

Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt. Ltd. (SMIPL), the two-wheeler subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan, has given a new dual-tone colour to Avenis, the sportier model in the company’s 125 cc range of scooters. The Access and Burgman comprise the other two in Suzuki’s current scooter portfolio but none of them has ever had a colour name as peculiar as the latest colour on the Avenis, which is called Metallic Matte Platinum Silver No. 2 / Glass Sparkle Black.

I don’t know the reason behind adding “No. 2” to this colour’s name as the other colours don’t really have something like a “Metallic Matte Platinum Silver” which could be considered “No. 1” and then a slightly different version could have “No. 2” in its name. It still wouldn’t make much sense though.

Or, it could be a case of “Metallic Matte Platinum Silver” being taken by some other manufacturer already. I will certainly ask Suzuki about it and get you the answer in the review story of the Avenis or perhaps in the Access review which I might be doing earlier. For now, I

shall take this opportunity to inform you about the pricing and other basics.

But before I do that, here are the other colours in addition to the new one: Glossy Sparkle Black / Pearl Glacier White, Glossy Sparkle Black / Pearl Mira Red, and Glossy Sparkle Black. In simple words, these three can just be called Black & White, Black & Red, and Black.

wonder why it hasn’t been mentioned in the press release. Also, I couldn’t see my personal favourite—the Race Edition (in full Suzuki’s MotoGP Ecstar livery), which I had reviewed in 2022—on the website, which is disappointing. Come on Suzuki, please stick to your roots!

## POWERTRAIN

There is no change in the powertrain and the Suzuki Avenis continues to

now. The peak power output is 8.7 PS at 6,750 rpm, while the peak torque output is 10 Nm at 5,500 rpm.

## SUSPENSION, TYRES, AND BRAKES

The Suzuki Avenis features telescopic front suspension, tubeless tyres, front disc brake, and Combined Brake System (CBS).

## OTHER TIDBITS

The scooter continues with LED headlamp and tail lamp, split grabrails, digital instrument console, front box with USB socket, external

be powered by a 124.3 cc, all aluminium, 4-stroke, single-cylinder, air-cooled engine that is BS6 OBD-2B compliant

hinge-type fuel cap, long and comfortable step seat, and 21.8 liters of under-seat storage.

Photo: Suzuki Motorcycle India

The Access and Burgman comprise the other two in Suzuki’s current scooter portfolio but none of them has ever had a colour name as peculiar as the latest colour on the Avenis, which is called Metallic Matte Platinum Silver No. 2 / Glass Sparkle Black.

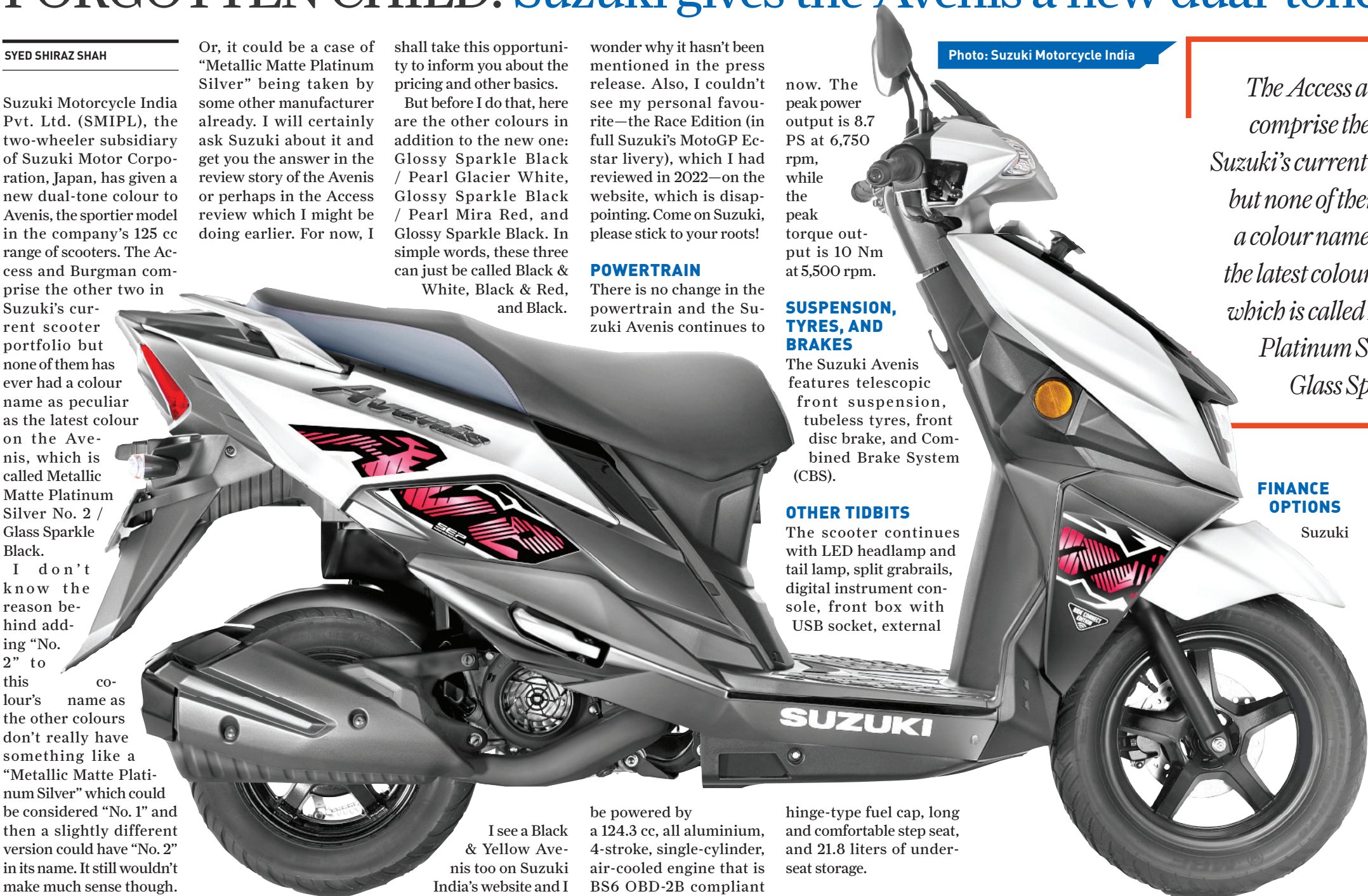
## FINANCE OPTIONS

Suzuki

claims that customers can now ride home the Avenis in their favourite colour with loan options of up to 100 per cent and no hypothecation, making ownership more accessible and hassle-free.

## PRICING

The press release states that the Standard Edition of the Avenis is priced at Rs. 91,400 and the Ride Connect Edition at Rs. 93,200, but doesn’t mention whether the new shade is available in both editions OR if it’s exclusive to the Special Edition which is priced at Rs. 94,000. You may trust me to clear all the doubts in my review story soon.





# WHAT AGENTIC AI ACTUALLY MEANS AND WHAT INDIAN ENTERPRISES SHOULD KNOW



THE NEXT  
ABHISHEK ANAND

If ChatGPT was the demo, then Agentic AI is the deployment. We're entering a new phase of artificial intelligence - where AI systems don't just respond to prompts, but act autonomously toward goals, over time, with context and memory. They can browse the web, manage calendars, write code, run API calls, and even trigger downstream workflows. This is not science fiction. It's the Agentic AI era, and it's unfolding fast - led by OpenAI's launch of Chat-GPT Agents, and similar developments across Salesforce, Microsoft, and AWS. For Indian enterprises, especially CIOs and business leaders, the question is

no longer if Agentic AI will impact business operations - but how soon you can safely and effectively integrate it. **What is Agentic AI?** Agentic AI refers to systems that possess autonomy, context awareness, planning capabilities, and the ability to act on behalf of users without constant supervision. Unlike traditional AI models that operate in isolation, agents can: 

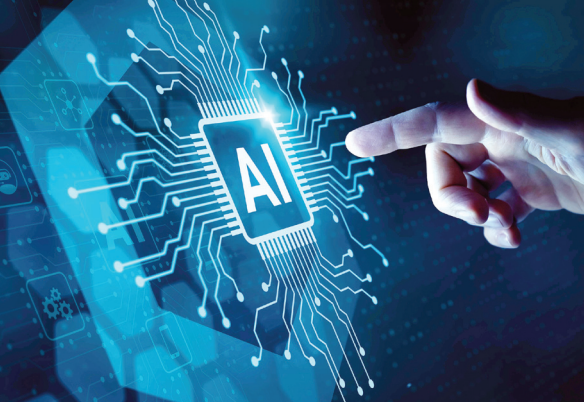
- Set subgoals
- Access and act on external tools
- Monitor progress and loop decisions
- React to feedback and adapt in real-time

 Think of them not as tools, but as digital employees - ca-

pable of initiating actions, managing tasks, and learning from outcomes. **Examples of Agentic AI in Action**

- Customer Experience: AI agents that not only answer queries but resolve issues by navigating internal databases, refund systems, and CRM records.
- Developer Tools: GitHub's Copilot Agents that can review, debug, and commit code autonomously.
- HR and Admin: AI assistants that can screen candidates, schedule interviews, and auto-generate documentation based on company policies.
- Salesforce's Einstein Agentforce: Enterprise-grade sales agents that manage outreach, follow-ups, and lead prioritisation.

**Why This Matters to Indian Enterprises** India's digital ecosystem is



vibrant but highly cost-sensitive and process-intensive. Deploying Agentic AI in: 

- Mid-sized IT firms could eliminate repetitive scripting and testing tasks
- Healthcare could enable AI agents to manage appointment bookings, patient onboarding, and post-consultation care
- Retail could automate dynamic pricing, stock checks, and customer service

 But without a structured approach, introducing autonomous agents can cause more confusion than clarity. **Getting Started: A CIO's Guide to Deploying Agentic AI** Like hiring a new employee, integrating AI agents requires structure, roles, governance, and feedback loops. Here's a practical roadmap: **1. Treat AI Agents as Digital Employees** Assign them: 

- Roles: e.g., "Customer Support Triage Agent"
- KPIs: Time saved, accuracy, customer satisfaction

**Limits: Scope of action, escalation thresholds** This ensures clarity and accountability from the start. **2. Define Agent Identity and Responsibilities** Just like departments have org charts, AI agents need clear domains: 

- What tools and APIs can the agent access?
- What decision boundaries are they allowed?
- Who monitors or reviews their outcomes?

 Create agent runbooks - standard operating procedures for agent behaviour. **3. Build Access Controls and Ethical Guardrails** Use role-based access and digital signatures to: 

- Restrict what data an agent can access
- Prevent unintended consequences like email spamming or wrong transactions
- Log every decision for audit trails

 Implement regular compliance checks, especially in sectors like finance, healthcare, and government services. **4. Onboard in Phases (Like HR Training)** Don't give agents full control on Day 1. Use this 3-phase model: 

- Shadow Mode: Agent observes tasks and recommends actions
- Assist Mode: Agent executes tasks with human approval
- Autonomous Mode: Agent acts independently within defined boundaries

 This staged onboarding helps teams build trust and catch errors early. **5. Measure and Iterate** Track agent performance like you would an intern or new hire: 

- Success/failure ratio
- Human override frequency
- User feedback or friction points

- Set up regular performance reviews and improvement loops.

**Final Thoughts** Agentic AI is not just another automation trend - it's a shift in how we design workflows, delegate responsibility, and scale intelligence across the enterprise. For Indian businesses, the opportunity is massive - but only if approached with structure, governance, and strategic intent. The best-performing companies in the coming years won't be the ones with the most AI - they'll be the ones who manage AI like a high-performing team. *Abhishek Anand, Founder of Skill Bud Technologies Pvt. Ltd., a technology company specializing in Website Development, Digital Marketing, CGI Ads, Social Media, and emerging technologies including AI, AR/VR, and Generative Content under his brand Generative Crafts.*

## India's AI healthcare tools are stuck in pilot mode. What will it take to scale?

DR SABINE KAPASI

India's hospitals are teeming with artificial intelligence demos: slick presentations, promising pilots, and neatly packaged tools. But in practice, most of these innovations remain confined to labs, research papers, or isolated pilot sites. According to the Economic Survey 2024-25, while 34% of healthcare organisations in India were experimenting with AI in 2023, only 16% had successfully operationalised even one tool in routine care. The World Economic Forum estimates that AI could unlock \$1 trillion in economic value for India by 2035. Yet, that future is slipping out of reach. Without clear pathways from pilot to scale, AI in Indian healthcare risks becoming a high-potential idea permanently stuck in the trial phase. **AI WAVE IN INDIA** Across India, a range of AI-driven tools are being tested in clinical settings, often with impressive results in limited deployments. Some notable examples from the past 2-3 years include Qure.ai's chest X-ray algorithm, which already analyses approximately 60,000 scans each month across 25 states, automatically flagging roughly 16,000 suspected tuberculosis cases for review. Rajasthan has

integrated a similar AI model into its Silicosis Portal, enabling district boards to certify miners' lung damage more quickly. These tools reduce diagnosis time to minutes and cost a fraction of the cost of specialist interpretation. Yet, they remain exceptions, not the norm. Cardiology offers a second glimpse. Maharashtra's state-run STEMI programme links rural hospitals to cardiologists via Tricog's AI ECG platform. In three years, the network has recorded more than 150,000 ECGs, flagging over 3,500 critical heart attacks within ten minutes, an intervention window that often decides life or death. In oncology, Niramai's Thermalix breast scan is now available in over 200 hospitals and camps, providing radiation-free early detection at a fraction of the cost of a mammogram. While both pilots have proved their point, neither has a clear nationwide path. **CHALLENGES TO SCALE** Despite high interest and clear potential, systemic hurdles are keeping AI health tools in a state of "pilot purgatory." Several key challenges have emerged: Firstly, India still has no dedicated rulebook for learning algorithms. ICMR's 2023 ethical guide-



lines are advisory, so hospitals remain unsure how to validate or monitor an evolving model or who is liable if it errs. The result is paralysis: innovators stay in "research" limbo, and purchasers hesitate to sign long-term deals. Secondly, AI interpretations are exempt from tariffs under Ayushman Bharat or private insurance, leaving hospitals unable to bill for them. A 2023 APAC-Med paper warned that without reimbursement codes, digital health solutions will never reach scale. Maharashtra temporarily buys ECG reads out of its state budget, yet few states can replicate that stop-gap. Thirdly, many doctors still balk at "black-box" models trained on data they have never seen. The Economic Survey 2024-25 also flags a shortage of hybrid talent that understands both medicine and machine learning. Fewer than one in four public hospitals have fully digi-

tised records, so integrating an AI tool can take longer than writing the algorithm itself. **AN ESCAPE PLAN** Moving from pilot projects to nationwide adoption will require coordinated action on multiple fronts. Firstly, the Parliament should create a fast-track "software as medical device" pathway with tiered risk classes, annual post-market audits and explicit liability norms. A national AI sandbox, overseen by CDSCO and NITI Aayog, can let innovators prove safety on live data while regulators watch. Secondly, Ayushman Bharat can pioneer bundled payments for approved AI screenings that prevent more costly treatment downstream. Once the public payer recognises an AI readout, private insurers will follow, converting pilots into revenue-supported practice. Thirdly, the Indian Medical Association could accredit AI training modules and establish a public registry of validated models, along with their corresponding accuracy scores. Hospitals should appoint "digital residents", i.e., young doctors trained in data science, to serve as translators between code and clinical teams. Fourthly, we can pair the

ABDM health-ID rollout with a sovereign, anonymised imaging and ECG cloud that lets approved start-ups train on diverse Indian datasets while preserving privacy. Strong governance, combined with broad access, will make algorithms more effective and cost-efficient. Lastly, we should invest in designs for the last mile. Co-create voice-based AI apps with ASHA workers, embed usage incentives in their payment schedules, and localise interfaces for dialect and offline use so tools work where physicians are scarce. India doesn't lack talent or technology; it lacks the connective tissue to scale up good pilots to a national level. The solutions exist, but they require urgency, coordination, and, above all, trust in systems that allow innovation to thrive responsibly. If implemented well, AI can democratise healthcare, empower frontline workers, and close the urban-rural care divide. As Thomas Edison once said, "The value of an idea lies in the using of it." It's time India stops testing and starts trusting its AI breakthroughs, at scale, for all. *Dr Sabine Kapasi, MD & CEO, Enira Consulting and Ritesh Aeron, Advisor at Enira Consulting and WHO*

## Over 90% Indians Turn to Faith-Tech for Daily Spiritual Practice, VSF Survey Finds

TDG NETWORK

Survey highlights a growing shift toward mindful, tech-enabled spiritual practices rooted in Vedic wisdom India, 6th August 25: In today's hyper-connected, chaotic world, where constant distractions and digital overload have become the norm, finding inner stillness is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity. Anxiety, burnout, and the craving for deeper meaning have led many to revisit spiritual practices. But this time, there's a new ally in the journey within technology. To understand this emerging trend, the Vedic Sadhana Foundation (VSF) recently conducted a digital survey, which revealed a powerful shift in how Indians are choosing to engage with spirituality. Reflecting the growing convergence of ancient wisdom and modern innovation, a recent survey conducted by the Vedic Sadhana Foundation (VSF) reveals that more than 90% of users are eager to embrace digital tools that support daily mantra chanting and peaceful Sadhana practices. According to the survey: 91% of respondents said they would use an app every day if it helped them chant their mantras the right way; 92% gave a similar response in a separate



poll conducted by VSF and 89% expressed interest in a spiritual app that guides daily Sadhana with "no ads, no noise just peace." These numbers highlight a significant demand for minimal, distraction-free platforms that integrate ancient Vedic practices into modern routines especially as users increasingly seek refuge from overstimulating digital environments. The Vedic Sadhana Foundation, an organization dedicated to preserving and reviving Vedic Dharma, has been at the forefront of this movement. With over 1 million Vedic rituals performed and 90,000+ monthly active users on its flagship Sadhana App, VSF is demonstrating that deep spiritual transformation can be both scalable and accessible. Priyanka Om Anand, CEO of Vedic Sadhana Foundation, shared: "In an age where the profound wisdom of Vedic Dharma is at risk of being forgotten, the Vedic Sadhana Foundation stands as a beacon of revival and preservation. This survey reaffirms our

belief that people are not only ready but eager to embrace timeless spiritual practices when presented in an accessible and pure format. Our vision is to reconnect, preserve, and celebrate the depth of Vedic Dharma by integrating its practices into modern daily life through technology and community." The findings reflect a larger cultural shift: people are not just looking for wellness they're seeking meaning, discipline, and inner alignment. With the rise of spiritual tech, Vedic traditions are being reimagined not diluted for the next generation. **ABOUT VEDIC SADHANA FOUNDATION** The Vedic Sadhana Foundation is devoted to making Vedic wisdom relevant and accessible in today's fast-paced world. By combining ancient teachings with modern technology, VSF enables millions to perform rituals, chant mantras, and experience spiritual depth through its digital platforms.

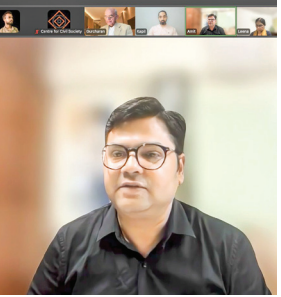
## Five years on: Centre for civil society hosts webinar on NEP chapter 8, policy, practice, and School Governance

TDG NETWORK

July 31, 2025, The Centre for Civil Society, a non-profit think tank that advances social change through public policy, hosted the webinar to unpack India's school governance architecture and how it can be transformed to reflect the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's vision of decentralisation, functional clarity, and institutional autonomy. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Amit Chandra, CEO, Centre for Civil Society. The panellists included: Mr. Gurucharan Das, public intellectual and author, Mr. Kapil Khurana, Central Square Foundation, Prof. Geeta Gandhi

Kingdon, University College London, Dr. Leena Chandran Wadia, The University of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology, Prof. Pranati Panda, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. Dr. Chandra began the session by anchoring the discussion in chapter 8 of NEP, underscoring the reforms in both style and functions of educational governance. Mr. Gurucharan Das delivered a philosophically and morally centered keynote address, noting that "governance must serve the child, not the system". He traced the evolution of educational governance in India, emphasizing the moral purpose of schooling, the

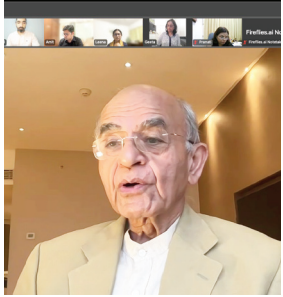
imperative of autonomy and accountability in governance, and need for reduced state control while ensuring equity. Dr. Leena Wadia focused on the design of school complexes, bringing attention to how they allow the sharing of resources, especially in rural areas while highlighting the role of school leaders and cluster-level autonomy, and warning against over-centralizing. "Autonomy at the complex level must be protected. These structures are intended to empower, not add another bureaucratic layer." she remarked. Prof. Geeta Gandhi Kingdon delved into a comparative and evidence-based overview, emphasized on



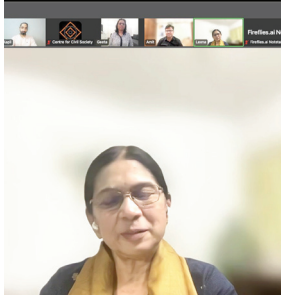
performance-based accountability rather than compliance. She said, "India needs to move towards a light-but-tight regulatory model, and Chapter 8 explicitly acknowledges this need." She illuminated the conflict of interest that arises when a single body plays multiple roles - operator, regulator, and assessor and advocated for the separation of powers between policymaking, regulation,



operations, and assessment. She also stressed the need for independent school evaluation boards. Mr. Kapil Khurana, addressing ground-level implementation, shared insights underlining the urgent need to revise state-level education acts in alignment with NEP, and observed, "Real reform happens in state-level education rules. NEP gives the vision, but states have to enable it." He also



discussed the problem of overlapping authorities between DIETs, SCERTs, and Directorates, highlighted CSF's partnership with states to pilot school complex models, and called for coordination mechanisms and technical assistance cells to support in NEP implementation. Prof. Pranati Panda focused on teacher professional development and institutional governance. While emphasizing the



need for a transparent recruitment and career progression system, she called for stronger academic leadership at both the school and cluster levels, and observed, "The NEP rightly shifts the discussion from inputs to outcomes, but outcomes are a function of governance quality." Before wrapping up the session, Dr. Amit Chandra summarized the key consensus points: The ur-



gency of regulatory reform to enable the NEP vision | The importance of structural clarity and functional autonomy | The role of research, outreach and collaborative implementation. He concluded with a key remark - "Our job now is to hold the system accountable to NEP 2020's spirit, especially Chapter 8, which rightly places governance at the heart of education reform."



# 'INDIA WINNING WITHOUT BUMRAH IS JUST COINCIDENCE, HIS QUALITY EXCEPTIONAL'

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Beating great Sachin Tendulkar feels that India winning two Tests against England in Jasprit Bumrah's absence was a mere "coincidence" and the talismanic pace spearhead's quality remains "exceptional and unbelievable".

Bumrah played three of the just-concluded five-Test series in which a relatively inexperienced India eked out a creditable 2-2 draw. The two games that India won did not feature Bumrah due to a pre-decided workload management plan.

Tendulkar said India emerging victorious at Birmingham and The Oval in



Bumrah's absence was a matter of chance. He went on to highlight Bumrah's performances in the three Tests he played, fetching 14 wickets in all. "Bumrah

started off really well, got five wickets in the (first innings of the) first Test. He did not play the second Test, but (played in) the third and the fourth. Again, in

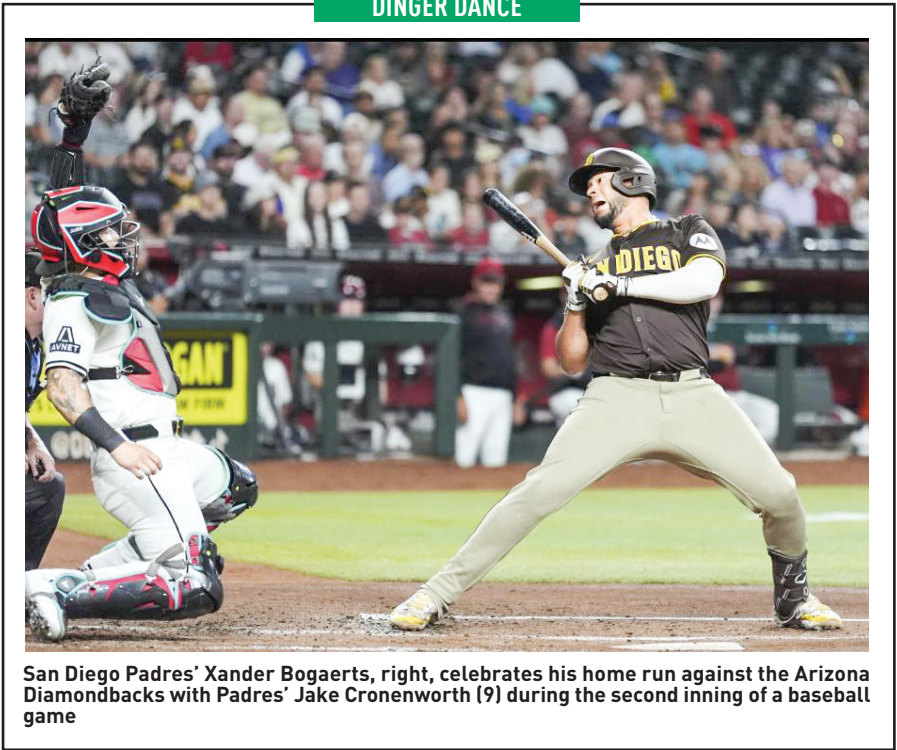
(one of) those two Tests, he got (a) five wickets (haul)," Tendulkar said in his video analysis of the series on 'Reddit'. "Of three Tests that he played, he picked up five

wickets twice. I know that people are discussing a number of things, that we won those Tests in which he did not play. To me, that is just a coincidence."

"The quality of Bumrah is exceptional. What he has been able to do is just unbelievable so far. He has been a consistent performer without any doubt (and) I would put him right at the top with anyone else," he added.

In Bumrah's absence, Mohammed Siraj brought his A game to the table and snared 23 wickets, playing in all five matches and bowling a total of 185.3 overs.

However, Bumrah remains miles ahead in absolute numbers with 219 wickets in 48 Tests as compared to 123 in 41 matches by Siraj.



San Diego Padres' Xander Bogaerts, right, celebrates his home run against the Arizona Diamondbacks with Padres' Jake Cronenworth (9) during the second inning of a baseball game

## Shubman Gill among nominees for ICC 'Player of the Month' award

AGENCIES  
DUBAI

India captain Shubman Gill was on Wednesday named among the three nominees for ICC's Player of the Month award for July along with South Africa's Wiaan Mulder and England skipper Ben Stokes. Gill led India remarkably in the recently-concluded Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy against England as his young side emerged with a hard-fought 2-2 draw, a series in which the 25-year-old rewrote batting records. Gill scored 754 runs in the series against England with four centuries, including a double ton at 75.40 to break legendary Sunil Gavaskar's record (732) for the highest run tally for an Indian captain in a five-Test series. Gill's returns are now also the second-best behind Sir Donald Bradman (810 runs) in the all-time list for captains.



"Shubman Gill had a sensational month, amassing 567 runs at an impeccable average of 94.50 in three Tests during India's gripping series in England," the ICC wrote on its website. "He played a starring role in India's record-breaking win at Edgbaston, where he scored a monumental 269 in the first innings followed by 161 in the second. His combined 430 runs across the two innings is the second highest tally, next only to Graham Gooch's 456," it added.

The ICC said Gill carried the

baton from "all-time great" Virat Kohli at No.4. "His consistency at No. 4, carrying on the baton from all-time great Virat Kohli, provided stability and flair in equal measure, and combined with his extraordinary captaincy in his debut series," it said. In his maiden outing as South Africa captain, Mulder struck a mammoth 367 not out against Zimbabwe but declared his team's innings when he could have broken legendary Brian Lara's record for highest individual total of 400 not out against England in 2004.

## Osaka powers into semifinals in Montreal, will face Clara Tauson

AGENCIES  
MONTREAL

Naomi Osaka powered into her first Canadian Open semifinal, beating No. 10 seed Elina Svitolina 6-2, 6-2 on Tuesday night.

Osaka advanced to face No. 16 seed Clara Tauson, who eliminated sixth-seeded Madison Keys 6-1, 6-4 in the first quarterfinal of the night.

Osaka, the four-time Grand Slam champion who reached No. 1 in the rankings, continued her best performance in a WTA 1000 tournament since reaching the final in Miami in 2022. She stepped away from tennis for 15 months toward the end of that season and had daughter Shai in July 2023.

The native of Japan is seeking her eighth career title and her first since the 2021 Aus-



Naomi Osaka of Japan celebrates after her victory against Elina Svitolina of Ukraine during their quarterfinals women's singles match at Canadian Open. Agencies

tralian Open.

Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko takes on ninth seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan in the other semifinal on Wednesday. Mboko, who's playing in her first main draw at the National Bank Open, will rise into the

WTA's top 50 after beginning the year outside the top 300.

The 18-year-old from Toronto has defeated five higher-ranked opponents en route to the semifinals, including top seed Coco Gauff in the fourth round.

## Fritz, Shelton set up all-American semifinal in Toronto

AGENCIES  
TORONTO

Taylor Fritz and Ben Shelton won Tuesday in the quarterfinals of the National Bank Open, setting up the first all-American semifinal in an ATP Masters 1000 tournament in 15 years.

The second-seeded Fritz beat No. 6 seed Andrey Rublev 6-3, 7-6 (4). He hit 20 aces, including one that finished off the match.

"It was clean," Fritz said of his performance. "I'm happy with everything."

Shelton, the No. 4 seed, then beat No. 9 Alex de Minaur of Australia 6-3, 6-4. The 22-year-old reached the semifinals of an ATP Masters 1000 tournament for



aylor Fritz of the United States celebrates his win against Andrey Rublev. Agencies

the first time. The matchup Wednesday between Fritz and Shelton will be the first time since Andy Roddick beat Mardy Fish at Cincinnati in 2010 that two American met in an ATP Masters 1000 semifinal.

## Manipur Hockey, Hockey Himachal qualify for Division A

AGENCIES  
KAKINADA (ANDHRA PRADESH)

Manipur Hockey, Hockey Uttarakhand and Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu won their respective league matches while Hockey Himachal drew with Hockey Association of Bihar as the Division B contests in HI Junior Women National Championship ended on Wednesday.

Following the conclusion of Division B matches, Manipur Hockey from Pool A and Hockey Himachal from Pool B got promoted to next year's Division A.

Manipur Hockey defeated Assam Hockey 3-1 with Kangjam Silvia Chanu (27',



49') scoring a brace and Devi Mutum Priya (26') slotting home a goal. Ashmita Tigga (20') scored for the losing side. Hockey Uttarakhand crushed Hockey Kerala 7-0 with captain Saloni Pilkhwal (9', 31', 46') scoring a hat-trick,

while Raeen Kehkasha Ali (4', 14') and Aarti (40', 45') scored two goals each. Hockey Himachal drew 1-1 with Hockey Association of Bihar with Bhoomi (12') and Khushi Kumari (11') scoring for their respective teams.

## Punjab, Jharkhand enter final of Sub Junior Hockey Nationals

**Chennai:** Punjab and Jharkhand registered victories in their respective matches on Wednesday to set up a summit clash against each other in the 15th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship here. In the first semi-final of the day, Punjab defeated Uttar

Pradesh 4-3. Sukhdev Singh (51st, 52nd) shone with a late brace, after Mandeep Singh (19th) and Varinder Singh (28th) scored in the first half.

Harsh Pratap Singh (9th), Ali Shahrukh (21st) and captain Ketan Kushwaha (28th) were the scorers for Uttar Pradesh.

Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu defeated Hockey Arunachal 5-0 with Priyadharsini K (39', 52') scoring two goals while Akshatha R (43'), Subalak-

shmi L (40') and Jayashalini S (46') netted a goal each.

In Division A league matches, Hockey Madhya Pradesh and Hockey Jharkhand won

In the other semi-final, Jharkhand defeated Madhya Pradesh 3-1. Though Love (21st) gave Madhya Pradesh the lead, Jharkhand bounced back with goals from Soreng Sumray (29th), Ashish Tani Puri (44th) and Jaysan Kandulna (56th) to move into the final.

their respective pool games, while the contest between Hockey Haryana and Uttar Pradesh Hockey ended in a draw.

## 17 Indian athletes to compete in World Games 2025

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

For the World Games 2025, which will be held in Chengdu, People's Republic of China, from August 7-17, India has sent a squad of 17 members, according to Olympics.com.

This is the 12th edition of the World Games, a quadrennial competition for sports not included in the Olympics.

Running since 1981, the multi-sport event typically takes place a year after the Olympics. The 2025 World Games will feature 253 medal events across 34 sports and 60 disciplines, with powerboating

and cheerleading making their debuts at the quadrennial meet.

However, India will be represented in 23 medal events throughout five sports: billiards, archery, racquetball, roller sports or skating, and wushu.

Many medal winners from the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou are among the members of the Indian World Games team that will travel to Chengdu. The list includes archers Abhishek Verma and Parneet Kaur, speedskaters Velkumar Anand Kumar and Aryanpal Singh Ghuman, as well as wushu athlete Naorem Roshibina Devi.

## Will Siraj's yorker that dismissed Atkinson get same respect as MS Dhoni's six?

### COMMENTARY BOX

MANOJ JOSHI

Siraj proves to be even more dangerous without Bumrah, yet his workload rarely gets the attention it deserves. With performances like these, he's no longer just the 'Hyderabad Express', he's truly become Hamara Siraj.

Whenever Indian fast bowling is talked about, it is especially Jasprit Bumrah's workload management that gets attention, but Mohammed Siraj is rarely mentioned in this regard. The truth is, in the last two years, he has bowled the most number of overs (524) in Tests and has taken the most number of wickets after Bumrah. In

the India-England series, he bowled the most overs (185.3) among both teams and took the most wickets (23). According to Cricviz, Siraj bowled 1,118 balls during 47 spells in this series. Not a single ball among these was at a speed less than 131 kmph. The decisive ball with which he got Atkinson out and helped Team India level the series was also at the speed of 143 kmph—that is, his fifth fastest ball of the series.

#### SIRAJ'S WORKLOAD

The question is whether there is no need to manage his workload today. Siraj has also said that he has



such a passion to play for the country that he does

not care about his fatigue. When Bumrah is not in the

team, Siraj compensates with his striking ability. This is the reason why from Gaba (Brisbane) to Birmingham and then the Oval, he played an important role in winning all these three matches by bowling brilliantly without Bumrah. His role and partner have changed every time. While T Natarajan was his partner in Brisbane, he got good support from Akashdeep's seam bowling. Similarly, in the Oval, he got good support from Prasidh Krishna's seam bowling.

#### BIG CHANGE IN BOWLING

The big change in Siraj's bowling is that now he not only focuses on his own bowling but also reads the batsman's mindset very well. While bowling continuously outside to Jacob Bethell, he bowled one ball

inside—and that too on a yorker length. Similarly, he bowled Zak Crawley, who was continuously playing behind square leg, on the same yorker length. While bowling continuously outside to Smith, he brought the ball in on a short ball, due to which Smith had to go outside. He also set up Overton and got him out.

#### MOST WICKETS IN AWAY WINS

Now Siraj knows how to take wickets not only with the new ball but also with the old ball, which he showed at the Oval. He is the third player after Vinoo Mankad and Kapil Dev to have played three overseas series of five Test matches. He has taken 104 wickets in 27 away matches. Not only this, he also holds the Indian record for taking the most wickets in away

match wins. Siraj played a major role in Team India's historic victories in Melbourne, Brisbane, Lord's, Mirpur, Cape Town, Perth, Birmingham, and the Oval. He took nine wickets at the Oval, eight at Lord's (2021), seven each at Cape Town, Mirpur, and Birmingham, six at Brisbane (Gaba), and five each at Melbourne and Perth. His bowling became a synonym for fear in the Cape Town Test, where South Africa's first innings collapsed for 55 runs with his six wickets. His late swing and seaming balls became the centre of attraction in this innings. Similarly, he became unplayable after taking three wickets in the second innings of Perth.

#### A YORKER WORTHY OF LEGACY?

Today, Siraj's nip-backer

balls are proving to be the most dangerous. When he brings the ball in with the vowel seam, Harry Brook and Joe Root have no answer to it. He has also troubled Ollie Pope with such balls. Siraj's father was once an auto-rickshaw driver. He has seen struggles closely since childhood. That is why he never hesitates to capitalize on any opportunity given by the country.

Now everyone is calling him 'Hamara Siraj'. 'Hyderabad Express' has become an old metaphor. Cricket legends are counting the series that equalled the historic victory of the Oval Test as one of the most memorable series in Test history.

In such a situation, it is natural to raise the question—will Siraj's yorker that dismissed Atkinson get the same respect as MS Dhoni's six in the 2011 World Cup?