



Har Pal Aapke Saath



Trusted Present, Secured Future



We thank you for placing your trust in us.
Celebrating 69 years of meaningful service to the nation.

Subsidiaries:



Associates:



Our WhatsApp No.
8976862090

Say
'Hi'

Download
LIC Mobile App

Visit: licindia.in

Call Centre Services
(022) 6827 6827

Follow us : LIC India Forever

IRDAI Regn No.: 512

THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Pope Leo XIV. Reuters

VATICAN CITY

Pope pleads for end to 'pandemic of arms' after US shooting

Vatican City: Pope Leo, the first U.S.-born leader of the global Catholic Church, prayed on Sunday that God would "stop the pandemic of arms" after a mass shooting on August 27 at a Minnesota Catholic school that killed two children. "Our prayers (go) for the victims of the tragic shooting during a school Mass in the American state of Minnesota," Leo, speaking in English, said in a prayer in St Peter's Square. "Let us plead God to stop the pandemic of arms large and small, which infects our world," said the pope. Sunday's appeal was also a rare instance of the pope addressing a world event in English.

REUTERS

PAKISTAN

Militants target girls' school with IED in KPK

Peshawar: Militants targeted a government girls' primary school with an improvised explosive device in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat district in northwest Pakistan early Sunday, police said. The explosion damaged parts of the building but caused no injuries or loss of life. Police quickly reached the site, and cordoned off the area, while security was tightened in nearby localities. In a separate incident in Paharkhel Pakka, a village in the same district, armed men allegedly abducted a young man. He was reportedly tortured before being dumped in a semi-conscious state.

PTI

GREENLAND

French minister visits island in show of support

Nuuk: French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot insisted that Greenland "is not for sale," and criticised the US for its intentions to take control of the strategic Arctic territory during a visit Sunday to its capital, Nuuk. Barrot spoke in a news conference following a working meeting with Greenland's prime minister and foreign minister. "Greenland is not for sale," he said, echoing French President Emmanuel Macron's similar comments during a June visit to the vast, semi-autonomous territory of Denmark. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he seeks US jurisdiction over Greenland. AP

FINNISH AIR FORCE'S BLUE SWASTIKA INSIGNIA IS BEING CHANGED AFTER COUNTRY'S NATO ENTRY; IT WAS ADOPTED IN 1918

Swastikas still linger on some flags in Finland's air force, but are on the way out

JAMEY KEATEN

AUGUST 31

FINLAND'S AIR Force, now part of NATO, still flies swastikas on a handful of unit flags — but is preparing to phase them out, largely to avoid awkwardness with its Western allies.

The history of the Finnish air force's use of the swastika, which since the 20th century has largely been associated with Nazi tyranny and hate groups, is more complex than at first appearance. It is an ancient symbol and Finland's air force began us-

ing it many years before the birth of Nazi Germany.

Change has been underway for years. A swastika logo was quietly pulled off the Air Force Command's unit emblem a few years ago. But swastikas have remained on some Finnish air force flags, raising eyebrows among NATO allies, tourists and other foreigners who spot them at events.

"We could have continued with this flag, but sometimes awkward situations can arise with foreign visitors. It may be wise to live with the times," Col. Tomi Böhm, the new head of Karelia Air Wing air defense

force, was quoted as saying in a report Thursday by the public broadcaster YLE.

A bad look for a new NATO member

The Defense Forces, in an email to The Associated Press on Friday, said a plan to renew the air force unit flags was launched in 2023, the year Finland joined NATO, but said it was not linked to joining the alliance. The aim, it said, was "to update the symbolism and emblems of the flags to better reflect the current identity of the Air Force."

Teivo Teivainen, a professor of



Count Eric von Rosen of Sweden donated Finland's 1st military plane in 1918, which bore his personal symbol, the Swastika

world politics at the University of Helsinki, said the flags in question were introduced in the 1950s and today are flown by four Air Force units. The Air Force and the Finnish public generally had for years insisted the swastikas used in Finland's air force "have nothing to do with the Nazi swastika," said Teivainen, who this month had a book published whose Finnish title translates as "History of the Swastika."

A symbol used for more than a century

Finland's air force adopted the swastika emblem in 1918

soon after country gained its independence after more than a century of Imperial Russian rule. Count Eric von Rosen of neighboring Sweden donated Finland's first military plane in 1918, which bore his personal symbol, the swastika.

The Finnish air force soon after adopted a blue swastika on a white background as the national insignia on all its planes from 1918 to 1945. After the war, the imagery remained for decades on some Air Force unit flags and decorations as well as on the insignia of the Air Force Academy.

But that doesn't mean there

is no Nazi connection at all. Von Rosen, an aristocratic explorer and ethnographer, was the brother-in-law of Hermann Goering, a decorated World War I German fighter pilot who became an early Nazi Party member. Goering went on to lead Germany's Luftwaffe during World War II under Hitler.

New flags — featuring a eagle — will be published when the work has been completed and the flags are introduced into use for events like parades, the Defense Forces said, without saying when that would happen.

NETANYAHU'S SECURITY CABINET TO DISCUSS IDEA, SAYS MINISTER

Israel weighs annexing West Bank to counter moves to recognise Palestine

MAAYAN LUBELL
JERUSALEM, AUGUST 31

ISRAEL IS considering annexation in the occupied West Bank as a possible response to France and other countries recognising a Palestinian state, according to three Israeli officials and the idea will be discussed further on Sunday, another official said.

Extension of Israeli sovereignty to the West Bank — de facto annexation of land captured in the 1967 Middle East war — was on the agenda for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet meeting late on Sunday that is expected to focus on the Gaza war, a member of the small circle of ministers said.

It is unclear where precisely any such measure would be applied and when, whether only in Israeli settlements or some of them, or in specific areas of the West Bank like the Jordan Valley and whether any concrete steps, which would likely entail a lengthy legislative process.

Any step toward annexation in the West Bank would likely draw widespread condemnation from the Palestinians, who seek the territory for a future state, as well as Arab and Western countries. It is unclear where US President Donald Trump stands on the matter.

A spokesperson for Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar did



A Palestinian child in Rimal in Gaza City on Sunday. Reuters

not respond to a request for comment on whether Saar had discussed the move with his US counterpart Marco Rubio during his visit to Washington last week. Netanyahu's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether the PM supports annexation. The office of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israel is angered by pledges by France, Britain, Australia and Canada to formally recognize a Palestinian state at a summit during the UN General Assembly in September.

Meanwhile, in Gaza

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Sunday that Hamas' armed wing spokesperson Abu Ubaida had been killed by the Israeli military in Gaza. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said earlier in the day that Abu Ubaida had been tar-

geted in a joint operation carried out by the military and the Shin Bet intelligence service in Gaza.

Hamas confirmed Saturday the death of its Gaza military chief Mohammad Sinwar, a few months after Israel said it killed him in a strike in May.

Israeli forces also pounded the suburbs of Gaza City overnight from the air and ground, destroying homes and driving more families out of the area.

REUTERS

GRETA JOINS AID FLOTILLA TO GAZA

Barcelona: A flotilla of ships departed from Barcelona to the Gaza Strip Sunday with humanitarian aid and activists on board in the largest attempt yet to break the long Israeli blockade of the Palestinian territory by sea. This comes as Israel has stepped up its offensive on Gaza City, limiting the deliveries of food and basic supplies in the north of the Palestinian territory. The Global Sumud Flotilla, of about 20 boats and teams from 44 countries is the largest attempt to date to break the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip by sea. AP

HOUTHIS RAID U.N. AGENCIES IN YEMEN

Cairo: Houthi rebels on Sunday raided offices of the United Nations' food and children's agencies in Yemen's capital, detaining several U.N. employees, officials said. Rebels tightened security across Sanaa after the Israeli killing of their prime minister and several Cabinet members. Offices of World Food Program and UNICEF were raided, and agencies are conducting "a head count" of staffers. AP



Riot police inspect motorists in Jakarta on Sunday. Reuters

Deadly Indonesia protests force Prabowo to cut lawmakers' pay

Amid rising cost of living, people say stipends for politicians are lavish

STEFANNO SULAIMAN & GAYATRI SUROYO
JAKARTA, AUGUST 31

INDONESIAN POLITICAL parties have agreed to cut lawmakers' benefits. President Prabowo Subianto said on Sunday, in a bid to calm anti-government protests that have killed at least five people in the country's worst violence in decades.

Thousands of protesters in several major Indonesian cities have been rallying since Monday in response to the country's increasing cost of living and rising unemployment rate. Protesters demanded that the government cancel the high monthly housing allowances that lawmakers received, which many in the country see as lavish. The protests escalated into riots on Friday after a motorcycle rideshare driver was killed during police action at a protest site. Homes of political party members and state buildings were ransacked or set ablaze in the Southeast Asian economy.

Hardest hit was the port city of Chornomorsk, just outside Odesa, where residential houses and administrative buildings were also damaged, said Oleh Kiper, the governor of the Odesa region. "Critical infrastructure is operating on generators," Kiper said on the Telegram messaging app. One person was injured in the attack, he said. The DTEK power company said emergency repair work would begin as soon as the military gave it the all-clear.

Prabowo said he had ordered the military and police to take stern action against rioters and looters. He said some of the unrest

EXPLAINED E Challenge to President

Until recently, Indonesia was one of Southeast Asia's most stable economies. The public has now grown frustrated with rising prices and worsening unemployment, and President Prabowo's decision to cut budgets to fund his flagship programs. The protesters were especially infuriated by the monthly housing allowances for lawmakers, almost 10 times what a minimum-wage worker in Jakarta could make in the same time.

bore the signs of terrorism and treason. "Leaders...have conveyed that they will revoke a number of parliament policies, including the size of allowances for members of parliament and a moratorium on overseas work trips," he said.

Many ministers and political leaders arriving at the palace used civilian number plates instead of special ones given to officials, a witness said, in an apparent security measure as unrest simmered in some places. The military was deployed to guard the palace on top of the secret service detail.

REUTERS WITH NYT INPUTS

Ukraine plans new strikes deep into Russia

Attack on Ukraine power facilities in multiple areas leave 60,000 without electricity

PAVEL POLITYUK
KYIV, AUGUST 31

RUSSIAN DRONE attacks on power facilities in northern and southern Ukraine overnight left nearly 60,000 customers without electricity, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowing to retaliate by ordering more strikes deep inside Russia.

Three and a half years into the war, Russia and Ukraine have both intensified airstrikes in recent weeks. Russia has targeted Ukraine's energy and transport systems, while Ukraine has been attacking Russian oil refineries and pipelines.

"We will continue our active operations in exactly the way needed for Ukraine's defence. The forces and resources are pre-



The funeral of a Ukrainian woman and her 2-yr-old daughter killed in a Russian missile attack in Kyiv, on Sunday. Reuters

pared. New deep strikes have also been planned," Zelenskyy said on Sunday after meeting Ukraine's

top general, Oleksandr Syrsky, without giving further details of the plans.

Chicago mayor defies Trump's immigration crackdown plan

MARGERY A BECK
AUGUST 31



I don't take orders from the federal government, says Mayor Brandon Johnson. File

THE MAYOR of Chicago pushed back Saturday against what he called the "out-of-control" Trump administration's plan to surge federal officers into the nation's third-largest city, which could take place within days.

The Chicago Police Department will be barred from helping federal authorities with civil immigration enforcement or any related patrols, traffic stops and checkpoints during the surge, according to an executive order signed by Mayor Brandon Johnson. The mayor directed all

When asked about federal agents who are presumably "taking orders," Johnson replied: "Yeah, and I don't take orders from the federal government."

Johnson also blocked Chicago police from wearing face coverings to hide their identities, as most federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers have adopted since the Trump administration took charge this year.

The federal surge into Chicago could start as early as Sept. 5 and last about 30 days, according to two U.S. officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss plans that had not been made public. AP

US to rename defence dept as Department of War: WSJ report

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, AUGUST 31

THE TRUMP administration is advancing plans to rename the Department of Defense as the Department of War, the Wall Street Journal reported Saturday, citing a White House official, after US President Donald Trump raised the prospect Monday.

Restoring the Department of War name for the government's largest department would likely require congressional action, but the White House is exploring alternative methods to implement the change, the report said.

Republican Representative



A 1949 amendment changed the name Dept of War into Dept of Defense. File

Greg Steube of Florida filed an amendment to the annual defense policy bill that would change the name of the department, indicating some Republican support in Congress. The White

House underscored Trump's comments this week emphasizing the military's offensive capabilities. Trump raised the idea while speaking with reporters in the Oval Office Monday, saying it just sounded to me better."

The War Department became the Department of Defense through a gradual process, beginning with the National Security Act of 1947, which unified the Army, Navy, and Air Force under a single organization called the National Military Establishment.

An amendment to the law passed in 1949 officially introduced the name "Department of Defense," establishing the structure in place today.

is no Nazi connection at all. Von Rosen, an aristocratic explorer and ethnographer, was the brother-in-law of Hermann Goering, a decorated World War I German fighter pilot who became an early Nazi Party member. Goering went on to lead Germany's Luftwaffe during World War II under Hitler.

New flags — featuring an eagle — will be published when the work has been completed and the flags are introduced into use for events like parades, the Defense Forces said, without saying when that would happen.

MODI: AFTER DISENGAGEMENT,
atmosphere of stability, peace in place**XI: DANCING OF DRAGON AND**
elephant right choice for both**INDIA, CHINA TIES SHOULD NOT**
be seen through 3rd country lens: MEA

'Partners, not rivals': India & China

Committed
to improving
ties based on
mutual trust,
respect: PM

EXPRESS ATSCO

SHUBHAJIT ROY
TIANJIN, AUGUST 31

UNDERLINING THE move to repair bilateral ties – after a five-year military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh – Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasised on Sunday that the two countries were “partners, not rivals”, marking an important shift in India’s position on China as both sides work towards gradual normalisation.

The two leaders met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit here – this is Modi’s first visit to China in seven years. The two sides agreed on a “fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable resolution” of the border issue, and flagged the importance of a multipolar world, free trade and “role of their two economies to stabilise world trade,” the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

The meeting – their second in the last 10 months – comes in the backdrop of the deepening trust deficit between India and the United States over the 50 per cent tariffs imposed by the Donald Trump administration.

Significantly, the MEA said Modi noted that “India and China both pursue strategic autonomy, and their relations should not be seen through a third country lens.” Xi said the two countries should strengthen “multilateral cooperation to safeguard common interests”, and should “not let the border issue define the overall China-India relationship”, according to CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit in Tianjin, China, on Sunday. PTI

Trump heat, Tokyo-Tianjin warmth:
Modi begins to rejig power relationsCRAJA MOHAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

IN BARELY three days, India has set in motion a significant diplomatic effort to rearrange its great-power relations amid the turbulence unleashed over the last six months by US President Donald Trump.

Tokyo and Tianjin, two cities Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited in the last few days, could not be more different, geopolitically. Tokyo, the capital of Japan,

has been one of Washington’s closest allies since the Second World War. Tianjin, a port city that once served imperial Beijing, now represents China’s rise as a challenger to American primacy in Asia and beyond.

That India has simultaneously deepened ties with Japan and accelerated re-engagement with China – two Asian great powers with little strategic convergence – is not so much a tes-

tament to Delhi’s diplomatic “magic touch” as it is to the ripple effects of Trump’s dramatic reorientation of US policy.

In Tokyo, Modi signed a raft of agreements to intensify commercial, technological, security and human-resource cooperation with Japan. In Beijing, Modi and Xi Jinping agreed to consolidate commitments to end the five-year chill in bilateral ties, stabilise CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



INSIDE

MODI-PUTIN MEET
TODAY, FIRST SINCE
TRUMP LEVIED 50%
TARIFF ON INDIA P 5

In 2 readouts, a message and a signal: ‘Strategic autonomy, fair trade’

Delhi flags border thaw as key, Beijing’s refrain: Don’t let issue define overall ties

SHUBHAJIT ROY
TIANJIN, AUGUST 31

IN PRIME Minister Narendra Modi’s first visit to China in the shadow of the border stand-off and the deepening chill in the US, both countries have displayed one of their deepest convergences as they work towards repairing ties and regaining trust.

At the same time, it was evident that on the border issue,

there is some divergence, and that Modi’s meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping – their 21st since 2014 – was in the backdrop of strained ties with the US.

A detailed analysis of both readouts is telling.

First, India underlined that Modi and Xi framed the two countries as “development partners and not rivals.” This was echoed in the Chinese readout:

“As long as they remain CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Finance Committee (EFC), a central body under the Ministry of Finance that appraises government schemes and projects.

Once cleared by the EFC, the MHA will move a proposal for the approval of the Union Cabinet.

The amount sought is for both phases of the Census: the houselisting operation that will be conducted from April to September 2026, and population enumeration that is scheduled to begin in February 2027 in the entire country, except for Ladakh, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPRESS NETWORK

MAGSAYSAY FOR
INDIAN NGO WORKING
TO EDUCATE GIRLS
WHO DROP OUT PAGE 6LIFE TERM, ₹50 LAKH
FINE IN RAJASTHAN’S
ANTI-CONVERSION
BILL PAGE 10

Behind talks table, how border tensions cooled down over a year

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

MEETING IN China after seven years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping pointed to a clear improvement in the situation along the border. Their remarks in this regard at the bilateral meeting Sunday in Tianjin marked the culmination of spadework spanning more CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BORDER MILESTONES

OCTOBER 2024: Border patrol deal restores pre-2020 rights in sensitive areas like Depsang Plains and Demchok.

JUNE 2025: At Defence Ministers’ meeting, India seeks “structured road-map” for better border management.

AUGUST 2025: 24th round of boundary talks held with Chinese FM Wang Yi’s visit; focus on easing tensions, boosting economic ties and addressing India’s concerns over Chinese export curbs. Both pledge to maintain ‘peace and tranquility’ along the LAC.

IMD: Above normal rain in Sept, landslides likely in Uttarakhand, Himachal

ANJALI MARAR
& SOPHYA MATHEW
PUNE, NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

EVEN AS parts of the country, especially in the north, are reeling under heavy rainfall, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday said September was likely to see above-normal rainfall, and warned of landslides and flash floods in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Stranded, Punjab flood victims say won’t leave homes, livestock behind

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, AUGUST 31

RANJIT KAUR and her family have been living on their rooftop for the past three days. Their home in Lal Singh Wala village of Ajnala in Punjab has been submerged by floodwaters. Their two children have been sent to relatives’ homes in “safer locations”. But, speaking to The Indian Express over phone, Ranjit said she and her husband won’t leave. “Even if we get the opportunity to evacuate, we won’t... I have only one buffalo, and this is my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

A Kerala farmer’s fight to preserve wetlands stalls billionaire’s mall plan



TN Mukundan (left) has moved HC, claiming that the land in Thrissur district, on which UAE-based M A Yusuff Ali’s Lulu Group wants to build a mall, is a paddy field

wetlands in the state.

TN Mukundan’s legal battle came to light after Yusuff Ali said

at an event last Sunday that his plan to build a shopping mall in Thrissur was yet to materialise

after “one party” moved a case against it in the High Court. Although Yusuff Ali did not mention the name of the party, Mukundan came out saying that the Communist Party of India (CPI), of which he is a member, has no role in the case. For him, it has been a lonely fight for the conservation of paddy fields.

The crux of the legal battle between the billionaire businessman and the Thrissur-based farmer is over the question of whether the land at Ayyanthole village, where the Lulu Group CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Transform Your
Career with AI-Powered

MBA

Programs Offered —

MBA IMPACT

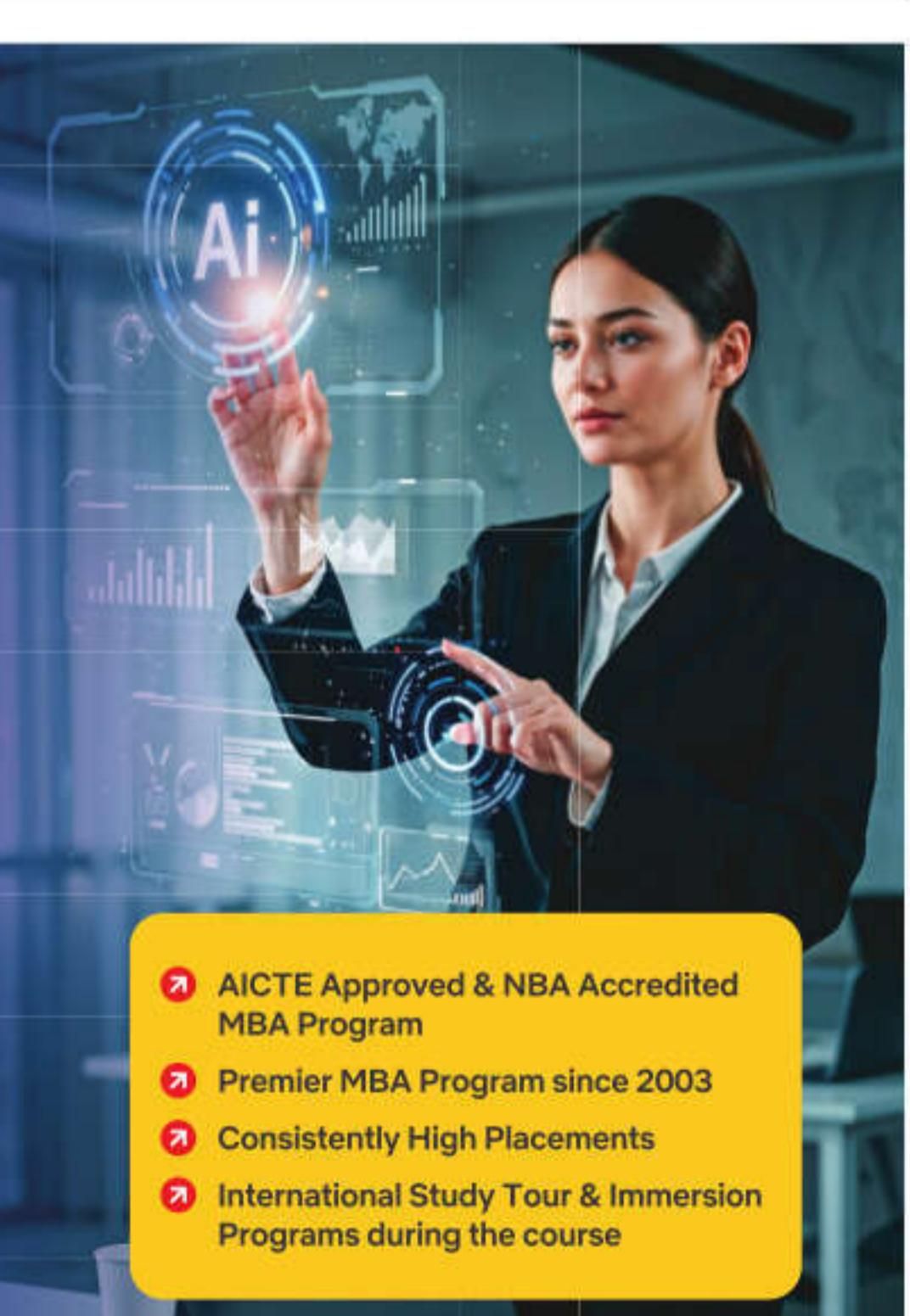
Intensive Management Program for Achieving Creative Transformation

MBA Artificial Intelligence & Data Science

MBA Hospital Administration with Live Internship at Graphic Era Hospital

MBA Digital Marketing

MBA Aviation Management

Other Specializations:
Marketing, Human Resource, Finance, Logistics & Supply Chain Management

- Hands-on exposure to AI led data processing, dashboarding and reporting
- Exclusive Access to specialist GenAI and AI Led Management Reporting courses on AWS Skill Builder and Coursera
- Access to country leading GenAI resources & Centres of Excellence on campus

- AI Integrated curriculum as per modern day needs in all specialisations
- Special In-House In-Person Generative AI and Data Science Executive Development Programs mandated during course of study

nirf 52 in University Category

52 in Engineering Category

59 in Management Category

NAAC A+ Grade Accredited

**Graphic Era**
deemed to be University
DEHRADUN

Campus: Clement Town, Dehradun, Uttarakhand - 248002

1800 890 6027 www.geu.ac.in

Delhi Admission Centre: B-6/11, Lower Ground Floor, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi
Mobile No.: +91 95605 90475, +91 70423 88473, +91 92052 11685

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Committed to improving ties based on mutual trust'

a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement.

Later, asked if the US tariffs issue was discussed, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said the focus was on bilateral domain, but the international trade situation did come up.

The bilateral meeting lasted for about an hour. Modi and Xi last met on the sidelines of the BRICS leaders' summit in Russia's Kazan last October, when their talks resulted in disengagement of troops from two key friction points in eastern Ladakh.

"Last year in Kazan, we had very productive discussions, which gave a positive direction to our relations," Modi told Xi on Sunday. "After the disengagement at the border, an atmosphere of peace and stability is now in place," he said. This is an important assessment of the current situation, where 50,000 to 60,000 troops are still deployed along the LAC. "We are committed to advancing our relations based on mutual trust, respect, and sensitivity," Modi said.

Asked about the framing of India and China as partners, not rivals, Misri later said: "This is the framing of the relationship... both leaders have done this framing... this is what is desired, and this is what they see as the future of the relationship as well... What they have framed for the medium to long-term future of the relationship, which is that we should try being two large neighbours... that the future that we should aspire to... is one of partnership and not one of rivalry."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry statement quoted Xi as saying that

"being good-neighbourly friends and partners for mutual success, and achieving a 'Dancing of the Dragon and the Elephant' should be the right choice for both China and India". According to the statement, Xi said "last year's successful meeting in Kazan marked the restart of China-India relations, with exchanges and cooperation between the two countries making continuous progress".

"Our Special Representatives have also reached an agreement on border management," Modi said, referring to the two meetings between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister and Politburo member Wang Yi in December last year and August this year. Underlining the steps taken towards stabilisation of ties, he said: "The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra has resumed. Direct flights are also being resumed between the two countries." This is the first time that the PM has announced the resumption of direct flights. "Our cooperation is linked to the interests of 2.8 billion people of our two countries. This will also pave the way for the welfare of all humanity," he said.

"Had a fruitful meeting... We reviewed the positive momentum in India-China relations since our last meeting in Kazan. We agreed on the importance of maintaining peace and tranquility in border areas and reaffirmed our commitment to cooperation based on mutual respect, mutual interest and mutual sensitivity," Modi posted on X after his bilateral meeting at noon.

Modi was accompanied by Doval and Misri; External Affairs

Minister S Jaishankar was not present as he had some "personal issues", sources said. Xi was accompanied by Wang Yi.

The two leaders also met later in the evening at the banquet hosted by Xi for the SCO leaders.

"China and India, two ancient Eastern civilisations, are the world's two most populous countries, and important members of the Global South... Being good-neighbourly friends and partners for mutual success, and achieving a 'Dancing of the Dragon and the Elephant' should be the right choice for both China and India,"

Xi was quoted as saying by the Chinese Foreign Ministry. "First, they should strengthen strategic communication and deepen mutual trust. As long as they remain committed to the overarching principle of being partners, not rivals, and providing development opportunities, not threats, for each other, China-India relations will flourish and move forward steadily," Xi was quoted as saying.

"Second, they should expand exchanges and cooperation to achieve mutual benefit and win-win results... Third, they should accommodate each other's concerns and uphold harmonious coexistence. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, advocated by the older generation of leaders of China and India over 70 years ago, must be cherished and promoted. They should work together to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas and not let the border issue define the overall China-India relationship," he said.

"Fourth, they should

strengthen multilateral cooperation to safeguard common interests. We must jointly demonstrate historical responsibility, uphold multilateralism, strengthen communication and cooperation on major international and regional issues, defend international fairness and justice, work together to promote a multipolar world and the democratisation of international relations, and make due contributions to maintaining peace and prosperity in Asia and the world," he said.

In its statement, the MEA said: "Both leaders welcomed the positive momentum and steady progress in bilateral relations since their last meeting in Kazan in October 2024. They reaffirmed that the two countries were development partners and not rivals, and that their differences should not turn into disputes. A stable relationship and cooperation between India and China and their 2.8 billion peoples on the basis of mutual respect, mutual interest and mutual sensitivity are necessary for the growth and development of the two countries, as well as for a multipolar world and a multi-polar Asia befitting the trends of the 21st century."

On the border situation, it said Modi "underlined the importance of peace and tranquility on the border areas for continued development of bilateral relations. The two leaders noted with satisfaction the successful disengagement last year and the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the border areas since then. They expressed commitment to a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable resolution of the boundary question proceeding from the political perspective of their overall bilateral relations and the long-term interests of the two peoples".

Listing the steps towards sta-

bilisation of ties, the two leaders noted the "need to strengthen people-to-people ties through direct flights and visa facilitation, building on the resumption of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and tourist visa," it said. On resuming direct flights, Misri later said the aviation authorities had met and would discuss the next steps.

"On economic and trade relations, they recognised the role of their two economies to stabilise world trade. They underlined the need to proceed from a political and strategic direction to expand bilateral trade and investment ties and reduce trade deficit," the MEA said, referring to the ballooning trade deficit. Misri also flagged the importance of the issue, and said the matter was raised by Modi.

Significantly, the MEA statement said Modi noted that "India and China both pursue strategic autonomy, and their relations should not be seen through a third country lens." This can be seen as an oblique reference to the United States. "The two leaders deemed it necessary to expand common ground on bilateral, regional and global issues and challenges, like terrorism and fair trade in multilateral platforms," it said.

Earlier, the Chinese envoy had said Beijing would support New Delhi on the imposition of tariffs by the US.

Modi expressed support for China's Presidency of the SCO, and also invited Xi to the BRICS Summit that India will be hosting in 2026, the MEA said.

The statement said Modi also had a meeting with Cai Qi, Member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China. Misri said that Cai had offered to host Modi for a dinner, but that could not take place because of the PM's schedule.

So much so, sources in the security establishment told this newspaper, there could even be a "slight" thinning of deployment at the border in the near future. At the same time, the sources cautioned, challenges persist due to the deep-rooted mistrust between both sides, especially when it comes to border militarisation.

According to sources, for more than a year, even before India reached a border patrol agreement with China last October, not a single case of even verbal friction had occurred between their forces, particularly in Eastern Ladakh.

According to sources, the next Census will be the first digital one as data will be collected through dedicated mobile applications developed for the purpose. The option to self-enumerate will also be provided to the public and caste data will also be captured electronically, sources said. On April 30, the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs had decided to include caste enumeration in the Census. It is learnt that the RGI is also developing a website, Census Monitoring & Monitoring System, for the real-time monitoring and management of the entire exercise.

More than 35 lakh enumerators and supervisors will be deployed to conduct the Census, which is over 30% higher (27 lakh) than the functionaries deployed to conduct the Census in 2011.

The Centre had notified on June 16 its intention to conduct the Census 2027. This is the first time that the decennial Census has been delayed by six years. In December 2019, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal to conduct the Census in 2021 for Rs 8,754.23 crore and update the National Population Register (NPR) for Rs 3,941.35 crore. The Census 2021 was also planned in two phases – houselisting operations from April to September 2020 and population enumeration from February 9 to 28, 2021 – but could not be conducted following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The decennial population Census has been conducted since 1972 without a break. The Census 2027 will be the 16th decadal Census overall and the eighth since Independence. During the exercise, village, town and ward-level population data on various parameters are collected. This includes data on housing conditions, amenities and assets, demography, religion, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, language, literacy and education, economic activity, migration, and fertility.

With hundreds of villages across eight districts of Punjab inundated since late August, at least 24 people have died, mostly in building collapses. According to officials, the flooding followed incessant rains in the catchment areas of Himachal Pradesh and J&K, compounded by the release of water from dams, such as Bhakra and Ranjit Sagar, which caused the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers to overflow and seasonal rivulets to swell.

Punjab witnessed floods in

2023 and 2019 but officials estimate that this is "one of the worst" swells along the Ravi

with water submerging villages in Gurdaspur, Pathankot,

Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur and Fazilka. Educational institutions across the state were closed on August 27, with the government later extending the shutdown until September 3.

● Modi begins to rejig India's major power relations

the boundary, lift restrictions on economic exchanges, and explore common ground on regional and global issues.

By turning up the heat on friends and foes alike, Trump is compelling Asian actors to recalibrate their relations. In riding roughshod over partners such as Australia, India, Japan and South Korea on trade, and by threatening to weaponise security ties, he has forced them both to strengthen bonds with one another and to reduce tensions with China.

Of course, differences on trade and security could, in principle, have been resolved through negotiation between Washington and its Asian allies. But Trump not only set impossible unilateral demands, but he also insisted on humiliating public concessions.

Having presided over a major expansion of India-US ties in his first term (2017–21), Trump has now let personal pique override sound judgement. His fury at Delhi's refusal to credit him with ending India-Pakistan hostilities in May—and to recommend him for the Nobel Peace Prize—spilled over into policy.

He responded with additional

tariffs on India and a vicious campaign against Modi personally. It is rare in modern diplomacy to see the leader of the world's most powerful nation allow personal resentments to drive strategy against a major partner to such an extent.

Many US allies fell into line. India did not.

Delhi avoided a public spat with Trump despite severe provocation but quietly resolved to resist pressure. This measured stance reflected a recognition of the US partnership's enduring importance for India's long-term security and prosperity.

Nor does India want to squander the political and diplomatic investments of the past 25 years in building that relationship. Yet the volatility of US policy under Trump—and the surprising new malice towards Delhi emanating from the White House—has forced India to take a deep breath and rebalance relations with other major powers, including China, Japan, Europe, and Russia.

Unsurprisingly, the Foreign Office, in its read-out of Modi's meeting with Xi today, highlighted Delhi's emphasis on "strategic autonomy".

Some assume India has rushed into Beijing's arms after being spurned by Washington. In fact, the cautious normalisation of ties with China began as early as October 2024, after months of painstaking negotiations. Still, there is no denying that Trump's bullying of allies and adversaries alike has altered the political context for both India and China.

Although Trump continues to tout the prospect of a "grand bargain" with Beijing, he insists it will be on American terms. The relentless pressure his administration has piled onto China across multiple domains means that Beijing is not yet taken in by his claims of special friendship with Xi.

China is keeping the door open for stronger ties with Washington based on political dignity and mutual benefit, deepening its partnership with Russia, reaching out to America's allies in Europe and Asia, and rebooting relations with its neighbours.

India, coming from a quite different starting point, is nonetheless headed in the same direction.

(C. Raja Mohan is a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express)

● Border tensions

than a year by India and China to dial down tensions—from avoiding aggressive drills and verbal exchanges to holding meetings almost every day at a key hotspot, The Indian Express has learnt.

The statement said Modi also had a meeting with Cai Qi, Member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China. Misri said that Cai had offered to host Modi for a dinner, but that could not take place because of the PM's schedule.

So much so, sources in the security establishment told this newspaper, there could even be a "slight" thinning of deployment at the border in the near future. At the same time, the sources cautioned, challenges persist due to the deep-rooted mistrust between both sides, especially when it comes to border militarisation.

According to sources, for more than a year, even before India reached a border patrol agreement with China last October, not a single case of even verbal friction had occurred between their forces, particularly in Eastern Ladakh.

Sources said that patrolling in disputed zones has continued uninterrupted. "Our traditional practice during patrolling when the two forces meet in disputed areas, is off the routine," said a security establishment officer. These drills mark a long-standing practice when forces from both sides show banners saying "Go Back" in each other's language when they meet in dis-

● Census

J&K, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, where it will be conducted in September 2026. During houselisting, details on housing conditions, household amenities, and assets possessed by the households will be collected.

According to sources, the next Census will be the first digital one as data will be collected through dedicated mobile applications developed for the purpose. The option to self-enumerate will also be provided to the public and caste data will also be captured electronically, sources said. On April 30, the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs had decided to include caste enumeration in the Census. It is learnt that the RGI is also developing a website, Census Monitoring & Monitoring System, for the real-time monitoring and management of the entire exercise.

More than 35 lakh enumerators and supervisors will be deployed to conduct the Census, which is over 30% higher (27 lakh) than the functionaries deployed to conduct the Census in 2011.

Similar scenes were playing out this weekend across Ajnala and Chak Aul nearby, less than 10 km from the India-Pakistan border—the two villages cut off, water lapping against homes on streets turned into rivers.

Families here were camping on terraces, keeping a watch on their belongings, fearful that thieves might loot what little is left.

With hundreds of villages across eight districts of Punjab inundated since late August, at least 24 people have died, mostly in building collapses. According to officials, the flooding followed incessant rains in the catchment areas of Himachal Pradesh and J&K, compounded by the release of water from dams, such as Bhakra and Ranjit Sagar, which caused the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers to overflow and seasonal rivulets to swell.

Punjab witnessed floods in 2023 and 2019 but officials estimate that this is "one of the worst" swells along the Ravi with water submerging villages in Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur and Fazilka. Educational institutions across the state were closed on August 27, with the government later extending the shutdown until September 3.

Local residents in Lal Singh Wala and Chak Aul said official relief supplies were yet to reach

their villages. "Our village got

its first assistance from Sikh

preachers in Guru Ka Bagh, who brought fodder for animals and rations for villagers. So far, no administration has reached us.

Maybe they will come tomorrow (Monday)," said Avatar Singh, sarpanch of Lal Singh Wala.

According to the sarpanch, the sudden surge of water left villagers with little time to prepare. "We could shift only some belongings to the upper floors," Avtar Singh said.

Despite appeals from the ad-

ministration, most residents like

Ranjit Kaur are unwilling to

evacuate. "Our area is notorious

for drug addicts. If we leave our

homes, they will loot whatever

remains. And it is impossible to

move livestock in such a hurry

— the water came too quickly,"

On Sunday, the state's Revenue, Rehabilitation and Disaster Management Minister Hardeep Singh Mundian said that so far 14,936 people have been evacuated to safer places from flood-affected areas across the state. The entire state machinery along with NDRF, SDRF, Army and Punjab Police personnel are working to safeguard property, he said.

Additional Chief Secretary and Financial Commissioner (Revenue) Anurag Verma said 3 lakh acres of land have been affected so far, impacting around 1.25 lakh people.

Local residents in Lal Singh Wala and Chak Aul said official relief supplies were yet to reach

their villages. "Our village got

its first assistance from Sikh

preachers in Guru Ka Bagh, who brought

fodder for animals and rations for

villagers. So far, no administration has reached us.

Maybe they will come tomorrow (Monday)," said Avatar Singh, sarpanch of Lal Singh Wala.

According to the sarpanch, the sudden surge of water left villagers with little time to prepare. "We could shift only some belongings to the upper floors," Avtar Singh said.

Despite appeals from the ad-

ministration, most residents like

Ranjit Kaur are unwilling to

evacuate. "Our area is notorious

for drug addicts. If we leave our

homes, they will loot whatever

remains. And it is impossible to

move livestock in such a hurry

— the water came too quickly," he said.

His legal fight has forced the state government to maintain the Agriculture Promotion Fund to protect and restore paddy fields. From 2008 to 2024, the state has collected Rs 1,510 crore as fees for converting paddy/wetlands. "The state had not deposited the amount with the Agriculture Promotion Fund, and instead, diverted the same into the Treasury for other purposes. Only Rs 6 lakh has been used for the restoration of paddy fields," he said.

In November last year, the Division Bench of the High Court ordered the government to transfer the Rs 1,510 crore to the Agriculture Promotion Fund in four instalments.

AFTER WETTEST AUGUST IN 15 YRS, IMD'S SEPTEMBER FORECAST

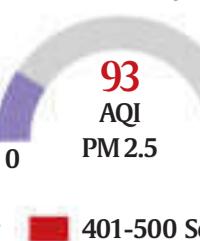
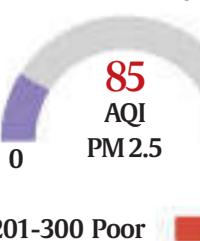
Delhi set to see above normal rain, cooler days and nights

SOPHIA MATHEW
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

AFTER WITNESSING the wettest August in 15 years, Delhi is set to see above normal rainfall in September too, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). As per the weather forecast, the Capital, which comes under the Northwest division of the country, could see below normal minimum temperatures in most parts in September even as the majority of the country is likely to experience normal to above normal minimum temperatures. The maximum temperatures are also expected to be below normal in Delhi.

The Met department's extended range forecast up to September 4 indicates above normal rainfall in Delhi and adjoining areas, including Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh. Heavy rain in September could also potentially lead to localised urban flooding in Delhi and adjoining areas, as well as trigger landslides and flash floods in other regions, according to the IMD, even as there is a lesser risk in plains.

In August, Northwest India topped all Met divisions in the country — East and Northeast India, Central India and South Peninsular India — as it logged 614.2 mm of rain against 484.9 mm, nearly 27% above normal. East and West Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Chandigarh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, West Rajasthan and East Rajasthan constitute the Northwest India division.



FORECAST: September 1
Generally cloudy, possibility of light to moderate or heavy rain with thunderstorms

MAX: 29-31
3.5°C below normal

MIN: 22-24
2.5°C below normal

IN AFTERMATH OF TRUMP TARIFFS

Fear of losing buyers and mass layoffs: Uncertainty looms for Noida textile units

SAMAN HUSAIN
NOIDA, AUGUST 31

"NOIDA – CITY of Apparel" — a mural, lit in neon pink during the evenings, greets the commuters crossing the Delhi–Noida Direct flyway everyday. It was installed in 2021 just days after the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, notified Noida as a "Town of Export Excellence" for apparel products. Just a few kilometres away, however, as one reaches the city's industrial cluster, a large number of apparel units are staring at losses, mass layoffs and uncertainties in the aftermath of tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump.

Exporters say that their production floors are unusually quiet — piles of stitched fabric waiting to be dispatched, sewing machines running at half capacity, and days are being spent not on getting new contracts but on anxious negotiation calls with American buyers.

"Before tariffs were increased to 50% on August 27, we had to ship goods to the United States at a 12% discount just to clear stock," said Lalit Thukral, President, Noida Apparel Export Cluster, and owner of Twenty Second Miles, a firm which employs around 5,000 workers. "But now with tariffs at 50%, new orders have stopped completely. Buyers are asking us if we can cut prices further. At this rate, we cannot survive. Noida's textile industry has been built over

HIGHLIGHTS IN NUMBERS

■ US accounts for nearly 35% of Indian apparel exports

■ India is the 4th largest supplier to the US

India's share of US apparel imports

2020 4.5%

2024 5.8%

Over 1,500 apparel units operating in Noida

Industry size in Noida: ₹50,000 cr



The mural at the DND. Gajendra Yadav

years of hard work — but if this continues then it can all be lost in a matter of months."

Anil Peshawari, Managing Director, Meenu Creations, which employs around 3,000 workers, echoed similar concerns of an uncertain future. "We don't know what will happen next, whether this is temporary or whether the US buyers will simply shift away to competing nations." His company supplies apparel to US retail chains like QVC and Coldwater Creek.

Peshawari added, "The US constitutes 17% of our turnover. If that disappears overnight, many small units will be unable to sustain ... Unlike Europe, which is fragmented with many small buyers, the US gives bulk orders... that is why this hit is so severe."

The numbers show the depth

of that dependence. India's apparel export industry is worth about 16 billion dollars or around Rs 14,10,36 crores — 5-5.5 billion dollars or 4,40,73 crores comes from the US. In Noida alone, the industry is valued at Rs. 50,000 crore, with nearly a quarter of that for the American market. Around 10 lakh people are directly and indirectly employed in this sector in Noida, and an estimated 60-70% of them are women. (see box)

"These are first-generation industrial workers," Thukral pointed out. "They may not have gone beyond Class 5 or 6 in school, but they have decades of skill in stitching, finishing, embroidery. If this crisis continues for two or three more months, a quarter of the factories here will shut down. That is lakhs of livelihoods gone — and imagine the social impact of that."

A senior HR manager at an apparel firm in the city, who did not wish to be named, said: "Some orders have been put on hold midway, others have been cancelled. If the fabric has only been purchased, it can be diverted elsewhere. But once it is cut according to the design, it becomes dead stock. Every day, it feels like the business is slipping away, if this continues then mass layoffs are inevitable."

The fear is not just about Noida's factories but also about India's place in the global supply chain — currently the country stands at fourth place. They are distributing orders to Bangladesh, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka. One business season is already lost. To bring buyers back will take two years. Once supply chains shift, they do not come back easily."

Thukral said,

Domestic challenges are growing. Faced with shrinking orders, Indian exporters are now undercutting each other to hold on to clients. "There is an order-snatching war within India itself. One exporter is taking away another's order by offering a 15 to 20% discount, even if it means suffering a loss. Everyone is desperate to hold on to buyers. The fear is that if you lose them once, they will never come back," Thukral said.

Meanwhile, looking at alternate markets, exporters said, is not as simple as it seems.

Industry leaders are urging immediate government intervention. "We appeal to the government to support us for the next four to six months," Thukral said.

"Interest subvention, tax-free loans — even 10% support can help us survive. This isn't like COVID, which was a long-term shutdown. This is a short, sharp shock. Even the US will eventually realise it cannot depend only on Bangladesh or Vietnam. But if our factories shut down, buyers will have no reason to return."

The crisis comes just as Noida has been trying to position itself as 'India's apparel Capital'. The city already has more than 1,500 units, and the government is planning an Apparel City Industrial Park, spread over 150-175 acres, to bring garment exporters together with modern facilities. For U, which has been promoting Noida as a centre for investment, the setback probably couldn't have come at a worse time.

"WE LIVE two lives at the same time, while men have to lead just one. It's not easy for a woman officer to manage both work and household responsibilities," says a woman inspector.

Herworts point to a stark disparity in the Delhi Police force in terms of the representation of women.

Delhi has 219 law and order police stations — out of a total of 225 stations — but only two women are Station House Officers (SHOs). Currently, Inspectors Vandana Rao and Vipresh head CR Park in South Delhi and Netaji Subhash Place under the Delhi Metro; the remaining 217 stations are led by men.

Meanwhile, looking at alternate markets, exporters said, is not as simple as it seems.

Industry leaders are urging immediate government intervention.

"We appeal to the government to support us for the next

'We lead two lives...': Women head only 3 of 225 police stations

ALOK SINGH
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

At Delhi Police headquarters. Abhinav Saha

when you also have to take care of your family," says the inspector quoted above. "It's not saying that men have it easier, but for us, it becomes more challenging... we have to manage the family, the police station, and also compete with our male counterparts," she adds.

An officer outlines the organisational structure of a police station: It consists of three inspectors — two handling investigations and one in charge of law and order.

Among the six other police stations in other units (apart from law and order), one has a woman SHO — Adith Lily Baxla, who heads the Special Police Unit for Women and Children (SPUWAC).

There are nearly 10,000 women personnel serving across ranks — from constables to commissioners (IPS rank) — making up only 10% of the total force, which numbers around a lakh. In higher ranks, six women are Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCP) as compared to 46 men. While 13 men are Special Commissioners, one woman has been appointed to the post.

The role of an SHO is challenging.

As the head of a police station, they are responsible for all law and order matters within their station's jurisdiction. It's a 24x7 job; they do not get any weekly or monthly days off.

"Serving in the force is a kind

of tapasya (devotion), especially

appointed nine women inspectors as SHOs in a single order — one of the most significant efforts to increase women's representation in SHO roles. However, some of these appointees later withdrew, writing to their seniors and citing various reasons for not continuing in the position.

Before this, the record for the most women SHOs was set in 1986, when five women served simultaneously.

"Women inspectors often don't come forward to show interest in becoming SHOs," a senior officer says. "The force needs to conduct motivational training to encourage them to take up the role."

According to former Delhi Police IPS officer Kiran Bedi, a systemic change could help.

"If you want more women to become SHOs in the Delhi Police, there needs to be a shift system. Men can work 24x7, often at the expense of their families, but women cannot," says Bedi.

"In Delhi, SHOs are not allowed to return home for weeks at a time. In our society, if a man stays away from home for weeks or even months, the family accepts it. But that is not the case with women," she adds.

After rules tightened, JNU sees surge in disciplinary action against students

VIDHEESA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

FINES OF up to Rs 20,000, suspension, or expulsion for demonstrations within 100 meters of academic or administrative buildings, and ban on protests outside the residence of university officials — the Chief Proctor Office Manual at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) had brought these and more rules in force in November 2023.

Since then, the number of disciplinary or proctorial enquiries initiated against students has gone up from just five in 2023 to 97 last year and 40 till July this year. The crisis comes just as Noida has been trying to position itself as 'India's apparel Capital'. The city already has more than 1,500 units, and the government is planning an Apparel City Industrial Park, spread over 150-175 acres, to bring garment exporters together with modern facilities. For U, which has been promoting Noida as a centre for investment, the setback probably couldn't have come at a worse time.

The significant surge last year came at a time when the JNU saw the formation of a student union after a gap of four years.

The manual, approved by the university's Executive Council on November 24, 2023, sets out "rules of discipline and proper conduct of students of JNU".

Under the rules, even organising a freshers' party, farewell or birthday event without permission can lead to Rs 6,000 fine or "compulsory community service".

Student leaders have alleged that the manual has become an

instrument of intimidation. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, JNU Student Union President Nitish Kumar said, "When students protest against sexual harassment, or water crisis on campus, they are slapped with proctorial inquiries and fines. When the union protested in March against the Dean of Students, at least 30 students were served inquiries."

"If a student is fined five times, the student will be expelled. We are asked to appeal, but nothing changes, no inquiry gets quashed," he stated, adding, "The culture of dissent is being attacked and politically active students are being fined to ensure that they do not participate in the student union elections."

According to official records accessed by *The Indian Express*, "no proctorial enquiries have been overturned or quashed. However, appeals filed by individual students against the fines or punishments imposed have been dismissed/fine waived off/fine reduced..."

Repeated calls, emails and messages to Chief Proctor N Janardhana Raju, Vice-Chancellor Pandit, and the university's media relations office went unanswered.

SOPHIYA MATHEW
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

ON A humid August day at MeiYu Chinese Centre in Delhi's Karol Bagh, a native Mandarin teacher, Claire Laoshi, guides a group of beginner-level students through simple sentences. "Wo he kafei," she says. "It means I drink coffee."

Ten students, mostly in their 20s, repeat it as she explains that adding 'le' turns the action into the past tense. "Next Saturday, when I ask you if you did the homework, you will say, 'Wo xie le (I wrote it)'," says Laoshi.

By the end of the lesson, the students — part of the HSK 1 (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi or Chinese Proficiency Test) batch at the centre — are familiar with simple greetings in Mandarin, a language steadily gaining popularity in the city among those seeking foreign scholarships and global career prospects.

According to data shared by the MeiYu centre, the learners come from a wide range of professional backgrounds: around 55% are corporate professionals, 25% are business owners from manufacturing and export sectors, and around 20% are university students or young professionals aiming to study or work abroad.

Students at MeiYu Chinese Language Centre in Karol Bagh. Express

Some like Princi Narang, among the centre's older students, were drawn to the language through social media and Chinese dramas.

A digital marketing professional, the 21-year-old says she started learning Mandarin in May 2023. "I became interested in the language because of short reels on Instagram and binge-watching Chinese dramas," she says.

Narang has since progressed to the HSK 4 level. "Initially, it was overwhelming — tones, characters, sentence structures... My sister's friends told me that Mandarin has great career opportunities, so it kept me motivated," she adds.

Learning the language has helped her secure the Huayu Enrichment Scholarship to study at Ming Chuan University, which she will join later this year.

At Han You Chinese Language Institute in South Delhi's Hauz Khas, batches are limited to 15-20 students. Co-founder Arun Jaiswal says that it is a deliberate choice as language learning requires a focused approach.

"People are fascinated, but ultimately, they approach it from a career perspective... Chinese is a highly practical language and can be very rewarding, offering excellent salary packages," says

Jaiswal.

Earlier, job opportunities for those proficient in Mandarin were largely thought to be limited to the tourism industry. But now, Jaiswal notes, the scope has expanded to include roles such as interpreters, translators, positions in multinational companies, travel industry, embassies and diplomatic missions, as well as government-linked posts.

The institute itself has come a long way from when it started with six students in 2018. "Over the years, we evolved, added courses, and adjusted to student needs," Jaiswal says.

Many college students are also choosing Mandarin over traditionally popular options like French and German.

At Delhi University(DU), Prof Payal Maggo, Director of the School of Open Learning (SOL), points to a university-led survey.

"Before introducing certificate courses in foreign languages at SOL, we conducted a survey and found a rising interest in Mandarin, apart from French and German," she says.

"This year at SOL, we found around 2,000 students were interested and 800 have already taken admission for this course. We are teaching French, German, Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, and Italian. The turnout, however, was very

low for Portuguese and Russian," she adds.

Maggo says students are driven by both career and academic goals. "Many are exploring job prospects and study-abroad opportunities through foreign languages, while others take it up out of personal interest. Mandarin has gained popularity at DU, particularly because of the growing demand for translators in corporate firms. We've introduced it from the first year."

As per the MeiYu centre, pre-Covid, students were mostly from academic and tourism fields. After the pandemic, there has been a sharp increase in corporate learners preparing for East Asian markets.

A faculty from the centre says, "Taiwan is currently offering fully-funded scholarships for Indian students, especially in fields like MBA, IT and engineering. With the India-Taiwan labour exchange growing and Taiwanese companies looking for skilled professionals, Mandarin proficiency is becoming a real advantage."

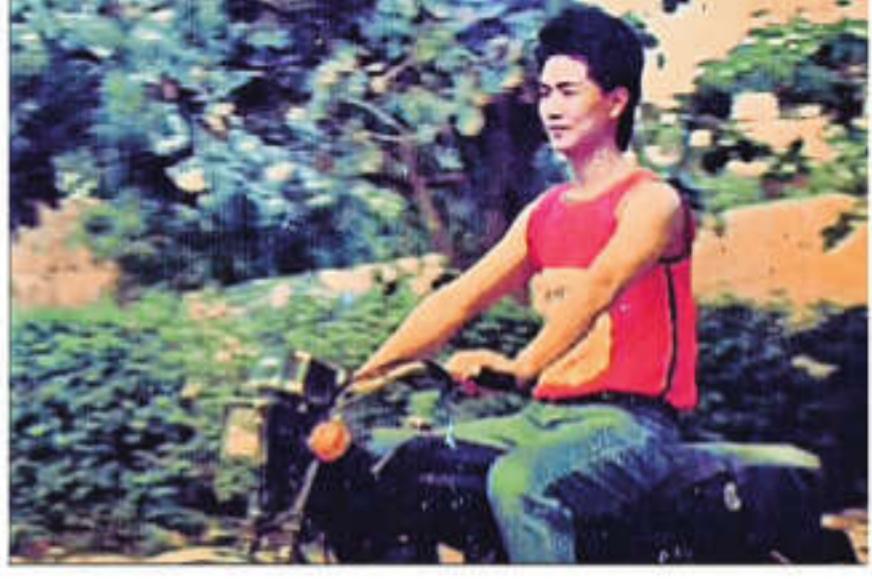
Corporate demand has been another key driver. The MeiYu centre reports that over the past few years, corporate firms have approached the institute for customised training programmes for their employees.

My Delhi
Ambassadors on this city - their home

HE REUBEN GAUCI
HIGH COMMISSIONER OF MALTA



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



SCENES FROM MEMORY

AFTER AN X user posted a photograph of a young Kiren Rijiju, complimenting his looks, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister on Sunday responded with a montage of images from his younger days. It showed, among other things, Rijiju riding a bike (image above), reading a magazine in a garden, drinking Campa Cola, sitting on a window sill and holding a mic in front of a crowd. In the background ran the Lata Mangeshkar song "Guzra hua zamana, aata nahin dobara".

BIRTHDAY EVENT

ON SUNDAY, Union Minister Bhupender Yadav and RSS leader Dattatreya Hosabale attended an event to celebrate the 18th birthday of the son of Kumar Kapileshwar Singh, who belongs to the family of the erstwhile king of Darbhanga. An audio clip played at the event said the Darbhanga rulers had donated 1.17 lakh acres for the Bhoodan movement and ₹5 lakh to help set up Banaras Hindu University.



Leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, including PM Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin, with Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan before a welcome banquet in Tianjin on Sunday. AP

Modi, Putin to meet today in shadow of Trump's oil tariff



SHUBHAJIT ROY
TIANJIN, AUGUST 31

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi is set to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday for the first time since the US penalised India for buying Russian oil.

Putin met US President Donald Trump in Alaska earlier this month. He has spoken to Modi twice in August – once before and again after meeting the US President. In the meantime, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also spoke to Modi.

The meeting between Modi and Putin is significant since

Trump has taken exception to India's purchase of Russian oil and levied an extra 25 per cent tariff on top of the reciprocal tariff of 25 per cent. India has said it has been singled out.

Asked about the Putin meeting, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said: "I would, at this stage, not preempt the conversation that is going to take place tomorrow afternoon." Around 45 minutes have been kept aside for the meeting.

As PM Modi reached Tianjin for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, Ukraine's Zelenskyy spoke to him and said "the end of this (Ukraine) war must begin with an immediate ceasefire".

Zelenskyy also said that "India is ready to make the necessary efforts and to deliver the appropriate signal to Russia and other leaders" at the summit.

He shared his perspective on the recent developments related to Ukraine, said a statement, in

EXPLAINED Meet comes amid US pressure

MODI AND PUTIN have been in touch with each other since the war in Ukraine started. But the situation has reached a critical juncture where India is being penalised by the US for buying oil from Russia. The Modi-Putin meeting will look at how to negotiate the issue at a time when US President Trump has taken a hard line on India. This will be Modi's third conversation in a month with Putin.

On August 18, three days after he met Trump in Alaska, Putin had also called up Modi and "shared his insights" on the meeting. On August 9, in the run-up to the Alaska talks amid the strain in Delhi's ties with Washington, Modi and Putin had a phone conversation during which they discussed "the latest developments on Ukraine" and reaffirmed their "commitment to further deepen the India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership".

Russia had criticised Trump's tariff action and backed India's right to choose its trading partners.

Peter Navarro, Trump's trade advisor, has described the Russia-Ukraine war as "Modi's war", and said "the road to peace runs, at least partly, right through New Delhi", adding, "everybody in America loses because of what India is doing".

India has maintained a firm stand on its autonomy. Putin is set to visit India in December.

the wake of Putin and Trump's August 15 meeting in Alaska, and Trump's subsequent meeting with Zelenskyy and other European leaders in Washington.

Zero tolerance for terror no more a slogan, PM implemented it: Shah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, AUGUST 31

IN THE last 11 years, "zero tolerance against terrorism" has not remained simply a slogan but been implemented on the ground by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Gandhinagar on Sunday.

He said that it has been well established that no mischief can be done with India's Army and its border. Shah was speaking after inaugurating a new consolidated emergency helpline service, 112, and developmental projects of the Gujarat Police.

Shah claimed previous Congress governments would not utter a word against Pakistan



Union Home Minister Amit Shah at a tree plantation event in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Bhupendra Rana

BJP leader seeks fatwa against man who made remarks against PM from stage

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

A BJP leader has written to the Darul Uloom Deoband seeking a fatwa against a man who allegedly used indecent language against Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week during Rahul Gandhi's Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar.

Terming it "a matter of grave concern and sensitivity", BJP Minority Morcha national president Jamal Siddiqui said Islam accords the highest respect to elderly parents and that the comments made at an INDIA bloc rally in Bihar's Darbhanga by Mohammad Rizvi, who has seen been arrested and sent to 14 days' judicial custody, tarnished the image of the community.

A letter to Maulana Abdullah Mujahid Siddiqui, principal of the Uttar Pradesh-based seminary, said Rizvi made "extremely derogatory and indecent remarks" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother during Gandhi's campaign centred on his allegations of vote theft.

The BJP had got an FIR registered in the matter, which had also triggered clashes between the cadres of the party and the Congress-RJD. The Opposition INDIA bloc in the state has denied Rizvi's affiliation with it.

RAHUL'S BIHAR YATRA CONCLUDES TODAY

Cong says it raised 89 lakh objections during SIR; poll panel rejects claim



A cutout of Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi being erected at Patna's Gandhi Maidan on Sunday. PTI

with a march from Gandhi Maidan to the Income Tax Square.

Meanwhile, the EC has listed four reasons for deleting names from draft rolls. While migration was cited to take off 25 lakh names, another 22 lakh were proclaimed dead. A total of 9.7 lakh voters were absent at the provided address while 7 lakh voters were taken off the rolls for being registered at multiple booths.

According to Khera, 75% of the deleted voters were proclaimed dead in 7,931 booths.

"Fifty deleted voters in each of the 5,239 booths were marked absent. The high number of migrated and deceased voters have a suspicious pattern," he added.

On his party's "investigation", Khera said, "In 7,613 booths, 70% of deleted voters were women while in 635 booths, women made up 75% of those deleted citing migration. This suggests women voters were being targeted."

Bihar CEO Vinod Singh Gunjiali dismissed the allegations. "Over the last 1-2 days, district presidents of Congress have written to DEOs over deletion of voters from electoral rolls. Under rule 13 of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, objections may be given only in Form 7, or BLAs appointed by political parties for separate forms for each voter. The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) seems to be pressured into not accepting complaints from political parties," Congress's media cell chairman Pawan Khera said.

The EC said Congress had not raised any objections. In a press statement, the EC said that it had received only 128 complaints, of which 118 and 10 were filed by CPI(ML)L and RJD respectively.

"Till date, no BLA authorised by any district president of Congress in Bihar has submitted any claim

(Form 6) or objection (Form 7) on any name in the draft electoral rolls published on September 1 in the prescribed format," it read.

Escalating allegations of "vote theft" levelled by LS Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Congress had started its Voter Adhikar Yatra on August 17 from Rohtas district and at various points, several INDIA bloc leaders from other states like Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin, Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav took part. After traversing through 25 of the state's 38 districts, the yatra is set to culminate Monday in Patna

on the process of deletion of about 89 lakh voters, at his discretion."

Convoy of MP Cong's chief pelted with stones

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, AUGUST 31

MADHYA PRADESH Congress president Jitu Patwari's vehicle came under attack by stone-pelting protesters in Ratlam district on Sunday, following which he said he was attacked for raising his voice against rising drug abuse in the state.

"If you can kill me and stop drug abuse, then please have me murdered," he said, addressing Chief Minister Mohan Yadav.

However, the BJP said the incident took place amid a protest organised by members of the Dhakad community, who were angry at Patwari's use of "abusive language" that they found objectionable.

The protesters showed black flags to the Congress leader's convoy and pelted stones at his vehicle. While Patwari escaped unharmed, his car's rear windshield was shattered in the attack.

Patwari tried to calm tempers and tried to speak to some of the protesters.

After FIR for Shah remark, BJP targets Mahua for 'insulting' Matuas



TANUSREE BOSE & JAYPRAKASH NAIDU
KOLKATA, RAIPUR, AUGUST 31

gious sentiments of Sanatanis".

The TMC MP hit back, saying Sanatan Dharma has been "leased out" to BJP so that the party could "peddle" it for its benefit. "BJP leaders are the only Hindus certified to speak on behalf of all Hindus. Sanatan Dharma has been leased out to them for an indefinite period, and they, in turn, can peddle it for their benefit."

As different parts of the country celebrate Ganesh festival, and Durga Puja and Diwali approach, people should never forget about made-in-India products, be it in purchasing gifts, clothes, decor items or anything else, he said.

The PM began his address by noting the recent floods and landslides. He acknowledged the role of the security forces in the rescue efforts, along with the use of technologies such as thermal cameras, life detectors, sniffer dogs and drone surveillance.

He said: "During the last few weeks, we have witnessed grave devastation caused by floods and landslides. At places, homes were destroyed; at others, fields were submerged; families were ruined en masse. Elsewhere, bridges were swept away amid

He said: "The TMC MP Mahua Moitra was booked in Chhattisgarh over alleged remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP's West Bengal unit Sunday accused the Krishnanagar MP of "insulting" the Scheduled Caste Matua community and "hurting the reli-

boths, when the ballot boxes are opened, it is 85 votes for BJP and 15 for other parties. Wearing wooden malas, all come to collect government doles, all have Swasthya Sathi cards and take Laxmi Bhandar benefits, but during the election, it's the BJP."

BJP's state legal co-incharge Tarunjioti Tiwari accused Moitra of hurting sentiments by allegedly calling "Tulsi Mala" "wooden malas". "This makes it clear TMC is against Hindus."

out; second time, it was an air strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

out; second time, it was an air

strike. And the third time, Operation Sindoor was launched 100km inside Pakistan border, and the headquarters of terrorists were destroyed..." he said.

TWO ACCUSED ARE RESIDENTS OF GAYA**Jabalpur bank heist accused held in Bihar with 3 kg stolen gold****HIMANSHU HARSH**
PATNA, AUGUST 31

THE SPECIAL Task Force of the Bihar Police on Sunday arrested two men allegedly wanted in connection with an armed bank robbery in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district earlier this month. Police also recovered over 3 kg of gold jewellery.

Additional Director General of Bihar Police (Headquarters and Operations) Kundan Krishnan said, "On August 11, unidentified armed assailants looted 14.873 kilograms of gold jewellery, along with cash exceeding Rs 5 lakh, from the Khitola branch of ESAF Bank in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh."

Following the incident, inputs regarding the suspects' presence in Bihar had been communicated to the police in Bihar. "A dedicated team was constituted under the Bank and Jewellery Cell of the Bihar STF, led by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Anand Kumar. The team, in coordination with the Jabalpur police, gathered intelligence and identified those involved. With assistance from the

Special Operations Group, SWAT, District Intelligence Unit and other units, targeted raids were carried out in Gaya, leading to the arrests of two suspects," said ADG Krishnan.

The arrested men have been identified as Rajesh Das, alias Akash Das, and Indrajit Das, alias Sagar — both residents of Bihar's Gaya district.

The ADG said that Rajesh Das has an extensive criminal history, with alleged involvement in over a dozen cases across Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha, including serious those involving serious charges such as dacoity, attempted murder, possession of illegal arms, and assault on public servants.

"During interrogation, both accused admitted to involvement in the Jabalpur heist, leading to the recovery of 3,112 kilograms of the stolen gold jewellery, estimated to be worth over Rs 3 crore," ADG Krishnan said, adding that further action regarding the accused and the recovered property is being taken by Jabalpur police.

The Bihar STF is making further efforts to identify and trace other individuals involved in the incident, officials said.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER**BORDER SECURITY FORCE**

HC KHUNIO SEMA 20.11.1934 - 01.09.1989	L/NAIK T KHEHUTO SEMA 15.10.1956 - 01.09.1989	CT BIRENDRA NATH NANDI 04.03.1966 - 01.09.1989	CT HARENDR A CHANDRA NATH 29.01.1965 - 01.09.1989	

ASI KAMALJEET SINGH 04.01.1967 - 01.09.2017	Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Subordinate Officer, Assistant Sub Inspector Kamaljeet Singh on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained serious bullet injuries in a fierce encounter with militants in area of CI Post "Lanya Bridge" (Manipur)	CT M L ROY 24.06.1964 - 01.09.1989	Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Subordinate Officer, Assistant Sub Inspector Kamaljeet Singh on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained serious bullet injuries in a fierce encounter with militants in area of CI Post "Lanya Bridge" (Manipur)	CT PRAMOD KUMAR AZAD 25.06.1978 - 01.09.2017

CT KEHARI SINGH 04.12.1965 - 01.09.1988	Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable Kehari Singh on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained fatal bullet injuries in an encounter with militants in Gurdaspur area (Punjab) and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.	CT XAVIER KINDO, PMG 10.03.1970 - 01.09.2012	Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable Xavier Kindo on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he made supreme sacrifice in an IED blast triggered by Naxals in Koraput area (Odisha). His sacrifice has been aptly recognized by GOI by awarding him with Police Medal for Gallantry (Posthumously)

CT VEER BALIDANI 10-10-1988 To 1-9-2016	Director General and all Ranks of CRPF remember its valiant trooper Constable Sachin Kumar of 150 Bn, CRPF, who lost his life on September 1, 2016 while undergoing treatment in AIIMS, Delhi, after he was critically injured while disposing of an IED on August 26, 2016 in Sukma, Chhattisgarh. CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.	CT SACHIN KUMAR 150 Bn 10-10-1988 To 1-9-2016	

CT VEER BALIDANI Sub Inspector Ranbir Singh 40 Bn 3-11-1992 To 1-9-1980	Director General and all Ranks of CRPF remember its valiant troopers Sub Inspector Ranbir Singh and Constable Tikendra Kumar of 40 Bn, CRPF, who lost their lives on active duty due to sudden rise in water level of Sindh river in Kargil district in Jammu and Kashmir on September 1, 1980. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.	CT VEER BALIDANI Constable Tikendra Kumar 40 Bn 1-2-1996 To 1-9-1980	

CT VEER BALIDANI Head Constable Ranbir Singh 45 Bn 4-10-1994 To 1-9-1981	Director General and all Ranks of CRPF remember its 6 valiant troopers of 45 Bn, CRPF, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting with insurgents on September 1, 1981 in Manipur. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.	CT VEER BALIDANI Naik Dariy Singh 45 BN. 10-2-1945 To 1-9-1981	CT VEER BALIDANI Constable P. K. Vijayan 45 BN. 30-12-1947 To 1-9-1981

CT VEER BALIDANI Constable Raghbir Singh 45 BN. 19-10-1951 To 1-9-1981	Director General and all Ranks of CRPF remember its 6 valiant troopers of 45 Bn, CRPF, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting with insurgents on September 1, 1981 in Manipur. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.	CT VEER BALIDANI Constable Raghbir Singh 45 BN. 19-10-1951 To 1-9-1981	

Magsaysay for Indian NGO working to educate girls who drop out of school**PALLAVISMART**
MUMBAI, AUGUST 31

THE FOUNDATION to Educate Girls Globally, widely known as Educate Girls, an Indian non-profit working to bring out-of-school girls into classrooms, is among the 2025 Ramon Magsaysay awardees announced on Sunday.

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has made history as the first Indian organisation to receive the award, a statement from the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) said in Manila. It has been named for "its commitment to addressing cultural stereotyping through the education of girls and young women, liberating them from the bondage of illiteracy and infusing them with skills, courage and agency to achieve their full human potential," it said.

Starting with just two villages in Rajasthan in 2007, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, impacting the lives of more than two million girls over nearly two decades. But at the heart of this remarkable journey is a dream once held by a young girl who herself had dropped out of school due to personal hardship — Safeena Husain, the founder and board member of Educate Girls. Her return to education,

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has made history as the first Indian organisation to receive the award, a statement from the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) said in Manila. It has been named for "its commitment to addressing cultural stereotyping through the education of girls and young women, liberating them from the bondage of illiteracy and infusing them with skills, courage and agency to achieve their full human potential," it said.

Starting with just two villages in Rajasthan in 2007, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, impacting the lives of more than two million girls over nearly two decades. But at the heart of this remarkable journey is a dream once held by a young girl who herself had dropped out of school due to personal hardship — Safeena Husain, the founder and board member of Educate Girls. Her return to education,

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has made history as the first Indian organisation to receive the award, a statement from the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) said in Manila. It has been named for "its commitment to addressing cultural stereotyping through the education of girls and young women, liberating them from the bondage of illiteracy and infusing them with skills, courage and agency to achieve their full human potential," it said.

Starting with just two villages in Rajasthan in 2007, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, impacting the lives of more than two million girls over nearly two decades. But at the heart of this remarkable journey is a dream once held by a young girl who herself had dropped out of school due to personal hardship — Safeena Husain, the founder and board member of Educate Girls. Her return to education,

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has made history as the first Indian organisation to receive the award, a statement from the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) said in Manila. It has been named for "its commitment to addressing cultural stereotyping through the education of girls and young women, liberating them from the bondage of illiteracy and infusing them with skills, courage and agency to achieve their full human potential," it said.

Starting with just two villages in Rajasthan in 2007, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, impacting the lives of more than two million girls over nearly two decades. But at the heart of this remarkable journey is a dream once held by a young girl who herself had dropped out of school due to personal hardship — Safeena Husain, the founder and board member of Educate Girls. Her return to education,

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has made history as the first Indian organisation to receive the award, a statement from the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) said in Manila. It has been named for "its commitment to addressing cultural stereotyping through the education of girls and young women, liberating them from the bondage of illiteracy and infusing them with skills, courage and agency to achieve their full human potential," it said.

Starting with just two villages in Rajasthan in 2007, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, impacting the lives of more than two million girls over nearly two decades. But at the heart of this remarkable journey is a dream once held by a young girl who herself had dropped out of school due to personal hardship — Safeena Husain, the founder and board member of Educate Girls. Her return to education,

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has made history as the first Indian organisation to receive the award, a statement from the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) said in Manila. It has been named for "its commitment to addressing cultural stereotyping through the education of girls and young women, liberating them from the bondage of illiteracy and infusing them with skills, courage and agency to achieve their full human potential," it said.

Starting with just two villages in Rajasthan in 2007, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, impacting the lives of more than two million girls over nearly two decades. But at the heart of this remarkable journey is a dream once held by a young girl who herself had dropped out of school due to personal hardship — Safeena Husain, the founder and board member of Educate Girls. Her return to education,

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has made history as the first Indian organisation to receive the award, a statement from the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) said in Manila. It has been named for "its commitment to addressing cultural stereotyping through the education of girls and young women, liberating them from the bondage of illiteracy and infusing them with skills, courage and agency to achieve their full human potential," it said.

Starting with just two villages in Rajasthan in 2007, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, impacting the lives of more than two million girls over nearly two decades. But at the heart of this remarkable journey is a dream once held by a young girl who herself had dropped out of school due to personal hardship — Safeena Husain, the founder and board member of Educate Girls. Her return to education,

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has made history as the first Indian organisation to receive the award, a statement from the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) said in Manila. It has been named for "its commitment to addressing cultural stereotyping through the education of girls and young women, liberating them from the bondage of illiteracy and infusing them with skills, courage and agency to achieve their full human potential," it said.

Starting with just two villages in Rajasthan in 2007, the organisation has expanded to over 30,000 villages across India, impacting the lives of more than two million girls over nearly two decades. But at the heart of this remarkable journey is a dream once held by a young girl who herself had dropped out of school due to personal hardship — Safeena Husain, the founder and board member of Educate Girls. Her return to education,

and eventual graduation from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), was made possible by a timely push and encouragement — a turning point that shaped her life's mission and inspired a movement to ensure no girl is left behind.

Husain said she experienced first-hand the stigma faced by girls who are denied education. "I was told things like 'what will she do in life?' or that I should just be married off," she recalled.

Educate Girls has

BRIEFLY

JAMMU & KASHMIR
2 militants held in Poonch, AK rifles recovered: Police

Jammu: Two militants – identified as Triq Sheikh from Azamabad village and his aide Riyaz Ahmad (Chamber) – were apprehended, along with their weapons, in the border district of Poonch Sunday during a raid at the former's house, the J&K Police said. Later, the house of one of Sheikh's associates in Mandi Jallian village was raided and two AK rifles as well as ammunition were seized, police said. ENS

MANIPUR
TV journalist shot at while covering festival, 1 held

Imphal: A TV journalist of Nagaland-based news channel, Hornbill TV, sustained injuries late Saturday after being shot at while covering a flower festival in Lai village in Senapati. The journalist, Deep Saikia, received two injuries – one in the right thigh and another near his armpit, sources said Sunday, adding he was hit by air rifle pellets. Reports said locals subdued the attacker, Raiveni Ramei, and handed him over to police. Police said Saikia is undergoing treatment in Nagaland. ENS

KARNATAKA
Priest arrested for remarks against Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru: Police have arrested an assistant priest, Gururaj Achar, for criticising CM Siddaramaiah's decision to invite Booker Prize winner Banu Mustaq to inaugurate the upcoming Mysuru Dasara festival and allegedly using derogatory language against him while speaking to a YouTube news channel, an officer said. He has been suspended from his position, the Ganapathi temple run by Sri Raghavendra Swamy Seva Samiti Trust, said. ENS

UTTAR PRADESH
Woman kills man for neglecting her over 1st wife, held

Muzaffarnagar: Police have arrested a woman for allegedly strangling her husband to death in his sleep on August 29 for "neglecting her over his first wife", officers said Sunday. "Sanjay Kumar, 40, was killed by his second wife, Kavita, 30," SHO Dinesh Chand Bhagel said, adding she was arrested Saturday. Sanjay and Kavita got married in 2000, while his first wife lives in his native Tanda Majra village, police said. PTI

3 booked in MP for killing turtle on cam, holding community feast

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, AUGUST 31

THREE PERSONS have been booked under the Wildlife Protection Act for allegedly killing a turtle with an axe and consuming its meat in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district. The accused, who filmed the act, are absconding as Forest Department officials conduct search operations.

On August 28, the accused caught a turtle from a pond and brought it to Sikli Jagir village and then hacked it to death while filming the act. After killing the turtle, the group cooked its meat and organised a community feast in the village, wildlife officials said.

"Based on the video evidence, the accused have been identified. Our teams are conducting search operations in the village and surrounding areas," Ranger Basant Sharma said. Said a senior wildlife officer, "Turtles, though often overlooked, play a vital ecological role in maintaining balance of the aquatic ecosystem... It is important to educate villagers about what turtles do for our environment."

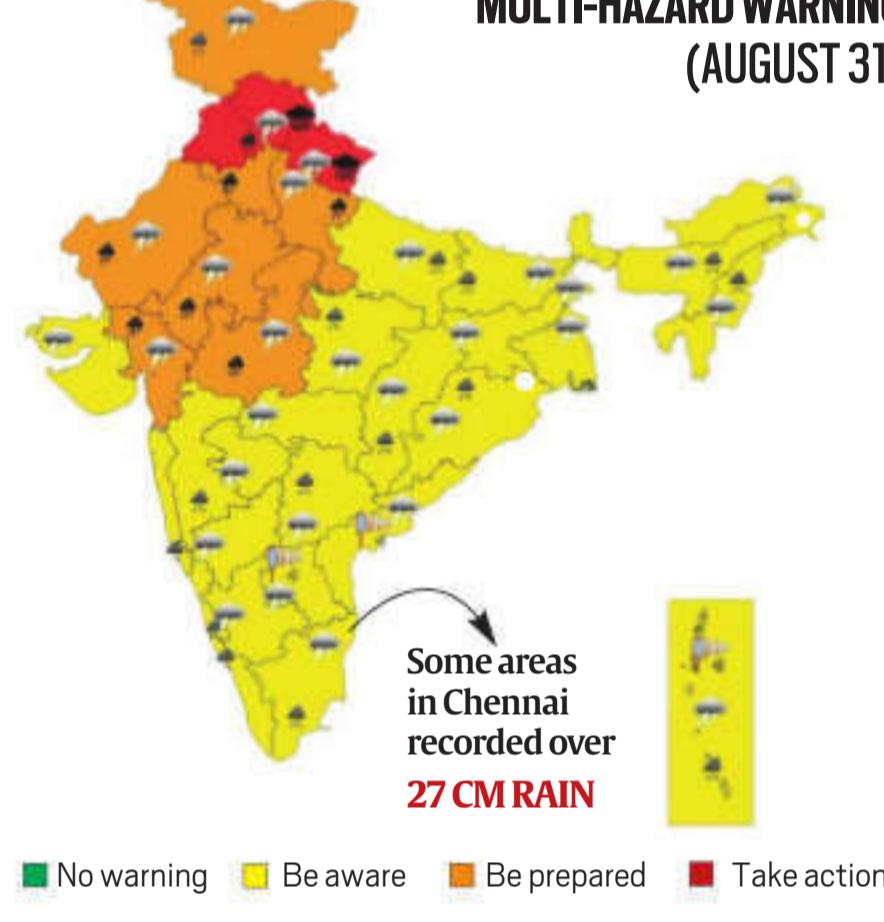


An ambulance that skidded off the highway to Manali, in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district on Sunday. The torrential downpour has left 819 roads blocked, including NH-03, NH-05, and NH-305, disrupting connectivity in many districts. PTI

RAIN WATCH

WHERE IT RAINED HEAVILY

- Many places in Tamil Nadu received over 21 cm rain
 - Several places in Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, east Uttar Pradesh, Odisha recorded over 12 cm rain
- (8.30 am Saturday to 8.30 am Sunday)



WHERE IT'S LIKELY TO RAIN

- Extremely heavy rain likely at some places in Uttarakhand on Sep 1, southern Himachal Pradesh and J&K up to Sep 2
- Few places in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh likely to get heavy to very heavy rain over the next two days
- Heavy rain likely over Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh over next five days, over Odisha for next four days, and West Bengal and Sikkim over the next two days
- Several places in Gujarat likely to get extremely heavy rain between Sep 4 and 6
- Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura are expected to get good rain over the next one week
- Heavy rain expected over Kerala and coastal Karnataka over the next 7 days

FLASH FLOOD THREAT

HIMACHAL

Moderate to high risk in Chamba, Kangra, Kinnaur, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, Solan & Sirmour

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Moderate to high risk in Anantnag, Doda, Kathua, Kishtwar, Poonch, Rajouri, Ramban, Riasi, Udhampur & Mirpur

UTTARAKHAND

Moderate to high risk in Almora, Bageshwar, Chamoli, Champawat, Dehradun, Nainital, Pauri Garhwal, Pithoragarh & Uttarkashi

(up to 11.30 am Monday)

MONSOON MAYHEM

Punjab floods: CM urges PM to release ₹60,000 crore

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 31

HIGHLIGHTING PUNJAB'S plight due to one of the worst flood disasters in decades, CM Bhagwant Mann Sunday wrote to PM Narendra Modi and urged him to release ₹60,000 crore of the "state's funds", which he claimed are "stuck" with the Centre.

Mann also sought revision in the norms for funds available in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), saying his government wanted to pay at least ₹50,000 per acre to affected farmers.

Punjab is under the grip of massive floods, caused by the swollen Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers and seasonal rivulets due to heavy rain in their catchment areas in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

In his letter, Mann said that Punjab is currently grappling with one of the worst flood disasters in decades, impacting about 1,000 villages. The CM said that heavy rain, coupled with the release of waters from dams, have caused extensive flooding in seven districts – Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Amritsar, Pathankot, Ferozepur, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur.

Mann said that at present, about 3 lakh acres of farmland, primarily paddy fields, remain submerged under floodwater, leading to devastating crop losses just weeks before harvest.

Mani also apprised the PM that permanent loss of revenue on account of implementation of GST and transition from VAT Regime is ₹49,727 crore for which no compensation has been provided by the Centre.

The CM said that reduction of Rural Development Fund (RDF), and Market Development Fund (MDF) in past few years has ballooned to over ₹8,000 crore adding that recently the Centre has also scrapped projects in Punjab worth ₹828 crore.

He added that this can adversely impact the state's rural connectivity in long-run.

Mann said that while substantial funds are available in the SDRF, the existing norms prescribed under the guidelines of the MHA remain grossly inadequate to compensate farmers, livestock owners, and vulnerable communities for the scale of their losses.



A flooded home in Hukumat village in Punjab's Hoshiarpur on Sunday. PTI

Punjab sees wettest Aug in 26 yrs

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, AUGUST 31

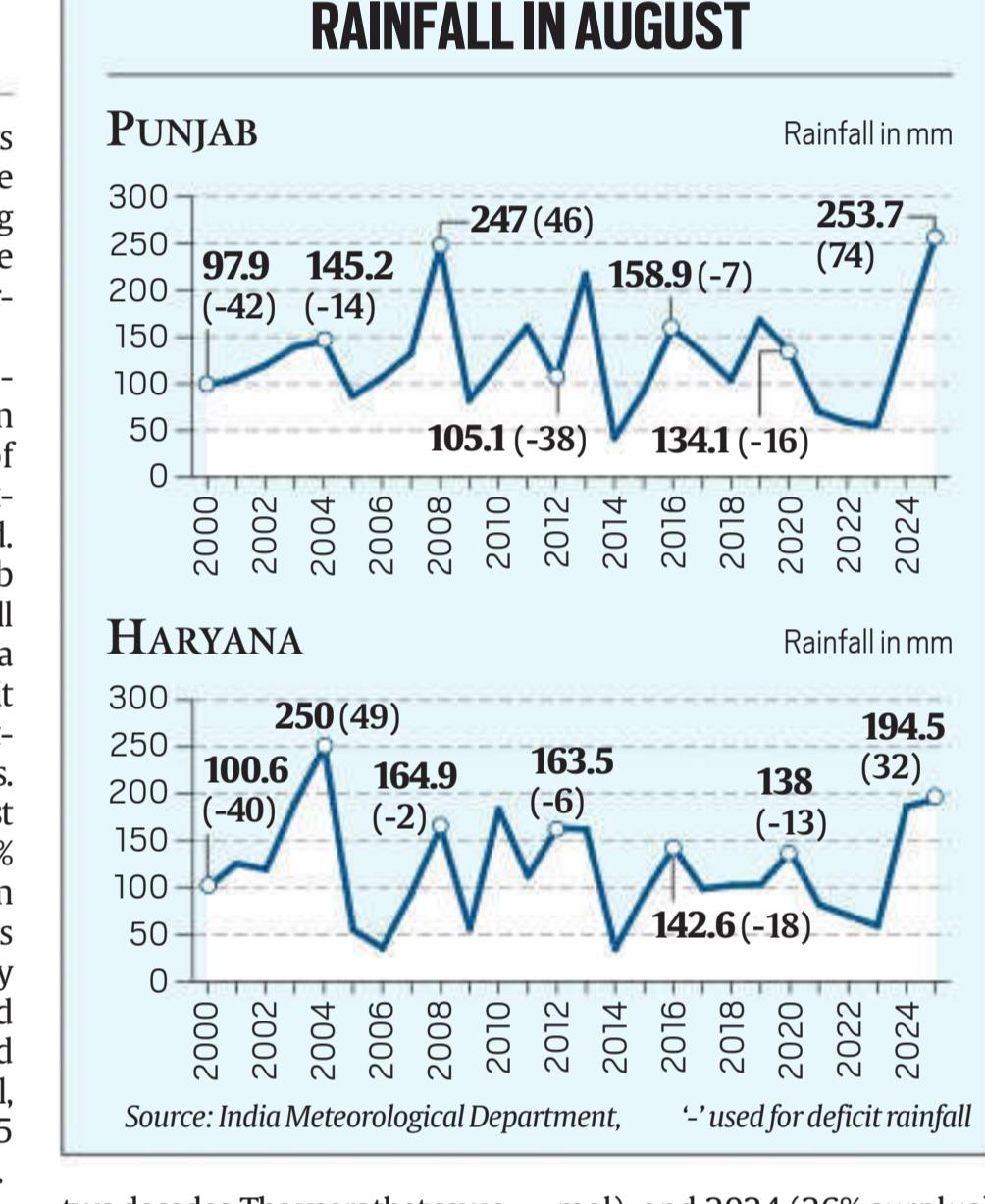
PUNJAB HAS this year received its highest-ever August rainfall since 2000, with the state recording 253.7 mm downpour against the normal of 146.2 mm – a 74% surplus – according to the IMD.

Neighbouring Haryana received 194.5 mm of rain in August against an average of 147.7 mm for the month, marking a 32% increase, the IMD said.

In the past 25 years, Punjab has mostly seen deficient rainfall in August. The state recorded a 75% deficit in 2014 and 62% deficit in 2013 even when Punjab witnessed major floods in both years.

The state saw surplus August rainfall in 2008 at 247 mm (46% surplus) and in 2013 at 217 mm (27% surplus). This year's surplus was driven by extraordinary showers in state's northern and central districts. Pathankot topped the state with 944.2 mm rainfall, followed by Gurdaspur (577.5 mm) and Jalandhar (479.9 mm).

Haryana recorded its second-wettest August in 26 years, receiving 194.5 mm of rainfall against the normal of 147.7 mm, a 32% surplus, according to IMD. The state has seen frequent rain deficit in August over the past



two decades. The years that saw a sharp deficit are 2006 (-79%), 2009 (-67%), 2024 (-80%), 2017 & 2018 (-48%), 2023 (-52%) and 2023 (-60%). The wettest August was in 2004, when Haryana saw 250 mm of rain (49% above normal), and 2024 (26% surplus). While Fatehabad at 298.3 mm rainfall (252% above normal) saw sharpest departure, Yamuna Nagar at 408.5 mm (33% above normal) was wettest district in the state this year.

Yadav ruled out any similarities with the Silkyara tunnel collapse. She said power generation was incumbent upon the presence of workers, but their safety would not be jeopardised. The local police, sub-district magistrate, tehsildar, and personnel of SDRF and BRO are at the site, Yadav said.

The Dhauliganga Power Station is a run-of-the-river scheme on the Dhauliganga river. The power station was commissioned in 2005 and generates 280 megawatts of electricity. It supplies power to Uttarakhand, J&K, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Chandigarh, the corporation said.

Vinod Goswami, Pithoragarh DM, said 19 workers were at work when the landslide struck, but no one was injured. "Debris has been cleared from the emergency shaft, and eight have been evacuated. Operations are underway to evacuate the remaining workers."

The officials, however, stressed that the workers were safe inside the Dhauliganga Power Station at Dharchula, which has sufficient amenities, and that their presence was required there in order to maintain power generation.

Eight other workers have been evacuated through a ventilation shaft wide enough to allow people to move, said SP Rekha Yadav. "We have taken out 8 workers and are working to clear debris," she said. "However, the power house requires a team of nine persons at the site for work at the house, so if the situation deteriorates, we will

evacuate all. Currently, the NHPC has maintained that the workers can be swapped if needed."

The power house sits under a hill and has its entry point in a tunnel opening to the road. "Machines have been deployed to remove the boulders that block the tunnel," Yadav said.

Uttarakhand has been reeling under heavy rain this monsoon which has caused multiple landslides and damaged infra-

structure including highways. The Dhauliganga Power Station is a run-of-the-river scheme on the Dhauliganga river. The power station was commissioned in 2005 and generates 280 megawatts of electricity. It supplies power to Uttarakhand, J&K, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Chandigarh, the corporation said.

On the war and the ongoing talks, Taban says that it was discussed between Moldova Foreign Minister Mihai Popsoi, during his visit to India earlier this year, and Jaishankar. "The message from my foreign minister was that India can play a very big role in finding a solution for peace. We hope that India can help in this regard," she said. "It is very important to have a long-lasting peace. And a very strong security guarantee for Ukraine... security for Ukraine is important for Moldova, for the region. Our perception is if Ukraine resists, Moldova will be safe."

Kashmir link shut, Omar says alternative road being opened

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, AUGUST 31



J&K CM Omar Abdullah in Ramban on Sunday. PTI

about the damage caused by the rains, floods and landslides in the Union Territory. The Union Home Minister will chair a high-level meeting on Monday.

Abdullah will brief Shah

MHA FORMS CENTRAL TEAMS TO ASSESS FLOOD DAMAGES

New Delhi: The government has constituted Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) for Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and J&K to assess the damage caused by heavy rain, floods, flash floods, cloudbursts and landslides, officials said.

The IMCTs would make on-the-spot assessment of situation and relief works being carried out by state governments. The MHA formed IMCTs on the direction of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, a statement said.

Under PM Narendra Modi, the Central government stands shoulder to shoulder with the states affected by natural calamities in mitigating the hardships faced by the people, it said. Early next week, the Central teams will visit the flood/landslide-affected districts.

A spokesperson said the chief minister carried out an extensive tour of Ramban and Udhampur districts to assess the widespread devastation caused by the recent cloudbursts, floods, landslides and mudslides.

Then the work started to promote education in India, she added.

"The number of Indian students applying for our universities is growing (mostly in medicine and engineering). We now have around 3,000 Indian students, who are the biggest community of international students," she says, adding many of them also sought a transfer from Ukraine after the war.

"Nobody was expecting that the war would start," she says, "so when the war started, the (displaced) population from Ukraine started to come to our country as refugees. And we were ready to receive them. People just opened the doors of their houses to re-

Uttarakhand: After landslide, 11 NHPC workers stranded in power house

AISWARYA RAJ
DEHRADUN, AUGUST 31



Boulders have blocked the tunnel and the entry point to the power house. Express

Eight other workers have been evacuated through a ventilation shaft wide enough to allow people to move, said SP Rekha Yadav. "We have taken out 8 workers and are working to clear debris," she said. "However, the power house requires a team of nine persons at the site for work at the house, so if the situation deteriorates, we will

evacuate all. Currently, the NHPC has maintained that the workers can be swapped if needed."

The power house sits under a hill and has its entry point in a tunnel opening to the road. "Machines have been deployed to remove the boulders that block the tunnel," Yadav said.

Uttarakhand has been reeling under heavy rain this monsoon which has caused multiple landslides and damaged infra-

structure including highways. The Dhauliganga Power Station is a run-of-the-river scheme on the Dhauliganga river. The power station was commissioned in 2005 and generates 280 megawatts of electricity. It supplies power to Uttarakhand, J&K, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Chandigarh, the corporation said.

On the war and the ongoing talks, Taban says that it was discussed between Moldova Foreign Minister Mihai Popsoi, during his visit to India earlier this year, and Jaishankar. "The message from my foreign minister was that India can play a very big role in finding a solution for peace. We hope that India can help in this regard," she said. "It is very important to have a long-lasting peace. And a very strong security guarantee for Ukraine... security for Ukraine is important for Moldova, for the region. Our perception is if Ukraine resists, Moldova will be safe."

Indians biggest community of international students: Moldova envoy

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

HAVING A war near you is like having a fire in the neighbourhood and if your neighbour's house is on fire, you need to do something, and that's the situation in Moldova, the country's Ambassador to India Ana Taban says in an interview with *The Indian Express*.

Taban, also the country's first resident ambassador to India, recalled that after a full-fledged mission came up only in June 2023 despite having diplomatic relations for 33 years, they organised a visit by Moldovan Agriculture Minister, and the two countries signed a pact to form a joint working group to discuss priorities.

"Based on the video evidence, the accused have been identified. Our teams are conducting search operations in the village and surrounding areas," Ranger Basant Sharma said. Said a senior wildlife officer, "Turtles, though often overlooked, play a vital ecological role in maintaining balance of the aquatic ecosystem... It is important to educate villagers about what turtles do for our environment."





The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE COTTON SIGNAL

By making cotton imports duty-free, India shows flexibility to negotiate. It's for US to reciprocate

INdia has allowed cotton imports at zero duty till December 31, 2025. The "temporary" exemption from the earlier chargeable 11 per cent tariff comes amid domestic production of the fibre falling to an estimated 311.4 lakh bales (lb) in 2024-25 (October-September), from 336.5 lb in the previous marketing year and the all-time-high of 398 lb of 2013-14. But it's not just lower output — compounded by a 2.6 per cent dip in the area sown this kharif season — that may have prompted the Narendra Modi government's decision. No less significant is the signal it sends out to the United States that has seen the value of its cotton exports slide from \$8.82 billion in 2022 to \$4.96 billion in 2024, largely because of reduced purchases by China (from \$2.79 billion to \$1.47 billion). With China further slashing imports to a mere \$150.4 million in January-June 2025, it means a huge loss of market.

No wonder the US wants other countries to buy more. Vietnam, Pakistan, Turkey and India have all done that. India alone has imported \$181.5 million worth of US cotton in January-June, as against \$86.9 million during the first half of 2024. The duty removal is likely to give an added boost to that. The US Department of Agriculture has, indeed, welcomed the move. It sees this as not only increasing US cotton bookings, but also helping Indian textile exporters access cheaper and contamination-free fibre. Nearly 95 per cent of imported US cotton, the agency claims, is processed and re-exported as yarn, fabric and apparel. But it is the optics, more than anything else, in the context of a low moment for Delhi-Washington ties, that's encouraging. Not reviving the stalled trade talks is in neither side's interest. By making cotton imports duty-free, augmenting availability of fibre for its textile industry, India has shown willingness and flexibility to negotiate. It's for the US now to reciprocate, by scrapping the unreasonable and irrational 25 per cent Russian oil import "penalty" on India.

There's a loser in all this, though. The Indian cotton farmer has been deprived of any new cropping technology after genetically modified Bt hybrids, which drove up average lint yields from 302 kg to 566 kg per hectare between 2002-03 and 2013-14. Since then, yields have dropped to sub-450 kg levels, even as cotton has become susceptible to so-called secondary pests such as pink bollworm and whitefly in addition to boll rot fungal pathogens. The results of non-investment in breeding research and development are evident from record imports of 39 lb projected for 2024-25. This double-whammy situation, of technology denial alongside import inundation, has been witnessed even in mustard and soyabean. The Indian farmer can — and should be enabled to — compete, but not with hands tied.

SCIENCE UNDER ATTACK

Firing of CDC director is a new low in Trump administration's approach to institutions. Pushback by civil society is heartening

LESS THAN a month after she was confirmed as director of the US's premier health agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), infectious disease expert Susan Monarez was forced to leave her job by the Donald Trump Administration. The scientist, who reportedly clashed with US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr over the revamping of America's vaccine policy, has said she will contest her ouster. The episode marks a new low in the Trump administration's approach to scientific institutions. The CDC has faced budget cuts, layoffs, resignations, and an array of changes to protocols. At least four experts have quit the agency in the wake of Monarez's ouster.

Kennedy has long held the much-discredited view that the administration of vaccines at a young age contributes to autism. In the weeks after assuming office, however, he insisted that his department wanted to set the "highest possible standards". The Health Secretary's first two choices for leaders of key agencies — Marty Makary as head of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Jay Bhattacharya as director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) — invited questions because both experts held controversial views during the Covid pandemic. Even so, their solid academic credentials held out hope that the two appointees wouldn't acquiesce in any effort to undermine public health. But under Bhattacharya, the NIH has pivoted away from cutting-edge research on mRNA vaccines and Makary has allowed FDA officials to set aside inoculation-related decisions of the agency's scientists. The worst fears of Kennedy's critics came true in June when the Health Secretary fired all 17 members of the Advisory Committee that guides the CDC on inoculation-related decisions and named a new panel that comprises more than one vaccine critic. The committee has given up the tradition of inviting representatives of medical bodies like the American Academy of Paediatrics to its meetings. After her appointment in early August, Monarez, the first non-physician to hold the CDC top post since 1953, reportedly came under pressure to rubber stamp the panel's decisions, including conducting investigations on links between vaccines and autism.

The purges at the CDC have underlined fears that the Trump administration is creating new public health risks at a time when measles has made a comeback in the US after more than 25 years. It's heartening, however, that it has faced concerted opposition from scientist groups, including the American Public Health Association, bodies representing federal health workers, and patient advocacy groups. Sustaining this pushback will be crucial to maintaining the integrity of American institutions, often seen as the gold standard of global public health policy.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



Under cover of trade deficit

FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH
ASHOK GULATI

US PRESIDENT DONALD Trump's frequent claims about stopping the conflict between India and Pakistan, which he believes could have gone nuclear, show that he wants to go down in history as a peacemaker. Interestingly, Pakistan has nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize and has managed a much-favoured treatment from the US. In contrast, India's steadfast denial of Trump's role in stopping the four-day conflict seems to have irked Trump.

Now, Peter Navarro, Trump's trade advisor, has quite irresponsibly said that the Russia-Ukraine conflict is actually "Modi's war", as India is funding it through Russian oil purchases. Trump's punitive tariffs of 25 per cent for buying Russian oil, on top of the reciprocal tariffs of 25 per cent, could be only the beginning of the punishment. The White House is already talking about cutting down on H-1B visas, and some senators have even described these as a "scam". India is the biggest beneficiary of H-1B visas, with an almost 70 per cent share. With high tariffs of 50 per cent, Indian exports to the US are going to suffer massive losses — they could be around \$40-50 billion. While a federal appeals court ruled on August 29 that the President overstepped his powers in imposing the tariffs, enforcement of the order is on hold till mid-October, giving the administration time to appeal to the US Supreme Court. And if Trump doubles down on H-1B visas, the losses could be much higher. So, India has many stakes in its relationship with the US.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stood his ground so far. He told the nation that he is ready to suffer, but will not compromise. However, the EU, Japan, and South Korea have already made deals. China is the only country that has withheld Trump's pressure tactics so far and even retaliated through its monopoly over rare earth minerals. India does not have that leverage. The Indian economy is less than one-seventh of the US economy. The only way

to escape being crushed during this power play is to be extremely agile and smart.

which, as per our rough calculation, is not more than \$6-7 billion. If we reduce that somewhat and increase imports from the US, that may help save our exports of \$40 to \$50 billion. All this will require smart negotiation and should not be seen as a compromise with sovereignty.

Lastly, there is a lot to do on the home front, and second-generation reforms need to be undertaken, including a significant reduction in import duties. Otherwise, we help Trump in saying that India is the target king.

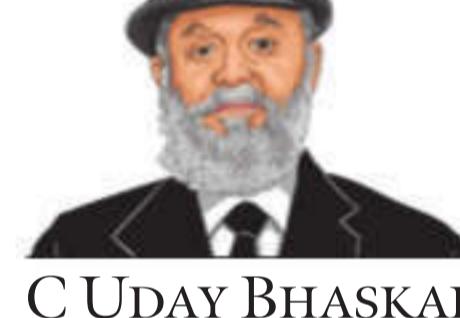
Let me turn to the issue of trade deficits, which seems to have spurred the US to impose higher reciprocal tariffs. A majority of politicians in most countries, including India, think exports are always good but imports are bad. That gives them the rationale for imposing higher import duties. The fundamental problem with these politicians is that they don't understand the theory of comparative advantage. Trade brings prosperity among trading nations. The only thing one has to ensure is that trading is based on rules, not export subsidies. That's where the WTO's role becomes critical. While export subsidies were banned, exchange rate distortions (especially undervalued currency) were not subjected to any scrutiny.

In such a situation, what should India do? Here are some pointers:

First, there is no need to retaliate. We have quite a bit at stake, and we don't have the leverage China has. Second, fast-track diversification of exports to other regions and countries, from Russia to Japan to Australia to the African continent to Latin America. We need to get going on free trade agreements (FTAs) with the EU, Russia, ASEAN, and the African Union and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Third, make the expanded BRICS more proactive on trade by adhering to the rules. The US has already buried the World Trade Organisation (WTO) with its barrage of differential tariffs on various countries. Can BRICS take the initiative to resurrect it? Fourth, remain engaged with the US on trade negotiations and adopt a somewhat more flexible approach. We need to be pragmatic and weigh the net benefit of sourcing oil from Russia,

Gulati is a distinguished professor at ICRIER. Views are personal

While export subsidies were banned, exchange rate distortions (especially undervalued currency) were not subjected to any scrutiny. It is well known that China, from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, pegged its exchange rate to the dollar at around 8.28. Several studies pointed out that the Chinese yuan was hugely undervalued (by about 20 per cent), which was a hidden way of giving an export subsidy across all sectors. This was a period when China was accumulating trillions of dollars, and yet the exchange rate remained undervalued. This is at the root of the current-day overblown trade deficits of many countries vis-à-vis China.



C UDAY BHASKAR

THE BILATERAL MEETING between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Tianjin on Sunday has aroused considerable global interest, given that it took place against the backdrop of unexpected turbulence in India-US bilateral ties, triggered by the petulant weaponisation of tariffs by US President Donald Trump.

The outcome of Tianjin is to be cautiously welcomed. It is a summit-level political endorsement by the two leaders of the broad agreements arrived at during the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Delhi earlier in August. It is instructive that the official statement released by New Delhi referred to both leaders welcoming the "positive momentum and steady progress in bilateral relations since their last meeting" in Kazan, Russia, in 2024.

This is a familiar template for both Asian giants who have had a troubled relationship since the border war of October 1962. After the most recent military confrontation in Galwan, Ladakh in mid-2020, bilateral ties went into a deep freeze and it took the Kazan meeting for the beginning of a thaw, with modest results in Tianjin. A much-needed degree of stability, resumption of dialogue and contact at various levels have been restored.

However, it would be misleading to interpret the Modi-Xi meeting as heralding a breakthrough in the more contentious issues that have bedeviled the relationship for decades. The tangled territorial-cum-border dispute that goes back to the birth of India and China as independent nations (1947 and 1949 respectively) is at the core of the dissonance. Despite repeated attempts, the path to a consensual modus vivendi has remained elusive.

In the Tianjin meeting, the two leaders noted "with satisfaction the successful disen-

A RECONNECTION IN TIANJIN

Modi-Xi meeting marks progress, but border issues remain a challenge

Beijing was vehemently critical of the Indian nuclear tests of 1998 and sought to play spoiler in the 2008 US-led civilian nuclear accommodation. The 2020 Galwan rupture is now being repaired in Tianjin and the SCO deliberations will testify to the current geopolitical reality: A contra-polar world, where major powers are grappling with complex contradictions.

gagement last year and the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the border areas since then." Predictably, the old chestnut, "mutually acceptable resolution", found mention and the statement added that the two leaders "recognised the important decisions taken by the two Special Representatives in their Talks earlier this month, and agreed to further support their efforts."

This translates into acknowledging that the border talks will remain a "work in progress" and both countries will seek to engage with each other in other domains. This was reflected in President Xi's remarks where he noted that the two nations are cooperation partners, not rivals, and that they are each other's "development opportunities rather than threats." The visually rich symbolism of a "cooperative pas de deux of the dragon and the elephant" was also invoked by Xi.

The Tianjin bilateral meeting and the SCO summit are unfolding at a consequential moment in global geopolitics. The American eagle is flapping its wings in an erratic manner and the dragon, the elephant and the Russian bear are all differently impacted. Till the draconian Trump tariffs upended the India-US relationship, New Delhi had managed to maintain a delicate balance in its ties with both Washington and Moscow. The anomalous assumption that India could be part of a robust partnership with the US, and an active member of the Quad and still remain invested with Moscow has been belied.

However, it would be misleading to assume that this translates into India joining the China-Russia camp that is ranged against the US. New Delhi has been navigating a carefully calibrated path of not being a camp-follower since 1947, to ensure that its core interests are not adversely impacted. When required, India has stood its ground while engaging with its prin-

cipal strategic interlocutors.

India had bitter differences with the US during the Cold War over the NPT (nuclear non-proliferation treaty) and this relationship remained strained from 1974 to 2005. The George Bush-Manmohan Singh rapprochement that led to the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2008 turned the page. The last 17 years have seen a steady consolidation in the India-US partnership. The August 27 imposition of unwarranted tariffs on India has strained ties but Delhi will have to remain committed to engaging with the US in the long term, given its relevance in the Indian strategic calculus.

China has pursued policies that have been either inimical or adversarial to India's core interests since 1962, with Beijing aligning itself with the US in the latter part of the Cold War and then with Pakistan. New Delhi has lived with long periods of breakdown in dialogue and contact with Beijing, going back to the 26-year hiatus that ended in 1988 with the visit of PM Rajiv Gandhi to China.

Beijing was vehemently critical of the Indian nuclear tests of 1998 and sought to play spoiler in the 2008 US-led civilian nuclear accommodation. The 2020 Galwan rupture is now being repaired in Tianjin and the SCO deliberations will testify to the current geopolitical reality: A contra-polar world, where major powers are grappling with complex contradictions.

Modi's visit to Tokyo prior to Tianjin and the India-Japan joint statement reaffirming "their steadfast commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific" would have been noted in Beijing and is part of this contra-polar pattern. The tea leaves are muddier than they seem and must be read objectively.

The writer is director, Society for Policy Studies

SEPTEMBER 1, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO

PAKISTAN'S N-THREAT

IF INDIA DECIDES to make nuclear weapons, the cost of such a programme limited to meeting a similar Pakistani threat will not be much, defence researchers say. For a developing country, cost is one of the basic factors in such a programme. The other factors are whether India has the means to assemble a bomb and a delivery system to take it to enemy targets. The government has been ambivalent about its nuclear policy saying that the nuclear programme is aimed at peaceful purposes and simultaneously adding that Pakistan is about to or has already made a bomb and that India's "options are open."

DRAFT PEACE ACCORD

THE SRI LANKA President, J R Jayewardene, has called a special meeting of senior ministers to discuss the "working paper" which could form the framework for resolving the island's ethnic problem. Hector Jayewardene, leader of the delegation to the Thimpu peace talks, had spent the last 10 days in New Delhi finalising the draft of the working paper.

CHEMBUR GAS LEAK

HAVING FAILED TO plug the leakage of chlorine effectively, the management of the Calico Mill's chemicals and plastics division

at Chembur in Bombay has agreed to neutralise the entire 40 tonnes stock of the toxic gas immediately. The suggestion to neutralise the chlorine gas came from Dr Ghosh of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, who is a member of the special crisis committee.

WAITING FOR A FLAT

EXACTLY 12 YEARS ago, an employee of a Central Government office responded to DDA's advertisement offering Janata flats. Ethelbert Kujur, belonging to a scheduled tribe, works in the Central Public Works Department. He was allotted a flat in 1975, and is still waiting to take possession.



THE IDEAS PAGE

An RSS of its time

Bhagwat's Vigyan Bhawan dialogue shows an organisation that seeks to contextualise itself and redefine its philosophy of action, lays ground for conversations based on mutual trust and optimism



RAKESH SINHA

RSS SARSANGHCHALAK MOHAN Bhagwat's dialogue at the Vigyan Bhawan marks a philosophical leap in the organisation's history. It reflected the collective will of not only the organisation's rank and file but also gave expression to the beliefs of millions of cadres. Bhagwat talked of going beyond the task of organising Hindus. He said, "The RSS wants to organise the entire society." The RSS Sarsanghchalak criticised some radical groups that masquerade as part of the Hindutva movement and reiterated the importance of dialogue between communities as a genuine solution to social conflicts. This was also a strong appeal for reciprocity from the so-called minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, to break the inertia that stops them from reconnecting with their cultural roots and confines these communities to ghettos.

The RSS today has evolved and developed V D Savarkar's vision of Hindutva. It does not cling to old speeches of its leaders. It moves according to the needs of the hour. In essence, Bhagwat's words were both an attempt at and a plea for the detoxification of discourses that have often polluted mindsets and bred mistrust. They lay the ground for conversations based on mutual trust and optimism. The three-day event was also an attempt to infuse a liberal democratic spirit into social and cultural conversations. As the RSS chief, Bhagwat has the moral heft to do so. The RSS has never been the reason for polarisation in the country. When the country was partitioned, then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel informed the Central Assembly, on February 11, 1947, that no province had asked for a ban on the RSS. A little more than a decade earlier, in 1934, during a debate in the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council, the colonial government could not respond to Muslim member M S Rahman's appreciation of the Sangh. Rahman challenged the government's portrayal of the RSS as a communal organisation.

The evolution of societies often involves myriad, unknown factors. Challenges are a constant. However, socio-cultural and political orthodoxies seem to have become entrenched in modern times. They address new realities with old mentalities. Therefore, resistance to change is apparent in almost every sphere. In such times, Bhagwat typifies RSS's exceptionalism – the organisation has always sought to contextualise itself and redefine its philosophy of action. Most organisations fear that ideological revision might cause splits, dissent, and disintegration. This breeds hypocrisy. The communist and socialist movements in India, which also began in the 1920s, saw splits and disintegration. Over time, their influence waned. Two factors gave the RSS an edge. First, its leadership and workers remained in constant touch with the people. They are good listeners as well as inheritors of the views of the common people. Second, the process of contemplation within groups in the organisation has been maintained. These methods are followed not just within the organisation's top echelons. Informal consultations outside the organisation's top leadership are given no less importance. Bhagwat said that,



CR Sasikumar

in the RSS worldview, individual ambitions merge with collective desires and ideals.

The Sangh has been a votary of an inclusive Hindu society. It has resurrected the lost meaning of "Hindu", which includes people of Semitic religions. This definition was in vogue in the 19th century and provides a justification of the Hindu Rashtra. Bhagwat's response to critics who created the narrative of RSS being a votary of uniformity is equally compelling. He said that synonyms like Bharatiya, Indic, and Hindavi are equally acceptable to the organisation.

Most of the RSS's history is of confrontation with the Indian state, dominated by the Nehruvian-Marxist ideologues. It's also a story of conflict with civil society leaders who have much in common with these ideologues. The two created several myths to tarnish the RSS. After its elevation as a dominant social and cultural group with a visible impact on politics and state power, Bhagwat uplifted the saffron movement and articulated cultural reintegration and constitutionalism as the hallmarks of a new RSS nationalism.

Bhagwat's speech was not just about social inclusion. His emphasis on the decentralisation of wealth and equality is important in an era of neoliberalism, which has caused more misery than comfort. It has created social deficits and undermined the institution of the family. The danger of the New Right prevailing in every corner of the world remains high. Bhagwat's speech shows that RSS is aware of the dangers of neoliberalism. It was not without reason that he spoke of the labour wing of the RSS, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, more than half a dozen times. This is perhaps an attempt to renew an economic vision and nudge society to be more egalitarian. The neo-rich are a part of dominant social groups all over the world, and India is no exception. Their influence on

Bhagwat's speech was not just about social inclusion. His emphasis on the decentralisation of wealth and equality is important in an era of neoliberalism, which has caused more misery than comfort. It has created social deficits and undermined the institution of the family. The danger of the New Right prevailing in every corner of the world remains high. Bhagwat's speech shows that RSS is aware of the dangers of neoliberalism. It was not without reason that he spoke of the labour wing of the RSS, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, more than half a dozen times. This is perhaps an attempt to renew an economic vision and nudge society to be more egalitarian. The neo-rich are a part of dominant social groups all over the world, and India is no exception. Their influence on

politics, culture, and social processes is visible. The RSS safeguards its boundaries by maintaining financial self-reliance. It depends on the *guru dakshina* contributions by its workers.

RSS leader Dattopant Thengadi's "Third Way" propounded a new economic philosophy, free from the rigid divisions of the Left and the Right. Bhagwat's speech is also an effort to dehypenate RSS from current politics. He said politics reflects society and, therefore, the RSS's future task should be social transformation as a precursor to changing the system. This is a greater goal than occupying the seat of power. This shows that the RSS is not a part of the so-called New Right.

For decades, and particularly since the 1990s, commentators on the RSS have focused on its political role. This belittles the organisation's social and moral compass. The RSS's priority of *kutumb prabodhan* aims to revitalise the family. New definitions of prosperity and some of the processes of development are reasons for the disintegration of the family. The Indian way of life, based on the family, is being appreciated in the West today.

Martin Luther King Jr is remembered for his Hungry Club Forum speech on May 10, 1967, in which he identified three evils: Hunger, racism and war. Similarly, Bhagwat's Vigyan Bhawan speech identified the three challenges the world is facing: Revitalisation of the institution of the family, social inclusion and decentralisation of wealth. While M L King expressed the feelings of unorganised people, Bhagwat represents an organisation with 4000 *pracharakas* and more than 5.5 lakh people holding various positions in an ideological family. That's why he expressed the RSS's ambition to become a role model movement for people of other nations too.

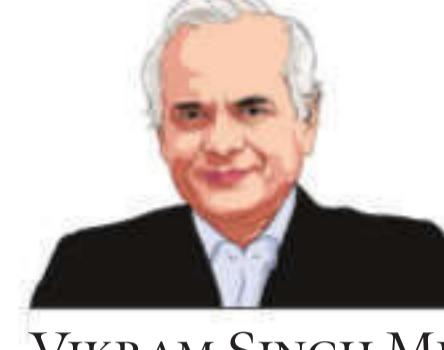
The writer is a former BJP Rajya Sabha MP

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The Kremlin sent a clear message with its lethal overnight raid on the Ukrainian capital. Will the US heed it?"
— THE GUARDIAN

Look over the horizon

India needs to leverage period of Trump-induced uncertainty to make it easier for international companies to do business here



VIKRAM SINGH MEHTA

Whether it be the robber barons of the late 19th and early 20th century, Andrew Carnegie, John D Rockefeller, Cornelius Vanderbilt or the captains of Indian Industry today, Mukesh Ambani, Sunil Mittal, Anand Mahindra, and the IT icons, they built their companies on the back of these first principles. In international affairs, too, there is an unerring fundamental principle for safeguarding national interest. The former UK Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, described it succinctly in a speech to the House of Commons in 1848. He said, "We (UK) have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow."

Our response to US pressure to cut off supplies from Russia was Palmerstonian. We ignored it. Currently, the weighted average benefit of Russian crude oil vis-à-vis purchases from Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries and Iraq is around \$2.50/barrel. This benefit would be erased were prices to drop further. If and when that happens, Indian refiners would undoubtedly switch suppliers. Russia will (hopefully) understand, and this switch will not strain relations. President Trump may wish to take credit for the switch, and we should allow him this moment in the sun. There is nothing to be gained by reminding him that the market is a more powerful force than his daily tweets.

Comparably, the resumption of talks with China is also Palmerstonian. Our green energy agenda rests on competitive access to low-cost solar panels, wafers, modules, batteries and rare earths. China offers all of these commodities at the lowest prices. Sure, our two countries have different and potentially clashing world views and economic logic must never supersede national security, but within this frame, there is space for cooperation and collaboration. In the context of green energy, this would centre around the creation of resilient supply chains.

"Uncertainty is the only certainty" — this is a somewhat clichéd encapsulation of current conditions. It does, however, compel the question: How should India respond to these uncertainties? Three responses come to mind. One, the world of alternate facts does not change reality. Trump may hyphenate India with Pakistan. But that cannot alter the reality that Pakistan is a flailing economy and India is to be the fourth-largest economic power. Two, economic strength is a solid currency. The US threatened prohibitive tariffs against China, but when China retaliated by cutting exports of rare earths, the US not only lowered taxes but also permitted Nvidia to resume exports of its semiconductor chips to the country. India needs to leverage this period of uncertainty to clear the miasma of regulatory compliance and make it easier for international companies to reshore, friend shore or on-shore into/towards India. Finally, the US is and will remain a crucially important strategic partner. We must look over the horizon and display "strategic patience".

I suspect I will be critiqued for flippancy, but I do not make these suggestions lightly. The conventional rules of the game have been overturned. This said, one must not lose sight of an unalterable reality. First principles and fundamentals will, in time, reassert themselves.

I have been in business for over four decades and, if asked, I would distil the core factors of business success to leadership, technology, innovation, scale, efficiency, talent and quality. And respect for the market. The latter cannot be bucked.

The writer is Chairman and Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

100 YEARS OF RSS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The Bhagwat doctrine' (IE, August 30). What the RSS sarsanghchalak says matters as he heads the organisation that is the fountainhead of the BJP and uses it as its political arm. We heard what Mohan Bhagwat was saying, but found his views unacceptable. "Inclusive Hindutva" is an oxymoron for any right-thinking person, as is his claim that the RSS is striving for an inclusive India. By making "brotherhood" conditional on handing over Islamic places of worship in Varanasi and Mathura for the construction of temples, he revealed the RSS's unfinished agenda.

Bhagwat spoke of India's religious diversity and Islam being part of India, but he was silent on the equality of religions. His statement that "individual swayamsevaks" can take part in "temple movements" has left us with the task of figuring out its meaning. The sarsanghchalak endorsed reservation "to correct historical injustices" more out of compulsion than commitment to the cause of social justice.

G David Milton, Maruthancode

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The Bhagwat doctrine' (IE, August 30). It dwelled on the salient features of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's lecture on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Sangh on August 28, in which

he vividly touched upon the contours of the progress and achievements made by the organisation. The editorial, however, ended up on a skewed note, asking an apocryphal question on an issue beyond its jurisdiction. The RSS may be a guiding source of inspiration for the BJP but not its mentor or guide to control its *modus operandi*.

Ravi Mathur, Noida

READING CHINA

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The China blindspot' (IE, August 30). As a matter of its security strategy, India needs to understand that the concept of fighting a two-front war, with Pakistan in the West and China in the East, is suicidal. As neighbouring civilisations, barring the exception of the 1962 war, India and China have co-existed peacefully for hundreds of years. The historical links between the two countries include a healthy exchange of goods, people, and ideas. These need to be revived, especially at a time when US President Donald Trump's tariffs have caused havoc. India needs to capitalise on this history to craft its narrative with China. That is the job of those who determine the trajectory of India's foreign policy. Building the required expertise on China must be the first step in this direction.

Shubhada H, via email



SHAMA MOHAMED

Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly.

— Mahatma Gandhi

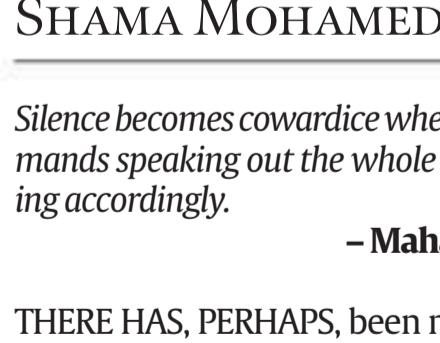
THERE HAS, PERHAPS, been no other comparable act of human cruelty in modern times that has failed to generate outrage and condemnation, as the unchecked military campaign that Israel has unleashed on the people of Gaza. This is not a war; it is carnage. And the silence of the West, and India in particular, is deafening.

As someone who was brought up in Kuwait in the 1980s, the Israeli-Palestinian issue is close to my heart. I have grown up witnessing the trials and tribulations of displaced Palestinians up close. I saw Palestinian refugees living in my apartment building, as well as attending public schools. I must say, the Kuwaiti government took good care of them by giving them jobs, free education and subsidised healthcare. This largesse ended when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, and Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) gave full support to Hussein.

The PLO is internationally recognised as the official representative of the Palestinian

A war like no other

Modi government must break its deafening silence on Gaza



SHAMA MOHAMED

people. I was there along with my family on that ill-fated day when everything came to a standstill for us. Our carefree life became restricted, and our homes became our prison. Arafat's support for Hussein perplexes me to this day, as Kuwait was more than generous to Palestinians and their cause.

The PLO was founded in 1964. It initially sought to establish a state over the entire territory of former Palestine. The first Oslo Accord, signed in 1993 between Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat, put an end to that idea. The Accord was intended to lead to a mutually negotiated two-state solution, and the State of Israel would be recognised, as would the PLO. One of the notable outcomes was the creation of the Palestinian Authority, which was made responsible for limited self-governance in parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

How, when, and why did Hamas come into the picture?

Hamas was founded in 1987 by Palestinian Islamic scholar Sheikh Ahmed Yassin after the First Intifada. Initially, Hamas was discreetly supported by Israel to weaken the secular PLO and prevent the creation of an independent Palestinian state. From the late 2010s to the early 2020s, Israeli officials

under Benjamin Netanyahu approved the transfer of millions of dollars via Qatar to Hamas, which intelligence officials believe contributed to the October 7 attack. Israel calls Hamas a terrorist organisation, but gave tacit support to it to discredit the PLO and the two-state solution.

The October 7, 2023, attacks were reprehensible. Around 1,200 Israelis were killed, and over 250 Israeli citizens were abducted by Hamas. But what followed is more horrific and inhumane. More than 60,000 Palestinians have been massacred by Israel, over half of them women and children. Ninety per cent of all homes in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed, and a blockade on food, water, and medicine has been enforced. In addition, more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank due to settler violence since October 7. If Israel has been adamant that their fight is against Hamas, how can it justify this unchecked violence in the West Bank?

It's not as if this violence doesn't have its share of critics within Israel. Ami Ayalon, former head of Israel's security agency Shin Bet, former Mossad chief Tamir Pardo, former IDF chief Matan Vilnai and former PM Ehud Barak have signed an open letter to the US

President on behalf of 550 former Israeli security officials, calling for an end to Israel's military campaign in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

Nearly 1,500 Palestinians have been reportedly killed at aid distribution sites, more than 300 have died of starvation, of which around half are children. More than 270 journalists and media workers have been killed, making this, by far, the deadliest war in history for journalists. More journalists have been killed in Gaza than in the US Civil War, both the World Wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and all the wars in former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan combined.

It is time the West woke up and sanctioned Israel for the war in Gaza. This is a war like no other, where starvation is being used as a weapon. After decades of sympathising with the Palestinian cause, India under Narendra Modi is now silent on the genocide, which is completely against this nation's ethos. The time to speak out has come and gone. If we stay silent any longer, even as time runs out for the people of Gaza, history will not forgive us.

The writer is national spokesperson, Indian National Congress

DAY 3 OF MARATHA QUOTA PROTEST



NCP-SP MP Supriya Sule meets Manoj Jarange Patil at Mumbai's Azad Maidan on Sunday. Akash Patil

No breakthrough in meetings with panel, Jarange threatens to stop drinking water

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, AUGUST 31

CITING LEGAL complexities in the way of granting Kunbi status to Marathas under the Hyderabad and Satara gazettes, the state Cabinet sub-committee empowered to tackle the Maratha quota agitation led by Manoj Jarange Patil has sought more time to relook the matter Sunday. As a result, the deadlock between the Maharashtra government and Maratha quota protesters continued on Sunday.

Vikhe Patil said: "We have started the process in all serious ness, but there are some legal aspects which can't be disregarded. The government will need more time to adequately consult legal experts on implementing the Hyderabad gazette to grant Kunbi status to Marathas. We are working seriously to find a solution."

He said the sub-committee will hold a meeting with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Speaking in Solapur district earlier in the day, Jarange had said that the Marathi community never faced untouchability and was not backward by caste, but shrinking landholdings and falling agricultural income had pushed its members into financial distress. "That is why they are seeking reservation in education and jobs. The Centre's Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) quota, already upheld by the Supreme Court, provides them an avenue of support," Patil told the media.

Jarange has been on an indefinite strike since August 27 at Azad Maidan. Doctors have been regularly monitoring his health. The sub-committee, led by senior BJP minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, held a meeting in the afternoon where they broadly discussed all the demands made by Jarange. Later in the day, the sub-committee held a meeting with state Advocate General Dr Birendra Saraf. Retired Justice Sandeep Shinde, who heads another panel to study the modalities of Maratha quota, was also present at the meeting; it was found that an attempt at a blanket

Porsche to Mini Cooper, Honda: ED raids Odisha businessman, seizes luxury cars, superbikes

SUJIT BISOYI

BHUBANESWAR, AUGUST 31

LUXURY VEHICLES including a Porsche and a Mini Cooper; superbikes including a Honda; more than ₹1 crore in jewellery. These were among the seizures made by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) after searching the premises of a Bhubaneswar businessman in a money laundering case.

The ED searched two premises of businessman Shakti Ranjan Dash in Bhubaneswar on August 30, including his residence and his business. Dash is the Managing Director of Anmol Mines Pvt Ltd and Anmol Resources Pvt Ltd, which, ED sources said, have allegedly received ₹59.80 crore from Shimla-based ITCOL, which is accused of siphoning bank loans.

Dash has also been accused of assisting ITCOL promoters in diverting the bank loan funds and utilising the same in mining activities in Odisha.

ED sources said ten luxury cars were seized, including a Porsche Cayenne, a Mercedes-Benz GLC, a BMW-X7, an Audi A3 and a Mini Cooper. Among the seized superbikes was a Honda Gold Wing Bike. In addition, cash of ₹13 lakh, jewellery worth ₹1.12 crore and various records related to immovable properties owned by Dash and his companies were also seized. Also, two lockers belonging to Dash have been frozen.

The ED initiated investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the Himachal Pradesh Police CID against ITCOL and its promoters for alleged siphoning of bank loans.

The ED has said ITCOL had obtained loans worth around ₹1,396 crore from a consortium of banks between 2009 and 2013 by showing forged detailed project reports and fake sales to dummy companies. The loans obtained by ITCOL were not utilised for the purposes they were sanctioned for.

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

TEN MONTHS after launching the online suspect registry system, the Centre has declined 13 lakh fraudulent transactions and saved ₹5,111.80 crore.

The registry, created based on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) and developed by Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), contains data of 1.4 million cyber-criminals linked to financial fraud and various cyber-crimes, which has been shared with all banks.

Launched by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on September 10 last year, it can be accessed by States/ UTs and central investigation and intelligence agencies.

Data accessed by *The Indian Express* shows they have frozen around 3,54,884 accounts in which fraudulent money was received, 11,10,566 unique accounts identified, and ₹5,111.80 crore saved after fraudulent transactions were rejected between

September 2024 and August 1 this year. "Around 14.13 lakh people data have been shared by the banks/financial institutions in the system, and data of around 13.06 lakh suspects identifiers were shared with the banks/ financial

institutions by the Centre," a senior government official said.

There are 61 banks/ financial institutions onboard the suspect registry system. The official said that among them, "35 private sector-Indian banks, 12 nationalised

and 6 regional rural banks, six wallet/merchant and one private sector bank-foreign bank".

The objective of the system is to help all the banks/ financial institutions to verify credentials of their customers before extending or giving any sort of financial services to them. With the help of a suspect registry, now the banks/ financial institutions can monitor money transactions going into suspected accounts in real-time..." an official said

An analysis by agencies has revealed that this year, India is losing over ₹1,000 crore monthly to cyber frauds. "In January, ₹1,837 crore was cheated, ₹1,573 crore in February, ₹1,683 in March, ₹1,314 crore in April, ₹1,644 crore in May, ₹1,584 crore in June and ₹1,829 crore in July. Analysis also shows that more than 80% of cheating cases are recorded in the financial fraud category," the official said.

An official said ₹15.03 crore was refunded in January 2025, ₹9.48 crore in February, ₹9.87 crore in March, ₹15.75 crore in April, ₹14.60 in May, ₹18.45 crore in June and ₹11.73 crore in July.

Chairing a review meeting on law and order ahead of the upcoming festival season, flood re

BILL SET TO BE TABLED IN MONSOON SESSION

Rajasthan new anti-conversion Bill: Life sentence, ₹50 lakh fine

Returning to 'original ancestral religion' not defined as conversion under Bill

HAMZA KHAN

JAIPUR, AUGUST 31

RAJASTHAN'S BHAJAN Lal Sharma government on Sunday announced more stringent provisions under its proposed anti-conversion Bill, including punishments of life imprisonment and ₹50 lakh fine in certain cases. The Bill is set to be tabled during the Monsoon Session of the Assembly that begins Monday.

Addressing a press conference with Deputy Chief Minister Prem Chand Bairwa and Cabinet Minister Sumit Godara, Law and Legal Affairs Minister Jyoti Patel said the Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2025, will be introduced in the Assembly to stop attempts at religious conversion by inducement or fraud. In February, the government had tabled the Bill, but it had not come up for debate.

Now, Patel said, the old Bill will be withdrawn and a fresh Bill with more stringent penalties will be tabled in the upcoming session. Currently, Rajasthan doesn't have a law against illegal conversion. The draft of the new Bill was approved in the Cabinet meeting on Sunday. Notably, returning to one's "original ancestral religion" has not been included in the definition of religious conversion.

"If someone returns to their mool (original) religion, which we call ghar wapsi, then these provisions will not be applicable to them," Patel said.

If the new Bill is passed, those involved in unlawful conversion can be punished with a jail term of seven to 14 years, along with a minimum fine of ₹5 lakh. In the old Bill, the punishment was one to five years of jail time and a minimum fine of ₹15,000. In case of unlawful conversion of a minor, a differently abled person, a woman or a person belonging to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST), the punishment will

be 10-20 years with a minimum fine of ₹10 lakh. Earlier, this was 2-10 years with a minimum fine of ₹25,000, with no specific provision for the differently abled.

In case of an unlawful mass conversion, the imprisonment would be from 20 years to life imprisonment and a minimum fine of ₹25 lakh. Earlier, this was 10-20 years with a minimum fine of ₹50,000. While the previous Bill had no mention of foreign funding, the new Bill states that receiving money from a foreign or illegal institution for religious conversion would carry an imprisonment between 10-20 years and a minimum ₹20 lakh fine.

In certain special cases, such as inducing fear, using force, promise of marriage, marriage, and trafficking women, the Bill proposes a minimum of 20 years and a maximum of life imprisonment, and a minimum fine of ₹30 lakh. While the previous Bill did not specifically mention punishment for conversion in the context of

marriage, it had said that a marriage done for the sole purpose of unlawful conversion, or vice versa, will be declared void. This will be retained by the new Bill, Patel said.

The Law minister said that the new Bill proposes a punishment of life imprisonment and a minimum fine of ₹50 lakh on repetition of the crime, as well as cancellation of registration of the organisation involved in illegal conversion, the termination of its grants by the state government and, after investigation, confiscation or demolition of the property where the illegal religious conversion took place.

The old Bill had said that repeat offenders would face, for each subsequent offence, a punishment not exceeding double the punishment provided under the law. Like the old Bill, the new one also puts the burden of proof on the person accused of carrying out the religious conversion, and all offences will be cognizable and non-bailable.

Thadou leader killed in Assam, police suspect Manipur conflict link

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, AUGUST 31

FIVE PERSONS identified as being former members of a Kuki insurgent group were arrested Sunday for allegedly murdering a Thadou community group leader, who had participated in a meeting with Meitei groups in Imphal earlier this month, in Assam's Karbi Anglong on Saturday night.

The victim, Nehkam Jomhao (59), who was the chairman of a group called Thadou Literary Society Assam, had been missing from his home in a village near Manja town in Karbi Anglong district since Saturday night. As of Sunday evening, his body had not been recovered. However, Karbi Anglong SP Sanjib Kumar Saikia told *The Indian Express* that five individuals, who are former members of the Kuki Revolutionary Army, were arrested Sunday after they confessed to murdering him and disposing of his body in a river.

"We were alerted through social media that an incident had taken place in the home of the victim... The five arrested persons have confessed to the murder. A search is on to locate the body," he said. The groups associated with the 16-member delegation distance themselves from the term 'Kuki' and claim that Thadou is a distinct ethnic group of people. This stand is at odds with other Kuki-Zo groups and the Thadou Inpi General Headquarters, part of the Kuki Zo Council, accuses them of not being representative of the community. SP Saikia said this angle is being considered, while there are also inputs regarding personal rivalry.

NISHAD chief present, UP CM doles out sops for nomadic tribes

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 31

AN EVENT to mark Denotified and Nomadic Tribes Day not only saw Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announce a slew of measures for the communities, but also served as a platform to showcase unity among NDA partners amid reports of tensions between the allies.

At the event in Lucknow on Sunday, observed annually on August 31 to commemorate the repeal of the British-era Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, which criminalised nomadic, semi-nomadic and denotified tribes, Adityanath announced a housing scheme and a welfare board, and provided land to them. "I would request Minister Asim Arun to provide land and housing for these tribes. Such measures will give them true freedom," said the CM.

The presence of NISHAD Party chief and state minister Sanjay Nishad, who recently "dared" the BJP to snap ties with his party over "trust issues", on the stage along with the CM did not go unnoticed. Nishad lavished praise on the NDA governments in Uttar Pradesh as well as the Centre. Thanking the CM for the initiatives, he said, "The tribes that once used to run away from the police are today being recruited as policemen due to the BJP government's efforts. The CM has ordered a survey of the tribes and assured them of benefits. This

is the real Pichhda, Dalit, Advasi (PDA)." It was a reference to the Samajwadi Party's (SP) "PDA" plank, which it defines as the focus on the Pichhda (the backwards or OBCs), Dalits, and Alpsankhyak (minorities).

Amid cracks in the ruling alliance, Nishad reiterated his support for state and Centre governments and urged his community – the backward riverine castes – to back the alliance. "I had taken an oath to unseat those who had committed atrocities against tribals. The non-deserving Congress, SP and BSP should be out of power while capable forces like the BJP must be in power in Lucknow and Delhi," he said.

Adityanath's initiatives are likely to benefit 29 communities in Uttar Pradesh, which, according to officials, number about 1.5 crore. Sources said 14 of these communities are categorised as

Make anti-Romeo squads more active across UP, says Adityanath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 31

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday directed that the police's Anti-Romeo squads should become more active across all districts of the state, saying the "safety of women and daughters remained a top priority" of the government.

Chairing a review meeting on law and order ahead of the upcoming festival season, flood re

lief preparations and dengue prevention measures through video conferencing with divisional commissioners, district magistrates, police chiefs and senior officers, the CM announced to launch a new phase of Mission Shakti during Sharadiya Navratri, a press statement quoted him saying.

He also underlined that negligence in resolving public complaints will not be tolerated, and that every complaint received through the IGRS (Integrated Grievance Redressal System) and

the CM Helpline must be addressed satisfactorily from the complainant's perspective.

"Public interest is paramount and the government is fully accountable to the people. The complainant's satisfaction and feedback will be the true benchmark of an officer's performance," the Chief Minister said, instructing officers to ensure grievance redressal with sensitivity and respect for victims' sentiments, warning that disciplinary action will follow against those filing false reports.

In Nainital, a raging fire, an old house and memories of a lost time

AISWARYA RAJ

DEHRADUN, AUGUST 31

WITH THE fall of the Old London House, one of the early buildings from the British years in the city, Nainital grieves the loss of another stately monument of memory. Part of the structure was gutted by a fire Wednesday night, leaving its long-time occupant – 82-year-old Shanta Bisht – dead.

The building she used to inhabit predicated most of the settlements, including the historic and weathered High Court of Uttarakhand. Established in 1863, the Old London House was one of the buildings from the early years of Nainital, coming up in tandem with the British town founded in the 1840s.

The Old London House came up to cater to the undersecretaries travelling to the city. They would stay in the massive four-

storied building with five flats, while one of the floors was allotted to their staff, Rawat says.

The selection of Nainital as the summer capital was an easy choice, as the city was untouched by the 1857 revolts, and the British took refuge in the hill town. After 1862, Nainital became a hub for educational institutions: St. Joseph's and Sherwood College for boys, and St. Mary's Convent and All Saints' College for girls.

"After the independence, the property came into the hands of the Sah community, the traders of Kumaon. My father, DS Rawat, purchased it and handed it over to my sister, Swarnlata Rawat, in 1971. This was later given to Shanta Bisht and her son Nikhil Singh as Swarnlata died unmarried," he says.

Rawat says his sister could have been saved had it not been

for the "lackadaisical approach and lack of coordination" by the authorities. "This place is hardly five minutes' drive from the fire station. It took the authorities more than five hours to douse the fire," he says. The property

housed 10 shops, but the quarters where Bisht stayed were affected.

Made out of timber, the building carrying the memory of the British town had become a "dilapidated old structure", says Pradeep Tewari, who runs Narain

Bookstore, set up 96 years ago. He attributes the loss of the structure to urban expansion and austere maintenance. He remembers the time when Bisht and her sister Rawat would take a stroll on the Mall Road along the lake. Growing up in Mallital – where the bazaar stands – along with the city's signature mosque, gurdwara, and temple, Tewari was brought up on the stories of the buildings. "After being unseated by the new London House by cloth merchants, it was christened as Old London House," he says.

The district administration said that in the firefighting operation, the local police force, fire teams, the Air Force fire team, along with additional fire tenders requisitioned from Bhawali, Bhimtal, Ramnagar, Haldwani, and other districts, were actively

typical of mid-19th Century hill stations, featuring a timber frame, steep roof, wide verandahs, and high ceilings designed to suit the summer lifestyle of British officials. The ground floor was used by servants who attended to the British officers.



The August 27 fire destroyed a part of Old London House and killed its long-time occupant, 82-year-old Shanta Bisht. Express

SOME LARGE ENTITIES PLANNING RELOCATION STRATEGIES

US tariffs bring into focus India's market distortions; exporters plan workarounds

ANIL SASI

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

A mid-sized clothing export house on the outskirts of the national capital landed a sizable order from a Texas-based American retailer. The sheer size of the order meant sourcing fabric from one textile mill, that too from a single lot, in order to ensure shade consistency. Not one mill in India qualified, given the relatively small size of operations of individual units that entrepreneurs deliberately limit for easier labour-related compliances. A supplier in Bangladesh was identified, who, in turn, contracted to source the fabric from China. The new QCO (quality control order) norms on man-made fabric in India meant the shipment was stuck for an extended period of time before landing at the export house, resulting in the order eventually getting pared down by the buyer.

Gurugram-based Pearl Global Industries' diversification strategy of expanding its operations to Vietnam, Indonesia, and Bangladesh is suddenly paying dividends in the face of the American tariffs. As the company is able to continue executing orders with American clients while using its location advantage and the relative duty arbitrage, other larger players are now looking to follow suit. While Bangladesh has been a destination for Indian exporters, others such as Indonesia and Vietnam are being explored, industry players said.

Tata Group-owned Titan, the country's biggest jeweller and watchmaker, which announced a deal worth over \$280 million to acquire a majority stake in Dubai-based luxury retailer Damas in August, is looking to move some of its manufacturing to West Asia. Delhi-based EV company Omega Seiki Mobility too is setting up a \$25 million vehicle assembly plant in the UAE's Jebel Ali Free Zone.

■ ■ ■

The US tariffs have brought back sharply into focus the hurdles India's structural anomalies and market distortions end up placing



File

on manufacturers, especially exporters. Some of the larger entities, especially garment exporters, have started moving part of their manufacturing base out of India to mitigate some of the emerging risks and also get around the multiple contradictions in regulations that work at cross-purposes and weigh down entrepreneurs. While garment exporters are following Pearl Global's lead, others such as jewellery makers are looking at West Asia.

Market distortions

In the country's textiles and the clothing segment, for instance, there are two lingering contradictions:

One, India is perhaps unique in encouraging competition on finished garments, while at the same time protecting the raw materials and the inputs – a complete reversal of economic logic. Ideally, raw material should be made available to manufacturers and exporters at the lowest level of price through active competition, including the permission to import inputs that we are lacking in. The entire effort should be to boost exports of the finished goods. But it is the other way around.

Second, around 70 per cent of the garments sold the world over are non-cotton, essentially synthetics, sportswear, and man-made fabric-based dresses, while cotton comprises just 30 per cent. India's clothing exports are exactly the reverse – around 70 per cent is cotton while only 30 per cent is synthetics. This is primarily because imports of man-made fibre have been made cumbersome and expensive by the imposition of tariffs and non-tariff barriers such as the Quality Control Orders or QCOs, which end up making raw

Bangladesh and Vietnam have succeeded because they allowed open trade policies on inputs, given that both countries do not have a substantial cotton or man-made fibre base. So exporters can import inputs from any geography at relatively lower duties. In India, it is exactly the reverse. Competition is allowed at the final stage of the garmenting value chain, but the input stages are tightly controlled to protect some domestic man-made fibre players at the cost of exporters. Those who have diversified their export manufacturing base now attest to the benefits of moving out of India and are now at a significant advantage after the US tariffs have

come into play. The ones impacted the most are smaller exporters who are unable to shift bases or can lobby the government for cheaper access to inputs," the industry representative quoted above said.

A government representative that *The Indian Express* spoke to on the issue said that inverted duty structure is a problem that has existed for decades and that in the last ten years, the NDA government has tried addressing the inversion issue across sectors. "The new GST rate rationalisation exercise would further ease some of these anomalies," the official said.

Trump tariff Impact

The Centre is exploring the possibility of a stop-gap package, including cheaper credit. The problem is that it is not known how long this pain will last and if there is no visibility into how the demand itself will be impacted, credit sops can only solve a small part of this problem. The Federation of Indian Export Organisations said Tuesday that textiles and apparel manufacturers in Tirupur, Noida, and Surat have halted production amid worsening cost competitiveness and uncertainties over flow of fresh orders.

In terms of interventions to counter the impact of the Trump tariffs, another official linked to the EAC-PM said that there is an expectation that the 25 per cent secondary tariffs will get removed over time. The post-pandemic interventions would be a template this time around too, given that the American tariffs threaten a demand shock.

The challenge for the government is that whatever measures are announced, they are not US-specific. They have to be general measures, since an incremental sop for a particular market such as the US could lead to the imposition of a corresponding countervailing duty by Washington – something that has happened in the past.

There has been a demand from industry to restore the Interest Equalisation scheme (IES), one of the most effective instruments to remove cost disability of Indian exports, that was inexplicably wound up by the central government last year. This

scheme provided much needed competitiveness to India's exports, particularly to the MSMEs, as the interest costs in India are much higher than in competitors' countries. It was a relatively small scheme with some Rs 2,500 crore annual expenditure available mostly to the MSMEs, and not to the larger firms. "That scheme was withdrawn last year, and needs to be reintroduced. The allocation may have to be increased now," GTRI's Srivastava said.

Some of the bigger exporters have started talks with big domestic retailers such as Reliance Retail and the Aditya Birla Group for an entry into the domestic market, at least to ride out the secondary tariffs. Exporters have also asked the government for facilitating access to big domestic buyers, including the Indian Railways and procurement by various government departments and undertakings.

Meanwhile, downstream synthetic textile manufacturers are among those petitioning the government to make imports cheaper and withdraw QCOs on man-made fibres, which have distorted the competitiveness of the MMF supply chain by limiting access to specialised raw materials at competitive prices. QCOs on polyester and viscose inputs have exacerbated the woes of a sector already plagued by a demand shock. Some action on easing cotton imports has already commenced. A top CII representative said some of the QCOs were initiated after representations were made by domestic industry, including MSMEs. Other industry bodies contend that MSMEs have been rallying for the removal of these QCOs, which have been brought in singularly after lobbying by big industry players, who have a literal monopoly in sectors such as man-made fibres.

On companies looking to relocate out, what could be key for them is to meet 'rules of origin' criteria and avoid getting labelled as transhippers. Companies typically need to demonstrate 35-40 per cent local value addition, as per US norms. This means that a meaningful portion of manufacturing, assembly, or finishing must take place in these external markets that they're increasingly relocating to.

At the very base level, we have a platform that can be provided to the lender either as a SaaS (software as a service) offering or an on-prem (on-premises) deployment, where the lender can – without doing any coding, but just by knowing Excel and PowerPoint – be trained and they can create the journeys like on a piece of paper. Ultimately, whatever they're doing manually can be automated fully.

To make this platform operational, we connect it to various data sources. We have partnerships with 30-40 different APIs (application programming interface). They are connected based on the client's requirements and the whole journey gets executed in less than a second. Some clients might want to improve any internal rules and ask us for suggestions. That's where we bring in our scorecards and models. Those are our IP (intellectual property), which we train and keep validating and monitoring annually using real data. We can just drop that into the client's platform.

Would the ULI end up competing with you,

MARKET WATCH

MCAP OF 8 OF TOP-10 VALUED COS DROPS

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 2,24,630.45 crore last week, with Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank taking the biggest hit. Last week, the BSE benchmark dropped 1,497.2 points, or 1.84 per cent.

PTI

'Unified Lending Interface to be a big boon for AI players in financial services'



The RBI report on developing a framework for responsible and ethical enablement of AI in the financial sector wants to promote AI in the manner of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for payments: it wants a fund for data and compute infrastructure and high-quality financial sector data infrastructure to help build models. Will the strategy that worked for UPI and payments work for AI in financial services too?

The committee's proposal makes sense, but AI presents different challenges than payments. UPI succeeded because payments needed a standardised infrastructure. AI needs something more sophisticated: shared infrastructure to democratise access to high-quality data and compute, plus an AI innovation sandbox for testing.

The committee's recommendation for a dedicated fund to finance indigenous AI model development addresses a real problem. Unlike payments, where competition happens at the application level, AI benefits from shared foundational infrastructure while companies compete on implementation – think of it as building better roads so everyone can drive faster, not forcing everyone to use the same car.

India's financial data is fragmented across institutions, making it hard to build representative models. A shared backbone could help smaller players access quality data and compute power they couldn't afford alone, while preventing the bias that comes from training on narrow datasets. This levels the playing field without stifling competition. Companies will still differentiate on how they use these tools to serve their customers better.

Your clients are primarily non-bank financial companies (NBFCs) and fintechs. Is there a tendency for banks to depend more on in-house models?

Yes, the clients are mostly NBFCs and fintechs. We do have a few banks like Jana Small Finance Bank and Unity Small Finance Bank. We are also talking to a couple of other small finance banks. But the lion's share, yes, is not banks.

Banks tend to have large in-house teams and a sea of data scientists building models. But they do look at products from startups in a PoC (proof of concept) or PoC++ way. They don't take these products to replace their current main processes.

And because of our size and bandwidth, it's tough to go to these banks and play with their PoCs for a year or two and wait for them to make their decision. So, it's just that we have taken a conscious stance to start with fintechs who are the early movers on AI and digitisation and then to the NBFCs. Now, we are getting in front of the banks. Private banks are next in our journey.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com



WITH
JOYDIP GUPTA
HEAD OF ASIA-PACIFIC,
SCIENAPTIC AI

considering it has the
government and the RBI's
backing?

Actually, that won't be the case. We don't produce the raw data – credit bureaus, banks, and others do that. We take the raw data, enrich it, and build intelligence on top of it.

This completes the picture for a lender. What does the lender want ultimately: should I give a loan to this person? If so, how much should I give? And if there are slightly higher risks, can I change my interest rate? That is where we come in.

What the ULI is essentially saying is that there will be a unified interface where the data providers will provide the data and people like us, who are helping banks consume the data, will use that data. Today, if you ask an SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) for their financials, they will give you something in Excel, a printout, or at best something from Tally; there's no common system. Yes, there is the RoC (Registrar of Companies) and it will give some data. But account aggregators still don't give bank statements for the larger current accounts; they give for individual accounts and proprietorship current accounts only. In fact, a company like us struggles because we go with our models and clients say they don't have any data and ask us to scan PDFs. We do it, but that's not our forte.

So, ULI (will be) a big boon to players like us because, hopefully, it will incentivise the givers of data to give the data and it will lead to the standardisation of schemas and let us focus on what we do best.

Foreign investors withdraw ₹35,000 cr in August; biggest sell-off in six months



File

tations, further dampening investor appetite," he added.

According to KV Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Investments, the simple explanation for this massive selling by the FPIs is the relatively high valuations in India compared to valuations in other markets. This is making FPIs to move money to cheaper markets.

It is important to note that FPIs have been sustained buyers in the primary market for long. This year, despite massive selling through the exchanges, they bought equity for Rs 40,305 through the primary market where valuations of the IPOs are fair, he added.

On the other hand, FPIs invested Rs 6,766 crore in the debt general limit and withdrew Rs 872 crore in the debt voluntary retention route during the period under review.

'GST meeting, macro data to drive markets this week'

Mumbai: Equity markets this week would keenly track the upcoming GST Council meeting, macroeconomic data announcements and trading activity of foreign investors for further movement, analysts said. "A resolution of tariff disputes could act as a key catalyst for market sentiment," Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Investments, said. "The GST Council meeting will be a key focus, with expectations building around an accelerated implementation of proposed reforms," Ajit Mishra – SVP, research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Would the ULI end up competing with you,

power to tax."

The decision addressed the legality of Trump's so-called reciprocal tariffs set in April as well as tariffs imposed against China, Canada and Mexico in February, but does not impact those issued under other legal authority.

Trump on Friday blasted the decision and vowed to take the case to the US Supreme Court. The appeals court said his tariffs can remain in effect through October 14 to allow for appeals.

Trump weighed in again on Saturday in a social media post, saying "A big year ahead for the USA, maybe the BEST EVER, if the Tariffs are finally approved by the Courts!!!"

Greer did not say which countries the United States was still in talks with, but said he had spoken with one trade minister

power to tax."

The decision addressed the

legality of Trump's so-called

reciprocal tariffs set in April as

well as tariffs imposed against

China, Canada and Mexico in

February, but does not impact

those issued under other legal

authority.

Trump weighed in again on

Saturday in a social media post,

saying "A big year ahead for

the USA, maybe the BEST EVER,

if the Tariffs are finally approved

by the Courts!!!"

Greer did not say which

countries the United States was

still in talks with, but said he had

spoken with one trade minister

power to tax,"

The decision addressed the

legality of Trump's so-called

reciprocal tariffs set in April as

well as tariffs imposed against

China, Canada and Mexico in

February, but does not impact

those issued under other legal

authority.

Trump weighed in again on

Saturday in a social media post,

saying "A big year ahead for

the USA, maybe the BEST EVER,

if the Tariffs are finally approved

by the Courts!!!"

Greer did not say which

countries the United States was

still in talks with, but said he had

spoken with one trade minister

power to tax,"

The decision addressed the

legality of Trump's so-called

reciprocal tariffs set in April as

well as tariffs imposed against

China, Canada and Mexico in

February, but does not impact

those issued under other legal

authority.

Trump weighed in again on

Saturday in a social media post,

saying "A big year ahead for

Sandeep Dwivedi: Now that you have retired, do you go to bed more peacefully? Not thinking about the nets the next day or making a comeback? What are your new worries – getting milk, dropping your daughter off to school...

I haven't thought about the future yet but my daughter did mention, when I announced my retirement, that now on she can trouble me a bit more as I will be home all the time. That is something even I'm looking forward to, spending time with family and friends. Because all these years, I haven't even been able to celebrate many festivals. Now, since I'll be in Rajkot, we will try and have more get-togethers. I also want to do social service, contribute to Indian cricket and continue with my media work.

Sandeep Dwivedi: You might not have had the kind of IPL contracts that many young cricketers have but it must be gratifying to know the kind of respect you command among your fans, teammates and rivals?

It has been overwhelming. All the hard work that I put in for the Indian team was appreciated in a manner I didn't expect. When you have chosen Tests, the ultimate format of the game, and perform well in difficult conditions, at a time when the team needs it the most, people notice. These were the moments that were appreciated the most. I did miss out on IPL contracts but I don't regret it. The appreciation from around the world means a lot because it's not just my journey, it's that of my family, my extended family and my friends. I'm at peace that I've played for India for such a long time. When I started playing cricket from Rajkot and Saurashtra, at that time, no one thought that a cricketer from that region would play for India. I feel proud that a cricketer from Saurashtra played more than 100 Tests.

Sandeep Dwivedi: Many have said you were the last of the Test specialists. Do you think the classical Test match batting approach will go out of business?

I think most players picked for Tests are those who have performed in T20s, IPL or ODIs. There are very few players who are picked because of their Ranji performances. Even bowlers are coming into Tests from the white-ball circuit. That is the reason I feel the strength of modern-era batsmen is to play attacking cricket. They are learning the art of defending or leaving the ball when the situation arises.

When you ask youngsters what they want to achieve, their answer is to play all formats of the game. They might want to play Tests but their priority is to get selected in the IPL or play white-ball cricket for India. Once the opportunity arises in Tests, they want to be part of the Test squad as well. So the game is revolving around the white ball and that is why I feel going forward, we will see even more attacking Test cricket, five to 10 years down the line. At the moment, it is still sensible cricket. Players are assessing the situation and then counterattacking. But I think the game is likely to move forward with a higher strike rate. However, this can only happen if you are playing on a flat pitch. If you start playing on a challenging pitch, can one continue to play attacking cricket? The answer is no. So, in case a conventional Test player emerges from the Ranji Trophy, I still feel that he will have a chance to contribute to India's Test team.

Sandip G: How did you cope with uncertainty in the last two years of your career, from playing the last Test to announcing retirement?

One thing I had in my mind was that I wanted to enjoy cricket, whether I was playing for Saurashtra or Sussex, or to represent India again. I wanted to try and stay as relaxed as possible because when I look back at my cricketing journey, from making my debut for the Indian team in 2010, it has been a rollercoaster. I've had a couple of major injuries after that. I've had a bit of a tough time in England in 2014, but since then things have been progressing well. But there have always been some challenges in my cricketing journey and that's why I thought that towards the last phase of my career, I wanted to enjoy the game as much as possible. Yes, selection was on my mind. You always want to play at the highest level. But if it didn't happen, I don't have any regrets.

Sriram Veera: In your time there was talk of 'showing intent', which those in the earlier generation like

Rahul Dravid didn't have. He batted alongside Virender Sehwag, who was attacking than most. How did you deal with it and did it affect your game?

One has to stick to their strength and I stuck to mine. I kept batting the way I knew the best I can, to contribute to the team's success. Yes, there were some questions raised in between. But if you look at the 2018 or 2021 series in Australia, when I started performing well there, things started changing because they understood that there's always a role for a

ON BATTING WITH SACHIN TENDULKAR IN HIS FAREWELL TEST

I WAS NERVOUS BECAUSE I HAD TO FOCUS ON MY GAME, I HAD TO CONCENTRATE, WHICH WAS TOUGH. I WAS OVERWHELMED WITH ALL THE ACCOLADES HE WAS GETTING... HE TOLD ME THAT WE'LL TRY TO BE IN OUR ZONE, FOCUS ON THE GAME AND BUILD A PARTNERSHIP; WE DID

Lalith Kalidas: When Sachin Tendulkar retired, you were at the non-striker's end. What are your memories of it?

It was a full house at the Wankhede. I was there at the crease when Sachin 'paaji' walked in to bat and that was the loudest cheer I've ever heard on a cricket field. India only bat once in that Test and I was there throughout his innings. I was overwhelmed with all the accolades he was getting. I was a little nervous as well because I had to focus on my game. I had to concentrate, which was tough. When he was trying to say some-

Sandeep Dwivedi: Can you talk about your preparation before a match. What role has your family played and are you guilty of making certain family-related decisions for the sake of cricket?

I'm very particular about my sleep. I need eight hours of sleep every day before a game. For this, I would start preparing my body 48 to 72 hours before a game. Since I would go to bed at 10 pm since I leave the hotel by 7 for a 9.30 am game. I am a light sleeper so I need peace. One particular guilty moment was during the Test at Southampton where I told my wife Puja that she and our daughter had to move out of the team hotel. Since there was no

room available in the same hotel, I told her that they would have to find another accommodation because I need my sleep. We had a little bit of an argument, but finally she moved out of the hotel. I ended up scoring a hundred and she later told me that if I continued scoring hundreds, she wouldn't mind finding accommodation.

So, family support is important. You need to identify the moment where you need to be professional and when you want your privacy. But at the same time, their support is needed especially when playing away from home because sometimes there are big breaks between the games and you want to spend it with your family just to switch off from the game and focus on other things.

Mayank: Have you ever found it difficult to be at ease in the middle? Was it generally harder to get into that locked-in zone because you were so methodical?

It is not difficult because there's always a method behind what one is doing. But it's important to stick to your routine and preparation methods. Once you do that, you get into that zone where nothing disturbs you in the middle. But, is it difficult to get into

ON PHYSICAL FITNESS

SOMETIMES YOU END UP FIELDING FOR MORE THAN 200 OVERS. AFTER THAT, YOU HAVE TO WALK IN AND BAT AND ARE EXPECTED TO PERFORM BECAUSE YOU CAN'T MAKE THE EXCUSE THAT 'I'M TIRED' OR 'MY LEGS ARE FATIGUED'. YOU HAVE TO ENSURE THE TEAM DOESN'T LOSE

that zone? I don't think so, because when you practise for hours and hours, you have a lot of preparation even without practising. So, I do yoga and breathing exercises, I follow a prayer routine too, which also helps me immensely before a game.

Tushar Bhaduri: What role does good physical fitness play in long innings?

You are giving your best while fielding for a long period of time. Sometimes you may end up fielding for more than 200 overs. After that, you have to just walk in and think differently – has helped me.



SCAN THE CODE
TO WATCH VIDEO

IDEA EXCHANGE

CHETESHWAR PUJARA

INDIAN CRICKETER

WHY CHETESHWAR PUJARA

The lead act in India's maiden conquest of Australia, the braveheart in the 2021 heist, the stonewaller who made stroke-makers blossom around him for 15 years and disillusioned some of the toughest bowlers in the world, he has left an indelible imprint in Indian cricket. With his farewell, cricket has lost a rare artiste of batting time



bat and are expected to perform well because you can't make the excuse that 'I'm tired' or 'my legs are fatigued'. You have to ensure the team doesn't lose a game.

If you are fit enough, it helps you maintain concentration for longer periods of time. It also helps with your footwork. You can convert some of the singles into doubles, sometimes twos into threes. As you cross 30, that's when you try and work on your fitness a bit more, because that's when you feel a little more soreness in your muscles. If you want to prolong your career, you want to be at peak fitness when you are in your late 30s.

Shivani Naik: When India's batting unit fails, like in the home series against New Zealand, what do you think actually goes wrong?

If you are playing on a rank turner where the game finishes in two-and-a-half, three days, the skill of a player is taken out of the game. You are relying on luck to score a 50 or a 60, and to score a 100 is a phenomenal achievement. So we need to start playing on slightly better pitches. There should be assistance for a spinner, but the game should finish on day four or five. The pitches in England were exciting. They were on the flatter side. But there were times where the game wasn't moving forward.

ON TEST MATCHES AND THE WAY FORWARD

THE GAME IS REVOLVING AROUND THE WHITE BALL. FIVE TO 10 YEARS DOWN THE LINE, WE WILL SEE EVEN MORE ATTACKING IN TEST CRICKET. THE GAME IS LIKELY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A HIGHER STRIKE RATE

Venkata Krishna B: From the time you began, up until now, how do you see the quality of bowling in domestic cricket?

The quality of fast bowlers in each and every domestic team has improved a lot. Back then, when I started, most of the teams had quality spinners and I ended up playing more cricket on turning tracks. But now, teams have good all-rounders. Maybe in the quality of spinners, there is a bit of a difference. Because of white-ball cricket, most of the spinners are looking at containing and not picking wickets. They are just trying to adjust their bowling and learn the art of bowling with the red ball.

We have Jadeja, Axar and Kuldeep but if there are a couple of injuries and some of the players are not available, who are your replacements? That is where you need to have a bunch of players ready for the next level. I'm sure that will happen eventually but spinners need to be nurtured in domestic cricket.

Nihal Koshie: The BCCI has mandated the need to play domestic cricket when not on India duty. But with a packed calendar now, do you think it is fair?

It's important for the players to play domestic cricket. It raises the standard of domestic cricket. When top players participate, there's a lot of motivation. There are a lot of things some of the young domestic players can learn (from them). At the same time, workload needs to be managed. If you are a multi-format player, you can't be participating in every game, but you need to prepare if there is a Test series coming up. With that preparation, if someone can manage to play one or two games, that would be ideal.

It might be slightly different for bowlers. Someone like Jasprit Bumrah needs to manage his workload and can't be expected to play domestic cricket. But if there is a young fast bowler trying to develop his bowling in red-ball cricket, he should be playing as many matches as possible. The team management and coaching staff at the NCA should sit together and figure a roadmap for every player.

Nihal Koshie: Rohit (Sharma) and Virat (Kohli) are playing just one format. The World Cup is in two years, what advice would you give them?

Firstly, I don't need to give any advice because they are some of the best players in white-ball cricket. Even if they are just playing one format, they are experienced enough to know what is expected of them. They are such talented players. Look at the records Virat and Rohit have. They also know when is the right time to call it off.

Lalith Kalidas: What influence did Duncan Fletcher have on you? Can you talk about the others (coaches) as well?

I made my debut under Gary Kirsten and I learnt a lot from him. He was one of the best coaches I've worked with. I spoke a lot to Duncan about my technique. I remember him telling me, 'Do think your father,' – he knew that my father was my coach – 'because you have a strong foundation.' He also enjoyed working with Anil 'hai' because he gave a lot of inputs, ideas and tactical moves. Some of them helped me in being successful against Nathan Lyon. In general, his guidance about my batting – how to conduct myself, things a bowler tries to do to get a batter out, how you can counterattack, how to outsmart a bowler, how you can think differently – has helped me.

'No regrets missing out on IPL contracts... feel proud playing 100-plus Tests'

The eighth highest run-getter for India in Tests reflects on the art of defensive batting, future of classical batting, sacrifices of his family and himself, and batting with Tendulkar in his farewell Test.

National Sports Editor Sandeep Dwivedi moderated the session

classical Test match player. Your strike rate doesn't matter that much if you can contribute to the team's victory. I always looked at the bigger picture. As long as I was doing that, I knew I was doing justice to my ability.

thing, I couldn't hear him. So I asked him if he could speak a bit louder. He told me that we should try to be in our zone, focus on the game and build a partnership. And we did. I am proud that I was the only batter who bat with him in his last Test match.

room available in the same hotel, I told her that they would have to find another accommodation because I need my sleep. We had a little bit of an argument, but finally she moved out of the hotel. I ended up scoring a hundred and she later told me that if I continued scoring hundreds, she wouldn't mind finding accommodation.

So, family support is important. You need to identify the moment where you need to be professional and when you want your privacy. But at the same time, their support is needed especially when playing away from home because sometimes there are big breaks between the games and you want to spend it with your family just to switch off from the game and focus on other things.

It is not difficult because there's always a method behind what one is doing. But it's important to stick to your routine and preparation methods. Once you do that, you get into that zone where nothing disturbs you in the middle. But, is it difficult to get into

ON PHYSICAL FITNESS

SOMETIMES YOU END UP FIELDING FOR MORE THAN 200 OVERS. AFTER THAT, YOU HAVE TO WALK IN AND BAT AND ARE EXPECTED TO PERFORM BECAUSE YOU CAN'T MAKE THE EXCUSE THAT 'I'M TIRED' OR 'MY LEGS ARE FATIGUED'. YOU HAVE TO ENSURE THE TEAM DOESN'T LOSE

that zone? I don't think so, because when you practise for hours and hours, you have a lot of preparation even without practising. So, I do yoga and breathing exercises, I follow a prayer routine too, which also helps me immensely before a game.

Tushar Bhaduri: What role does good physical fitness play in long innings?

You are giving your best while fielding for a long period of time. Sometimes you may end up fielding for more than 200 overs. After that, you have to just walk in and think differently – has helped me.

with. I spoke a lot to Duncan about my technique. I remember him telling me, 'Do think your father,' – he knew that my father was my coach – 'because you have a strong foundation.'

He also enjoyed working with Anil 'hai' because he gave a lot of inputs, ideas and tactical moves. Some of them helped me in being successful against Nathan Lyon. In general, his guidance about my batting – how to conduct myself, things a bowler tries to do to get a batter out, how you can counterattack, how to outsmart a bowler, how you can think differently – has helped me.

Ex-prof, China hawk, India critic: Meet Trump aide Navarro

Navarro's argument

Navarro has linked India's oil purchases with its trade deficit with the US, saying New Delhi has extended a "financial lifeline" to Russian President Vladimir Putin's "war machine".

"We run a \$50-billion trade deficit with India—and they're using our dollars to buy Russian oil... A 50% tariff—25% for unfair trade and 25% for national security—is a direct response," he said on Friday.

India has seen a slowdown in oil imports from Russia in recent weeks, but, according to officials in the refining sector, the decision was driven by discounts on Russian crude narrowing, rather than US officials' public disapproval.

New Delhi has reiterated that the US had earlier encouraged India to buy Russian oil, to keep global prices from rising.

Key advisor to Trump

Navarro is a professor emeritus of economics and public policy at the University of

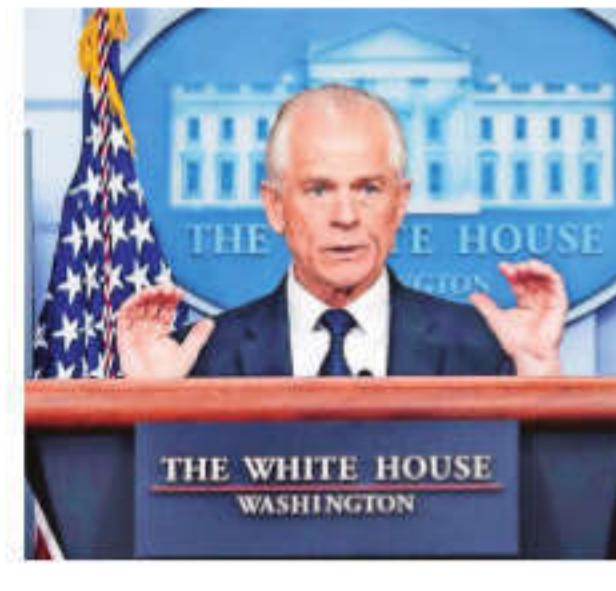
California, Irvine. He holds a PhD from Harvard University. Long before he became known as a Trump loyalist, in 1996, he ran for the 49th Congressional District as the Democratic Party nominee.

He met Trump while the latter was on the campaign trail nearly a decade ago, and ended up joining the first Trump administration (2017-21).

In 2018, *Politico* wrote of him: "Three years ago, Navarro was an obscure business professor in Southern California... Now, Navarro has more influence than perhaps anyone else in shaping U.S. trade policy into one grounded in the idea that America can never 'win' so long as other countries are reaping benefits, too."

This has been witnessed in Trump expanding tariffs on countries beyond China in his second term, and his contested view that trade deficits are always bad for a country.

Additionally, compared with Trump's first term, which saw established figures in the Republican Party attempt to influence and contain the administration, the loyalists-



Peter Navarro at a White House press conference in 2020. *Wikimedia Commons*

month sentence for defying a congressional subpoena from a committee investigating the January 2021 US Capitol riots. While announcing Navarro's appointment in 2025, Trump said he was "treated horribly by the Deep State, or whatever else."

China critic

Before his stint in the government, Navarro was best known for authoring several books on China, and for a controversy over one of the experts quoted in his works.

In *The Coming China Wars* (2006), he wrote about threats to the world due to the economic and military rise of China, covering everything from economy to climate change, and saying the country "cheats" on trade.

"Any time US politicians try to crack down on China's unfair trade practices, China and its growing band of Washington lobbyists quickly attack these politicians as 'protectionists'... In fact, it is perfectly reasonable for the United States to challenge China on its unfair trading practices," he wrote.

Navarro's books came under scrutiny

when it was found that he quoted a Harvard-educated expert across multiple works, later revealed to be a fake identity he created using letters of his own last name, "Ron Vara". He defended himself by terming it a "whimsical (writing) device and pen name."

Alongside Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, 64, and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, 62, Navarro is now among the top voices advising Trump on economic issues. Each of them has somewhat different approaches and views. For instance, the relatively more moderate Bessent was believed to have convinced Trump to announce a 90-day pause on the "reciprocal" tariff rates announced on April 2 on "Liberation Day".

A CNN report noted at the time that Navarro somewhat receding from public view was "fueling hopes on Wall Street that his influence had waned since markets began gyrating after tariffs rolled out in early April." Still, it termed him the "ultimate survivor in Trump's inner circle" who would be in front of the camera "whenever Trump wants to send his most hawkish message".

EXPLAINED SCIENCE

WHAT ARE BLUE DRAGONS, WHICH CAUSED BEACH CLOSURES IN SPAIN?



A blue dragon in Sydney, Australia. *Wikimedia Commons*

SEVERAL BEACHES in Spain — such as the beaches of Vivers in Guardamar del Segura, Santa Bárbara beach in La Línea de la Concepción, and Famara beaches in Lanzarote — were closed earlier this month after a tiny species of sea slug began to wash ashore in droves.

These were blue dragons — barely four centimetres long but capable of delivering one of the most ferocious stings in the animal world.

Their arrival, which has angered locals and ruined vacations during the peak summer tourist season in Spain, has surprised everyone, including scientists. Blue dragons are typically found in tropical waters and have rarely been seen in the Mediterranean Sea.

"We are all shocked... We've never had this little creature here before," Alfredo Villalba Barreto, mayor of Haría in Lanzarote, told *The New York Times*.

What are blue dragons?

Blue dragons (*Glaucus atlanticus*) are a small type of sea slug that live on the ocean surface, drifting with the currents. While other sea slugs live on the seabed, blue dragons float upside down, like when we float on our backs. They can do so by swallowing and maintaining an air bubble in the stomach.

The marine creature floats with its underside facing upwards in the water for a reason. It helps blue dragons "camouflage themselves with the sea's blue colour, and on their underside they are white, blending with sunlight when seen from below. It's a defensive strategy," Juan Lucas Cervera, professor of Biology at the University of Cádiz (Spain), told the Spanish newspaper *El País*.

Blue dragons have another unique trait. They feed on jellyfish and venomous siphonophores such as the

Portuguese man o' war, and incorporate the stinging cells of the jellies into multiple finger-like structures protruding from their bodies. This gives blue dragons a potent weapon against their predators.

Also, the venom becomes concentrated in the blue creatures, and their sting can be more powerful than that of the jellyfish they consume. A sting from a blue dragon can be extremely painful to humans and cause redness, swelling, nausea, and vomiting. However, it cannot lead to death.

What led to the arrival of blue dragons in Spain?

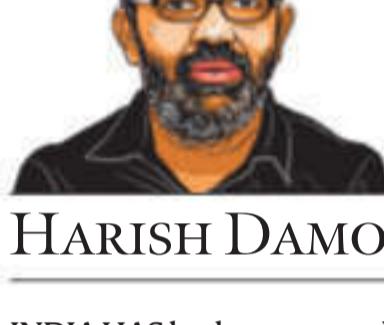
Blue dragons occur in the warm tropical waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans. In recent years, they have been cited farther afield, in countries such as Australia, South Africa, and the United States.

However, they have been rarely seen in the Mediterranean Sea. "The species was cited [in a scientific publication] in the second decade of the 20th century in the Balearic Islands, although the first record was in 1839 in the Canary Islands, but then a long time passed before it was detected again," Cervera said.

This has changed in the last five years. Scientists suggest that the blue dragons' arrival could be linked to rising Mediterranean temperatures, which brought more of their food sources, like the Portuguese man o' war, into the region, according to a report by *The New York Times*.

The Mediterranean Sea is one of the fastest-warming water bodies — at the end of June, temperatures exceeded 28 degree Celsius, with thermal anomalies of five degrees.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE



HARISH DAMODARAN

INDIA HAS had a very good southwest monsoon this time, with cumulative rainfall during June-August at 6.1% above the historical average or normal for these three months. The rains have, moreover, been temporally and spatially well-distributed.

The country received 8.9% above the long-period average rainfall in June, 4.8% in July and 5.5% in August. Even May, technically preceding the monsoon season, recorded 106.4% above-normal precipitation.

In terms of geographical spread, 33 out of the country's 36 meteorological subdivisions have registered normal rainfall. Rains have been deficient — below 80% of the normal for the June-August period — only in Bihar, Assam & Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh.

The monsoon's timely arrival and progress has resulted in farmers planting more area under *kharif* crops this year. As on August 22, they had sown 420.4 lakh hectares (lt) under rice, 7.6% up over the 390.8 lt for the corresponding period (from June) last year. The other crop to have posted a notable acreage jump, from 83.6 lt to 93.3 lt or 11.7%, is maize.

Fertiliser sale impact

When the monsoon is good — rains ensure adequate soil moisture, apart from filling up reservoirs and recharging groundwater tables — farmers plant with gusto, reflected in higher acreages. They also buy more fertilisers supplying nutrients — such as nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and sulphur (S) — that are as essential for plant growth as water and sunlight.

Table 1 shows double-digit growth in sales of most fertilisers during April-July 2025 over April-July 2024. That includes urea, single super phosphate (SSP), muriate of potash (MOP) and complex fertilisers containing N, P, K and S in different combinations.

The only fertiliser whose sales have dipped, by 12.8%, is diammonium phosphate (DAP).

TABLE 1 SALE OF MAJOR FERTILISER PRODUCTS

	2023-24	2024-25	Apr-Jul 2024	Apr-Jul 2025	%Growth
Urea	357.80	387.74	108.86	124.28	14.2
DAP	108.12	92.81	29.44	25.68	-12.8
NPKS	110.73	142.14	39.34	50.03	27.2
SSP	45.44	49.28	15.55	20.01	28.7
MOP	16.45	22.02	4.94	7.05	42.8

Source: The Fertiliser Association of India.

TABLE 2(A) IMPORT OF UREA

	2023-24	2024-25	Apr-Jun 2024	Apr-Jun 2025
China	21.48	1.04	0	0.02
Oman	19.26	29.56	6.28	2.81
Russia	15.93	9.24	3.41	1.91
Qatar	4.18	9.79	0.97	1.30
UAE	7.48	5.01	0.44	0.31
S Arabia	3.41	5.98	0.29	0.60
TOTAL*	80.06	69.10	12.10	7.75

Figures in Lakhs tonnes *Includes other countries. Source: Department of Commerce.

TABLE 2(B) IMPORT OF DAP

	2023-24	2024-25	Apr-Jun 2024	Apr-Jun 2025
China	22.87	8.43	2.11	0
S Arabia	15.86	18.96	5.34	5.50
Morocco	10.49	10.26	1.65	1.68
Russia	3.41	2.69	0.33	0.66
Jordan	1.74	2.38	0.91	0.56
TOTAL*	55.96	45.60	11.78	9.41

April-July 2025, at 93.6 lt, was lower than the 102.1 lt of April-July 2024. DAP output was flat at 13.7 lt, while it went up for NPKS complexes (from 35 lt to 37.4 lt) and SSP (from 17.1 lt to 19.1 lt). In the case of urea and DAP, there has been a decline in imports as well.

Demand outpacing supply has caused a sharp depletion in stocks of major fertilisers.

As per government data, urea stocks on August 1, at 37.2 lt, were lower than the 86.4 lt for the same day of 2024. So were that of DAP (13.9 lt versus 15.8 lt), complexes (35 lt versus 47 lt) and MOP (6.3 lt versus 8 lt). SSP stocks were marginally higher (20.7 lt versus 20.1 lt).

Given that India's 161 major reservoirs are currently filled to nearly 83.5% of full storage capacity, on top of replenished underground aquifers, one can expect fertiliser demand to be strong during rabi too. That would call for stocking up well in advance.

Imports of both urea and DAP have been falling after 2023-24, primarily due to a supply squeeze by China (Table 2(a) and (b)). That should hopefully ease with the recent rapprochement between the two countries.

"We must also look at ways to cap, if not cut, urea and DAP consumption. Farmers can replace at least one bag of urea with ammonium sulphate having 20.5% N and 23% S content. The government can, likewise, restrict DAP use only to paddy and wheat, while promoting complexes for other crops," added Ravi Prasad.

Given this pattern of consumption, it's not surprising that news reports and videos of farmers standing in serpentine queues to procure their bare minimum requirement of urea bags were in wide circulation from late-July. "By then, the fear factor also set in, with many farmers buying to pre-stock and not just to meet current crop requirements. That amplified the actual extent of shortage," said G. Ravi Prasad, a fertiliser industry veteran.

Policy lessons

The government probably underestimated the increased demand for fertilisers during this *kharif*, particularly on account of rice and maize. Both these are high nitrogen-consuming crops requiring three bags or more of urea per acre. This is unlike soybean and pulses, which are naturally nitrogen-fixing and require barely a bag of urea as a basal dose. Farmers expanded rice and maize acreages, while simultaneously planting less soybean and pulses.

With the peak fertiliser consumption period for *kharif* over, the government will now have to plan supplies for the upcoming rabi winter-spring cropping season.

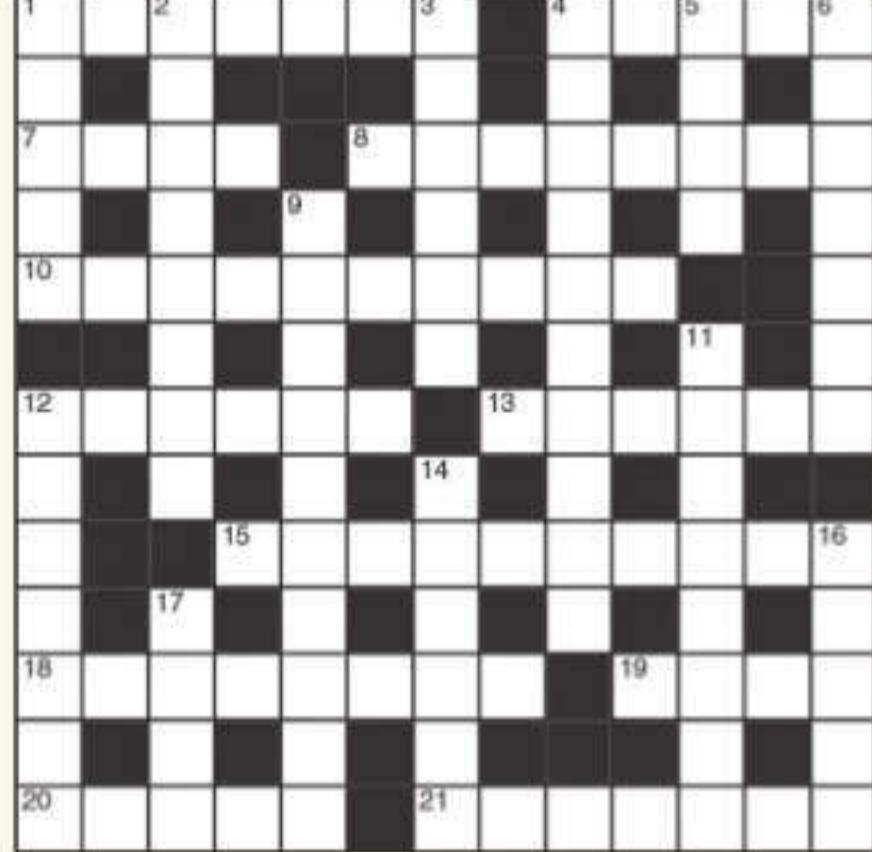
Given that India's 161 major reservoirs are currently filled to nearly 83.5% of full storage capacity, on top of replenished underground aquifers, one can expect fertiliser demand to be strong during rabi too. That would call for stocking up well in advance.

Imports of both urea and DAP have been falling after 2023-24, primarily due to a supply squeeze by China (Table 2(a) and (b)). That should hopefully ease with the recent rapprochement between the two countries.

"We must also look at ways to cap, if not cut, urea and DAP consumption. Farmers can replace at least one bag of urea with ammonium sulphate having 20.5% N and 23% S content. The government can, likewise, restrict DAP use only to paddy and wheat, while promoting complexes for other crops," added Ravi Prasad.

The ED ensures

CROSSWORD 5769



ACROSS

- 1 Sailor gets back money from well-known thief (7)
4 It was once abnormally restricted in fashion (5)
7 I need a doctor for the foot (4)
8 A commendation by no means rare in cookery (4,4)
10 You may have to fight to get seats on it (5,5)
12 Drink sounds dear to the French (6)
13 Doesn't differ in meagre essentials (6)
15 Still of use to writers say? (10)
18 One who goes on watch (8)
19 Turn pale; guilty perhaps? (4)
20 Upset new arrangement (3-2)
21 He makes an example of one (7)

Solutions Crossword 5769 Across: 1 Never-ending, 9 Leisure, 10 Ranch, 11 Stag, 12 Formulae, 14 Sides, 16 Morsel, 18 Coverage, 19 Asia, 22 Entry, 23 Starle, 24 Reading desk Down: 2 Evita, 3 Eonus, 4 Erenow, 5 Dartmoor, 6 Nonplus, 7 Closest, 8 Cheerleader, 13 Betrayed, 15 Devotee, 17 Eggson, 20 Sites, 21 Land.

DOWN

- 1 Pot roast? (5)
2 Still contrived (8)
3 The reason to go off course in a boat (6)
4 A capital gumboot (10)
5 A boy of four getting nothing right (4)
6 A likely backer for the training of climbers (7)
9 Source of ghostly light? (6,4)
11 A pound of sultanas? (8)
12 Understands the dog's in and locks up (7)
14 Peter's seen around with Meryl (6)
16 Long time coming to the point (5)
17 Notice a stain (4,5)
21 Property to come down (4)

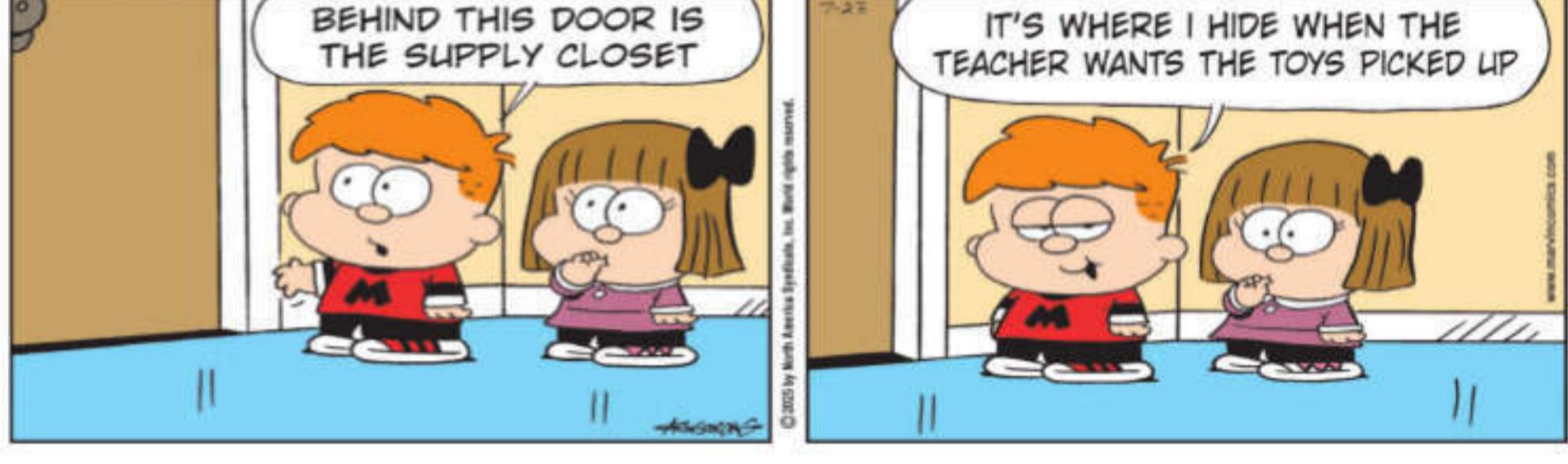
OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given query.

I am happy and content because _____ - Alain-René Lesage (1,5,1,2)

IRRAD

ALUMNA

TIFFS

HKSNAE

Answer: RADII, STIFF, MARINA, SHAGEN

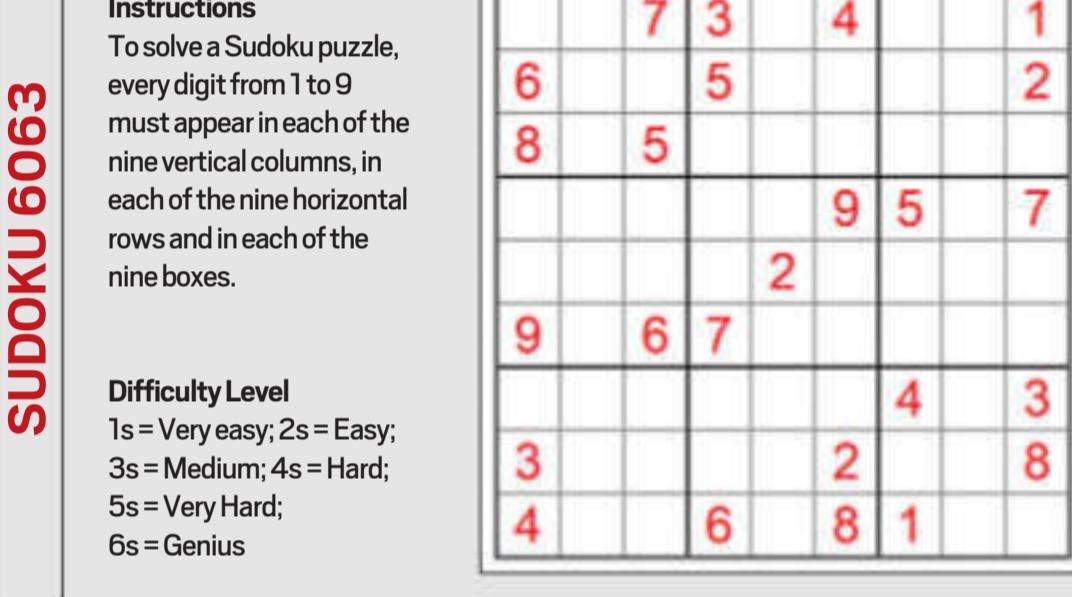
Solutions: RADII, STIFF, MARINA, SHAGEN - Alain-René Lesage

Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard;
6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 6062



BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, DIVISION BENCH, CHENNAI

COMPANY SCHEME PETITION NO. CP(CAA)/43(CHE)2025 CONNECTED WITH

COMPANY SCHEME APPLICATION NO. CA(CAA)/16(CHE)2025

read with Sections 230 to 232 of the Companies Act, 2013 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Companies (Compromise, Arrangements and Amalgamation), Rules, 2016

In the matter of Composite Scheme of Arrangement and Amalgamation Between

Cura Healthcare Private Limited (Demerged Company)

And

Adonis Medical Systems Private Limited (Resulting/Transferee/Amalgamated Company)

And

3I Medical Technologies Private Limited (Transferor/Amalgamating Company)

And Their respective shareholders and creditors

CURA HEALTHCARE PRIVATE LIMITED

CIN: U51397TN1998PTC121627

Refex Towers, 2nd floor, 313, Valluvar Kottam High Road,

Sterling Road Signal, Nungambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600034

Petitioner Company -1 / Demerged Company

CINA MEDICAL SYSTEMS PRIVATE LIMITED

CIN: U533110T2020PTC139683

Refex Towers, 2nd floor, 313, Valluvar Kottam High Road,

Sterling Road Signal, Nungambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600034

Petitioner Company -2 / Resulting Company/ Transferee Company/ Amalgamated Company

NOTICE OF HEARING OF THE PETITION

A Joint Petition under Sections 230 to 232 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, dated June 20, 2025, seeking an order for sanctioning the Composite Scheme of Arrangement and Amalgamation proposed between Cura Healthcare Private Limited (Petitioner Company -1 / Demerged Company) and Adonis Medical Systems Private Limited (Petitioner Company -2 / Resulting / Transferee Company/ Amalgamated Company) and 3I Medical Technologies Private Limited (Petitioner Company -3 / Transferor Company / Amalgamating Company) and their respective Shareholders and Creditors ("Scheme") was presented by the Petitioner Companies. By an order dated August 19, 2025, the said Joint Petition was admitted and has been fixed for hearing before the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Chennai Bench on October 01, 2025, for considering the approval of the Scheme as sought for.

Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said Joint Petition should send to the Companies' Advocate at the address mentioned below, notice of his/her intention, signed by him/her or his/her Advocate along with the appropriate authorization, with his/her name and address, so as to reach the Companies' Advocate not later than two days before the date fixed for hearing of the Petition. Where he/she seeks to oppose the said Joint Petition, the grounds of opposition along with a copy of his/her affidavit shall be furnished with such notice.

A copy of the Joint Petition will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.

Sd/-
Mr. Pawan Jhabak,
Counsel for the Petitioner Companies
New No. 115, First Floor, Luz Church Road,
Mylapore, Chennai - 600004.

Dated: 01 September 2025

Place: Chennai



BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

Office of the Chief Engineer (Project)

3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G.Road, Bangalore - 560 009

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EoI)

BWSSB invites Expression of Interest from qualified agencies to support the Board in obtaining ISO 50001 certification for key Water Pumping Stations located at T.K.Halli, Harohalli, Tataguni, and the BWSSB Head Office.

EoI work will be available on the website from: 01.09.2025. The last date for proposal of EoI: 10.09.2025 upto 16:00. The details regarding the EoI and participation in the process can be obtained by logging on to bwssb.karnataka.gov.in. For further details contact undersigned office during the working hours.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Project)

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH (DME), MEGHALAYA PASTEUR HILLS, SHILLONG

Email ID:pasteurinstituteshil@gmail.com, Tel No. 0364-2591510/94851 06663

NOTICE

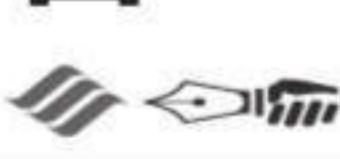
This is to inform all concerned stakeholders that the tenders for the "Supply and Installation of Set of Equipment/Items for Departments of Microbiology, Pathology, Pharmacology & Preventive & Social Medicine as per NMC at Shillong Medical College, Shillong," issued under the Directorate of Health Services Medical Education & Research (DME) vide NIT No. DHSME&R/SMC/TENDER/180/2025/939, DHSME&R/SMC/TENDER/180/2025/940, DHSME&R/SMC/TENDER/180/2025/941 dated 11/07/2025, stands cancelled with immediate effect.

Sd/-
Director of Health Services
MIPR No:1508
Dt: 29/8/2025

Medical Education & Research (DME)
Meghalaya, Pasteur Hills, Shillong

For All Advertisement Booking

Call : 0120-6651214



Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,SUMAN BALA D/O VIJAY
KUMAR GUPTA W/O DHANRAJ
JAIN R/O FIU-6, PITAMPURA,
DELHI-110034,have charged
my name to SUMAN JAIN.

004080756-1

I,Laxmi Sharma W/O, Aditya
Sharma R/o 95, Vigyan Vihar,
Yamuna Sport Complex,
Karkardooma, Delhi-110092
have changed my name to
Anshika Sharma.

0040808619-1

I,Tanu Chawla, W/O Deepak
Chawla, R/O G-19, Radhey puri,
Krishna Nagar, delhi-110051
have changed my name from
Tina Satiya for all future
purposes.

0040808549-1

I,Ravinder Kumar S/O Lakhmi
chand R/O village Jagatpur, Gali
no. 5, Delhi-110084, have been
changed my name from Ravindra
Kumar to Ravinder Kumar for all
future purpose.

0050273435-1

I,Sanskruti Umair S/O Shri
Khudev Singh R/O Ishanpur,
Bhadesi, Aligarh,
U.P.202002,inform that Sanskruti
Umair and Sanjay Kumar both
the names are one and the
same person.

004080756-2

I,Km. Pooja D/o Ram Karan
Singh have changed my name
from Km. Pooja to Pooja for all
future purposes.

0040808747-1

BUSINESS OFFERS

ACRYLIC SHEET
POLYCARBONATE SHEET
Gangadham-Katraj Rd
Hill Top, Pune 37
whatsapp only
9426071410

PROPERTY FOR SALE

Platinum-9 World Tower, Wakad,
Pune's tallest commercial, iconic
award winning project & India's
1st 3 level 360° revolving
restaurant, dream investment in
premium showrooms, retail
shops, food court, smart
corporate offices & multipurpose
spaces 15ft. height, your legacy
starts here- once in a lifetime
opportunity. Contact-
7205970999.

0090379661-1

"IMPORTANT"

Whilst care is taken prior to
acceptance of advertising
copy, it is not possible to verify
its contents. The Indian
Express (P) Limited cannot
be held responsible for such
contents, nor for any loss or
damage incurred as a result of
transactions with companies,
associations or individuals
advertising in its newspapers
or publications. We therefore
recommend that readers
make necessary inquiries
before sending any monies
or entering into any
agreements with advertisers
or otherwise acting on an
advertisement in any
manner whatsoever.

DAY TODAY

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Last month's personal ups and downs may still have a profound effect, but remember you must wait until next spring for the acclaim you so richly deserve. Avoid pointless confrontations with partners.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

You can afford to congratulate yourself on recent achievements, even if you get the feeling that some of your successes have gone largely unrecognised, especially at work. You may charm others, but don't spin them a line or manipulate them into acting against their interests.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Everything still focuses on parts of your chart ruling love. Perhaps you already have an inkling that social and romantic affairs are about to improve. Your personal creativity should also soon take a leap forward, all the more so if you have acquired the necessary skills.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Today's news and choices presage next week's actions. You may now be forced to decide whether to pursue a current matter to its logical conclusion or let sleeping dogs lie. Remember that old saying - if it isn't broken, don't try and fix it!

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

The Moon directs your attention to home and family matters. The question of the moment seems to be commitment, but when feelings are so nebulous and difficult to define, the answers are difficult to find. Perhaps you should redouble your efforts to discover the truth?

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

The key to a successful day is good communication.

You are often forced to consider aspects of your life in a new light. Right now the question may be whether you have done enough to make yourself clear, or whether you have been responsible for misunderstandings.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Something very strange has been happening in your professional or public life. For one reason or another, you've had to return to the past for your information or inspiration, and you may now feel as if you've wasted your time. All this will change before the week is out.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

The very fact that the Moon is aligned with your sign may be accountable for your swings of mood, especially if you can't decide whether to go out or stay in. It is likely that you'll be much happier in a homely, secure environment than fighting for your ambitions at work.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

You can be secretive at times, and this is one of them. There may be perfectly good reasons to keep your thoughts to yourself, and nobody else has any right to demand that you reveal all unless you are willing.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

The time when Mercury forms a challenging relationship to your chart is often filled with confusion and inspiration in equal doses. This will be helpful if it motivates you to question fundamental improvements that are now necessary.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

The Moon directs your attention to home and family matters. The question of the moment seems to be commitment, but when feelings are so nebulous and difficult to define, the answers are difficult to find. Perhaps you should redouble your efforts to discover the truth?

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

A whole cluster of planets is aligned with dreamy and imaginative regions of your chart. In the final analysis, it may be more important for your personal happiness to pursue your worldly ambitions

DULEEP TROPHY

Badoni hits double ton, North, Central ease their way into semis



Ayush Badoni hit 204 not out. PTI

HAVING TAKEN a sizable lead that more or less put them in the semifinals, North Zone batsmen ground East Zone bowlers into submission as Ayush Badoni scored a double century in the Duleep Trophy quarter-finals on Sunday. Resuming the day on 388/2, North showed no intention of giving East Zone a chase as they feasted on an already tired attack that missed Mohammed Shami. The veteran pacer, playing his first first-class match since November, did not bowl on the final day.

Having sent down 11 overs in the second innings, Shami spent the day in the pavilion as a precautionary measure after rolling over his toe on Day 3. Fellow pacer Mukesh Kumar too didn't bowl in the second innings because of a thigh niggle. In their absence, East Zone were sent on a leather hunt. North Zone skipper Ankit Kumar, unbeaten on 168 overnight, couldn't get to a double century as he fell for 198. But Badoni, resuming the day at 56, showed how much he has developed in the red-ball format. Having tallied 499 runs in the last Ranji season, the Delhi batsman was fluent as he hit 13 boundaries and three sixes in his 223-ball stay for an unbeaten 204 - his second double century in first-class cricket. After stitching a 150-run partnership with Ankit, he combined with Haryana's Nishant Sindhu (68, 91b, 2x4, 5x6) for a 157-run stand for the fourth wicket to take the lead past 700. North finished with an overall lead of 833 runs. North Zone will face South Zone in the semifinals.

In the other quarterfinal, Central Zone's efforts to make the semifinals with an outright win was thwarted by a spirited effort by North-East Zone. Having taken a 347-run lead in the first innings, Central Zone declared at their overnight score of 331/7, setting North-East a 679-run target. And just like the first innings, North-East batsmen made Central work hard for their wickets. Batting with caution all through the day, wicketkeeper-batter Jehn Anderson (64 off 96 balls) and skipper Rongsen Jonathan (60 off 97 balls) scored fighting half-centuries to frustrate the Central bowlers, including Deepak Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed and Kuldeep Yadav. The trio went wicketless in the second innings.

BRIEF SCORES: North Zone 405 & 658/4d (Badoni 204*, Ankit 198) drew with East Zone 230; Central Zone 532/4d & 331/7d drew with North-East Zone 185 & 200/6 (Anderson 64, Rongsen 60).

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

SATWIK-CHIRAG RETURN WITH BRONZE

Chinese flicks & tricks end dream run

A 0-9 deficit in decider was ultimately too much to make up as Indian pair lost to Chen-Liu in three games and 67 unnerving minutes

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN
AUGUST 31

FOR ABOUT the first 10 minutes of the men's doubles semifinal at the BWF World Championships on Saturday, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty couldn't have dreamt of a much better start against Chen Bo Yang and Liu Yi than the scoreline they had produced. The Indians had taken a commanding 11-5 lead into the mid-game interval of the opener, and coach Tan Kim Her walked up to them and didn't have to say much.

His tone was peaceful, his words measured. Apart from a few minor tactical inputs, he told Satwik and Chirag just to organise themselves better, attack more from the side-by-side stance instead of back-and-front. But it didn't take long for Chen and Liu to cause flutters in the Indian camp after that coaching break. They stormed back into the match to wipe out Satwik-Chirag's lead.

Then, at 13-13, came a pivotal moment. Chen had the serve. With one fluid motion, he hit a flick serve, the shuttle arching over the head of Chirag into the back horizon. The Indian had to backpedal at pace, and while he managed to keep the shuttle in play, he was scrambling for position and Chen hit a clever winner to the backcourt with a backhand drive. The Chinese duo had a big smile. Liu was jumping, patting his partner on the back, high-fiving each other. It wasn't just the usual celebration of a point. It was the joy of executing a perfect plan. It seemed, at the moment, it all clicked together for them as they took the lead for the first time in the match at 14-13.

The flick serve to cause the scrambling of the Indians' defence was the highlight of their performance as the world No 11 duo from China pulled off an impressive 21-19, 18-21, 21-12 win in 67 minutes to end Satwik-Chirag's dreams of becoming the first doubles World Champions from the country.

There was a funny moment at 14-14 in the opening game as well as the broadcast showed the statistic for the longest rally of the match at that point. 16 shots. It said it all. The game was fast and furious, as men's doubles tend to be, and a lot of it was being played out in the first three shots: the serves, therefore, became all too important for both sides. It is here that the Chinese pair started taking control. The flick serve wasn't used too frequently at this stage. The rally for game point in the opener was a stunning exhibition of men's doubles badminton from both



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty lost the semifinal 19-21, 21-18, 12-21 on Saturday.

BWF/Badminton Photo

pairs, as they engaged in a furious flat exchange, with the Indians showing solid defence, before Chen got the height to put away a booming smash and walked off the court with a swagger. 21-19.

The second game saw the Indians fight back, and they didn't trail at any point. However, there were signs towards the back-end that the nerves were starting to get the better of them. There was a point at 14-11 when it was Liu - soon to become the Most Valuable Player of the night - who used the flick serve that had Chirag fall flat on his backside on the court. In that rally, Chirag managed to recover well enough to get back up, take charge at the net, yell "maar!" as he set up a signature backcourt smash for Satwik. But the flick serve had once again caused panic to the Indian defence. Back-to-back

flick serves from Chen saw India's lead go from 16-11 to 16-15.

A 32-shot rally to set up game points for the Indians offered up hopes of a definitive change in momentum. Chirag had endured a nervous few points during the Chinese comeback but he stepped up his shot quality just in time. In a lovely flat exchange from all four players, Chirag's racket-head changed the course of the point with a flat push; he came forward and put the shuttle away. The fight back had begun. Or so it seemed.

What followed at the start of the third game was scarcely believable. At 3-0, Liu hit a flick serve to Satwik, and then closed the rally with a sensational backhand smash winner while suspended mid-air. At 6-0, another flick serve, this time to Chirag, who was caught off balance at the baseline after the

return and turned around to his coaches with a frustrated look. In the blink of an eye, the Indians were down 0-9. And try as they might, it is not a position one comes back from, especially in the semifinals of a World Championships. At the change of ends, down 3-11, coach Tan said in the interval: "Be ready for return, they are just going flick, flick, flick." "Yeah, a lot of flicks..." Satwik agreed.

They did manage to find some rhythm in the backend but by then it was too late as the Chinese duo romped home. "We didn't really get any rhythm (in the third game)"

Chirag told BWF after the match. "I think we didn't start off that well. We gave away very easy points. They were also serving quite well. But I think we should have been a little smarter. We could have made a few changes. Not really rush into the service because they

INDIA'S MEDAL-WINNING STREAK AT WORLDS

- 2011: Ashwini Ponnappa-Jwala Gutta, bronze
- 2013: PV Sindhu, bronze
- 2014: PV Sindhu, bronze
- 2015: Saina Nehwal, silver
- 2017: PV Sindhu, silver; Saina Nehwal, bronze
- 2018: PV Sindhu, silver
- 2019: PV Sindhu, gold; B Sai Praneeth, bronze
- 2021: Srikanth Kidambi, silver; Lakshya Sen: bronze
- 2022: Satwik-Chirag, bronze
- 2023: HS Prannoy, bronze
- 2025: Satwik-Chirag, bronze

*No World Championships in Olympic years, 2021 being the exception

Definitely, I think this week has been really good. We played some really good matches. Beat players there who we've not had a good record against in the previous matches. Yeah, sad that we couldn't play that final, we really wanted to. But overall a good time."

CHIRAG SHETTY
ON THE PERFORMANCE AT WORLDS (VIA BWF)

were serving quite deep. But yeah, credit to them that they could put us out of place."

Satwik too credited Liu - who played like a man possessed at the start of the decider when he won 8 straight points on his serve. "We played really well but only in patches. Then again in the third game, I think he got a good feeling. It's all a matter of confidence, how mentally strong you are. Start of the third game, that stretch cost us," Satwik said.

And so Satwik-Chirag return with a second bronze at the World Championships - a medal that should give them plenty of joy, and relief, after all that they have gone through in the past year, as well as pride in beating two of the pairs on the way that have caused them heartache. But also, it leaves them with enough lessons to work on, improve and stay hungry for the bigger prizes to come.

With third Worlds gold, Yamaguchi stakes claim to be greatest

SHIVANI NAIK
AUGUST 31

2021 Olympic champion Yufei, who had rolled her ankle but still managed to beat World No 1 An Se-young in the semis, was restricted in her trademark movement tracking to the backcourt, given the injury impeded change in direction. But the Chinese, easily the cleverest and most intuitive shuttler of this generation, who had taken down Tai Tzu-ying at Olympics and the compulsive Tour-winning Korean to make finals, couldn't do much against the humblest, hard-working champion with a relentless work rate in retrieving everything covering the court.

Yamaguchi barely gets expressive, save for her tight smiles when cameras goad, and hardly ever speaks more than a few words. She has remained tireless all these years, repeating her win against Yufei from the 2022 final. The greatest talents from Thailand, Japan, Korea, India, Spain and Taiwan have now assembled to deny the Chinese the



Japan's Akane Yamaguchi won the women's singles title on Sunday.

a metronome, who also became the greatest Japanese shuttler, surpassing Kento Momota.

The ankle aside, Yufei had no answers to Yamaguchi's defense, which asks more questions than her attack. She dived, parried body shots, stuck her racquet out like an extendable charm across her body, jumped concave, and still hit snapping shots like a human catapult. At 5'2", Yamaguchi is one of the shortest shuttlers in women's singles, but her court mileage will consistently log double that of most.

Very early in the piece, at 6-2 in the opening set, Yufei threw all her tricks at every corner - net drops, far tosses, half smashes - but Yamaguchi picked everything and wrapped up with a straight smash on Yufei's backhand.

When Yufei busted her ankle, An Se-young had attempted to make her move more, and ended up exhausting herself.

Yamaguchi tested the Chinese on the lunge for sure, but mostly it was her signature drops that precisely fell at the net. She's been playing them for a dozen years, with no perceptible loss in sting. Yamaguchi is the storm under the natural veneer of a lull - no screaming, no arguing, no fist pumping, not even celebration roars, and she's got 3 World titles. The only time she might actually look at her opponent is to apologise for net cords, unfailingly. Nothing fazes her.

In 2018, when winning one of her two bronzes, there's an iconic podium photograph of the Japanese boggled wide-eyed watching Marin bite her gold medal at Nanjing. The commentators had mentioned how the whole idea was startling for her. On Sunday, Yamaguchi simply stepped up on the podium, lost in thought, staring at her flag rise up. You couldn't tell it was her third.

Kasparov's scorn for Gukesh's world championship title is way off base

AMIT KAMATH
AUGUST 31

somewhere else (Magnus) who is widely considered, by all metrics, as a better player," Kasparov had reasoned in May this year.

There is no denying that everything Kasparov said in May is accurate. Carlsen has been the world's best player for at least the past 12 years besides being the uninterrupted world no 1 for the past 15, a streak that is far from ending in the near future even though the Norwegian has admittedly lost his appetite to play classical chess and in the world championship. And no one is arguing that we have seen the best of Gukesh. He is, after all, still a teenager, with his peak in the sport possibly yet to come - a giddily exciting prospect for anyone that cares about the sport itself. Gukesh has plenty of room for improvement just like Kasparov did at the age of 21 when he played Karpov for the first time in a world championship in 1984.

In such a scenario, where Carlsen isn't interested in the world championship, what are we expecting from the teenage Gukesh? That he personally cajole Carlsen into playing him? Why must the Indian teenager bear the burden if an opponent has simply had enough with a form of sport?

If Gukesh's world championship title is "not the same" as that of his predecessors because Carlsen is the best player in the world at the moment, should that same reasoning be applied to measure the weight of Anatoly Karpov's world championship credentials? He did after all become the world



Garry Kasparov (L) believes D Gukesh's world championship title carries less heft than the first 16 world champions.

Lennart Ootes via Grand Chess Tour

sical world champions" ending should we add asterisks to world championship titles won in tiebreaks in rapid and blitz formats after the classical games proved inconclusive? That would cover titles won by Kramnik (2006), Visy Anand (2012), Carlsen (2016 and 2018) and Ding Liren (2023). Kasparov almost seems to imply that the likes of Gukesh and Ding Liren will not be considered real world champions until they take on Carlsen mano a mano in a world championship fight.

Has the bloodline of world champions always been as formidable as Kasparov seems to imply? Did all the world champions always "earn their right" to fight the battle and win it?

As far as Gukesh earning his right to be world champion goes, he did battle it out in the eight-man Candidates tournament, one of the sternest tests of character on offer before securing his shot at the world championship. There, he prevailed over the likes of Ian Nepomniachtchi and Fabiano Caruana (both of whom have played in world championships before), Hikaru Nakamura (who has been second behind Carlsen for decades in the standings), Alireza Firouzja (Carlsen's handpicked heir apparent), Praggnanandhaa (a talent as promising as Gukesh) among others.

Did all the world champions fight their way through the thicket of strongest contenders to earn a title shot?

Before 1950, the world championship rules stipulated that any contender hoping to

directly with the reigning world champion and secure funding, besides playing a role in organising the match. This meant any player with financial backing could earn a shot - literally - at the world champion's throne.

Alexander Alekhine - a man known as "the first chess hero" in his books - earned a rematch against Max Euwe in 1937 not by winning a qualifying tournament. He earned a world championship shot by simply asking for it. On *ChessHistory.com*, Edward Winter notes a clause in the 1935 World Championship contract between Euwe and Alekhine that made their rematch two years later possible: "If Dr Euwe wins the match in accordance with Article 4, he is first of all obliged to play a return match against Dr Alekhine if the latter makes such a request within six months of the last game being played. Within a further six months thereafter Dr Alekhine must deposit 2,000 guilders with a bank."

In the 1962 Candidates, a 19-year-old Fischer had ranted and raged about how the Soviet Union's players were playing out short draws against each other so that they could give their best against him, the American upstart threatening to challenge the Soviet hegemony.

All of this is to say that Kasparov's assessment of Gukesh's chess strength is completely accurate. But he must reassess his uncharitable evaluation of the Indian's world championship title credentials.

ASIA CUP HOCKEY

Second win, but no second wind

After beginning brightly against Japan, Harmanpreet's side finish match just about hanging on

SCORELINE

India	3	Japan	2
Mandeep 4'		Kawabe 38', 59'	
Harmanpreet 5', 46'			

MIHIR VASAVDA
AUGUST 31

INDIA TOOK off at the scorching speed of the Japanese Shinkansen. By the time they reached their destination, they were huffing and puffing like the good old Indian passenger train.

They can blame it on the heat — at the 3 pm push-back, the weather apps suggested it felt like 42 degrees Celsius. It was, however, Japan that made them sweat. The sharp, counter-attacking Japan that refused to be knocked out by the early blows, put up a stubborn fight and, despite the 2-3 loss, gave Craig Fulton's India enough to ponder over before the serious business — the Super 4s round of the Asia Cup — that begins in a couple of days.

Not a single Indian player celebrated Sunday's hard-fought win. Abhishek, the forward who was named the Player of the Match, was tch-ing and tut-ing when asked to summarise the performance.

Flying start
A beautifully worked field goal and a bamboozling drag flick did not even allow the former Asian Games champions to put up any resistance. Forced to switch to Plan B, Japan had to step out of their half more than they would have liked to in search of goals. This left their defence more exposed, and at that moment, it seemed like India would win by a comfortable margin.

Fulton's team began with such high intensity that Japan did not get any time to settle. Within 10 seconds of the push back, an aerial ball was played deep into Japan's half, demanding a quick intervention from the defenders. Minutes later, Manpreet Singh took a pop at goal from the top of the 'D' but the ball whizzed past the far corner.

India had parked themselves in the attacking third and were rewarded in the fourth minute. Harmanpreet Singh played what looked like a harmless pass towards Jarmanpreet Singh on the left flank. The full back played it forward towards Sukhjeet Singh who made brilliant use of his 3D skills — lifting the ball, controlling it mid-air while simulta-



India struggled to keep control of the game but edged Japan out for their second win at the Asia Cup in Rajbir on Sunday. *Hockey India*

Not a single Indian player celebrated Sunday's hard-fought win. Abhishek, the forward who was named the Player of the Match, was tch-ing and tut-ing when asked to summarise the performance

neously running forward — to enter the 'D' from the baseline before cutting it back for Mandeep Singh. The forward rounded off Japan's Shota Yamada and, on the turn, pushed the ball past goalkeeper Takahashi Yoshikawa to put India ahead.

A minute later, India doubled their lead. Shilanand Lakra used to pace to accelerate into the shooting circle. He was thwarted by two defenders from taking a shot at goal but the Indian forward drew a foul and won a penalty corner. After four retakes, Harmanpreet beat the Japanese goalie to score his fourth goal in two matches.

Heat has its say

It felt like the match was put to bed with two goals in the opening five minutes and a rattled opponent. India created enough chances in the second quarter to extend their lead — Abhishek ran the length of the field but couldn't get a decent shot at goal; Hardik sliced a pass from the centre in the hope of finding Lakra but the ball, which was deflected along the way, rolled away from the forward;

Dilpreet Singh played a ball across the face of the goal but once again, there was no one to tap it in.

And so it rolled on — India either lacked the quality final touch or the final pass.

In the stifling Rajbir heat, it was always going to be tough for India to continue playing with the same intensity. As the pace of the game slowed down, Japan, too, gradually found their footing.

The beautiful manner in which they opened up India's defence showed how they grew in confidence the more the scoreline stayed the same. The move began in Japan's half. Yusuke Kawaura and Kaito Tanaka played quick give-and-go passes to take Manpreet and Dilpreet out of the equation.

With ample space in the midfield, Tanaka continued his march forward and passed the ball to Kosei Kawabe, who received the pass on the go, took a touch to move away from the Indian defenders and, with his back to the goal, unleashed a powerful hit on the turn. Sanjay, who had another average outing, was a little out of position while Pathak's vision seemed to have been blocked by Jugraj Singh.

Any hope of a Japanese fightback was quickly quelled after Harmanpreet restored the two-goal cushion eight minutes later. But Japan would not go down so easily.

Even though the scoreline was 3-1 in India's favour, the match was a battle of equals as the stats showed — equal possession, India's 10 shots on goal to Japan's 9, but Japan with more penalty corners (9) to India's (6).

Against China, India walked away with a close 4-3 win, knowing they were clearly the better of the two teams on nearly all counts. That wasn't the case against Japan, even though they were less disciplined defensively than China.

When Kawabe beat Suraj Karkera — who replaced Krishan Pathak in the final quarter — from a close range, a Japanese comeback didn't seem improbable. Especially after India played the final stages of the match with just 10 men, with Harmanpreet sent to the sin bin. Somehow, they held on.

India look set to top their group. But as the final hooter went off, Mandeep, who gave India an energetic start, was down on his hunches. And he wasn't the only Indian player left gasping.

Six years later, stars align for a Gauff vs Osaka rematch

NAMIT KUMAR
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

IN 2019, THE US Open saw an early-tournament match made in heaven. Naomi Osaka, top seed and defending champion, would take on Coco Gauff, then just 15 and fresh from a breakout performance by reaching the Wimbledon fourth round. It was a contest between two huge fan favourites: the experienced world-beater against a prodigal teenager making her debut at the Arthur Ashe Stadium under the lights.

Osaka delivered a beatdown on the day, defeating Gauff 6-3, 6-0 and then sportingly comforting the teenager as she broke down in tears after feeling the heat of the spotlight for the first time in her life.

If the anticipation was that the match would spur a rivalry for the future, that could not be further from later reality. Gauff slowly mounted her ascension to the top of the women's game while Osaka's career appeared to be tapering off after dealing with mental health issues and a 16-month break for pregnancy and childbirth. With their careers diverging, it became a rivalry that was not meant to be. But six years later, the New York stars have aligned once again.

With Osaka having gradually, and sometimes frustratingly so, moved up the rankings with incremental improvements in her game fitness, she has lived up to her big billing by reaching the second week of a Major for the first time since her title triumph at the Australian Open in 2021. There, late on Monday at Flushing Meadows' showpiece arena for the early tournament's showpiece fixture, she will meet Gauff, the third seed.

This week in New York, above all else, the 21-year-old American, a two-time Major winner who won this tournament in 2023, has shown a spectacular appetite to gamble. Going through a coaching change to completely revamp her serve just one week ahead of her most important tournament of the year, under the watchful gaze of daily expectant crowds, has taken its toll on her.

She needed to grit and grind to come through in three sets in her opener against Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic, and then broke down in tears midway through the first set of her second-round victory over Donna Vekic. A much-needed boring, dominant 6-3, 6-1 win was found against Poland's Magdalena Frech on Saturday to finally set up a match where the expectations will not fall entirely on her.



Coco Gauff (L) and Naomi Osaka. AP

Osaka still draws major attention from crowds that remember her from her pomp, and slowly yet surely, she has gone about rebuilding herself back to her best. There have been promising performances all year, which saw her get back into the top 25 in the rankings and be seeded in New York, and she seems to have built up her game in time for the season-ending Major.

The four-time Major winner's work with Polish coach Tomasz Wiktorowski, whom she linked up with in July, seems to have spurred more confidence in her attack-first game. She opened her tournament with two routine straight-set wins and was looking in fine form until slipping up when she was up a break in her third-round match against Daria Kasatkina on Saturday. She came back firing, raising her levels as a top player does, to return with the 6-0, 4-6, 6-3 victory.

In terms of a matchup, there's plenty of intrigue in Osaka vs Gauff. A lot will centre around the indifferent form of Gauff with her reworked serve. At her best, Osaka was an elite returner, leathering shots back when her opponents missed their spots.

The American, on the other hand, can retreat into lockdown mode and produce defensive masterclasses when put under pressure, which would really test the physical fitness and sharpness of Osaka. Forehand and backhands may clash, returns and serves may vary, but the psychological edge may be key for two players who have often found their best while feeding off the New York crowd's raucous energy.

"I remember it was a tough moment for me because it was a hyped-up match. I remember looking back at it. I guess I put way too much pressure on myself," Gauff said about their 2019 encounter. "It would be a cool kind of déjà vu type of situation, but hopefully it will be a different result."

Szoboszlai wins it for Liverpool against Arsenal

SCORELINE

Liverpool	1	Arsenal	0
Szoboszlai 83'			

REUTERS
LIVERPOOL, AUGUST 31

CHAMPIONS LIVERPOOL struck an early-season title blow against rivals Arsenal in a 1-0 Premier League victory at Anfield on Sunday thanks to Dominik Szoboszlai's stunning free kick in the dying minutes.

Szoboszlai struck in the 83rd minute after Martin Zubimendi's costly foul on Curtis Jones, unleashing a shot from 25 yards out that ricocheted in off the inside of the post, which had the Liverpool fans chanting "Champions!"

With both teams winning their opening two games, the afternoon was a chance to set an early tone for the season, but it appeared to be heading for a goalless draw in a game billed as a battle between titans.

Liverpool's summer signing Hugo Ekitike thought he had broken the deadlock in the second half when he bundled in the ball after goalkeeper David Raya fumbled Florian Wirtz's shot. But VAR showed Cody Gakpo was offside in the buildup.

A relieved West Ham United manager Graham Potter described his side's 3-0 win at Nottingham Forest on Sunday as the first brick in the wall of their Premier League season after a woeful start. Heavy defeats by Sunderland on the opening weekend and then Chelsea at home had left Potter under pressure.

But after digging deep to keep Forest at bay in the opening period at the City Ground, West Ham scored three late goals. "The players deserve the night tonight, they deserve the win, they deserve the performance because of how they've acted and I'm really proud of them for that."

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola was left to rue a second-half collapse by his side after a bright opening hour as they succumbed to a 2-1 Premier League defeat at Brighton & Hove Albion on Sunday.

City led in the first half through an Erling Haaland goal on his 100th Premier League appearance and looked in control for 60 minutes until a James Milner penalty brought the hosts level.

As Brighton's intensity increased, City failed to cope with their movement and conceded again late on to Brajan Gruda's fine individual goal. "We concede the goal and after that, it (the momentum) shifted," Guardiola told Sky Sports. "Until then it was really, really good, we had chances and the team looked aggressive and dynamic."

Chopra leads 19-member athletics squad for Worlds

PRITISH RAJ
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 31

200m at the elite stage. Gulveer Singh and Pooja are the only two athletes who will be featuring in two events. While Pooja qualified in the 1500m via rankings, a couple of withdrawals meant that she was invited for the 800m as well. Same was the case with Gulveer, who qualified for the 5000m by entry standards and was invited for the 10,000m after withdrawals.

Apart from Neeraj, who won his Olympic gold medal in the Japanese capital four years ago, Sachin Yadav, Yashvir Singh and Rohit Yadav will line up in the javelin throw competition of the mega event to be held in Tokyo from September 13 to 21.

Apart from Neeraj, who won his Olympic gold medal in the Japanese capital four years ago, Sachin Yadav, Yashvir Singh and Rohit Yadav will line up in the javelin throw competition of the mega event to be held in Tokyo from September 13 to 21.

They are part of a 19-member squad — 14 men and five women — announced by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) on Sunday. Sachin and Yashvir qualified by rankings while Rohit received an invitation after the withdrawal of Spanish thrower Manu Quijera.

"I'm particularly pleased that we have four javelin throwers who have qualified. The last time too there were four, but Rohit Yadav was injured and could not participate. And we had all of them in the finals in the top six. So we hope that this time too they'll all be in the finals," former AFI president and current World Athletics vice-president Adille Sumariwalla said.

Chopra is expected to arrive on September 5 while the other javelin throwers will join him on September 10.

INDIAN SQUAD FOR WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025

Men's: Neeraj Chopra, Yashvir Singh, Sachin Yadav, Rohit Yadav (Javelin Throw), Gulveer Singh (5000m, 10000m), Animesh Kujur (200m), Tejas Shirse (110m hurdles), Praveen Chithravel, Abdulla Aboobacker (Triple Jump), Sreesankar Murali (Long Jump), Ram Baboo, Sandeep Kumar (35km Racewalk), Servin Sebastian (20km Racewalk), Sarvesh Anil Kushare (High Jump)

Women's: Parul Chaudhary, Ankita Dhyan (3000m steeplechase), Annu Rani (Javelin Throw), Priyanka (35km Racewalk), Pooja (800m, 1500m)

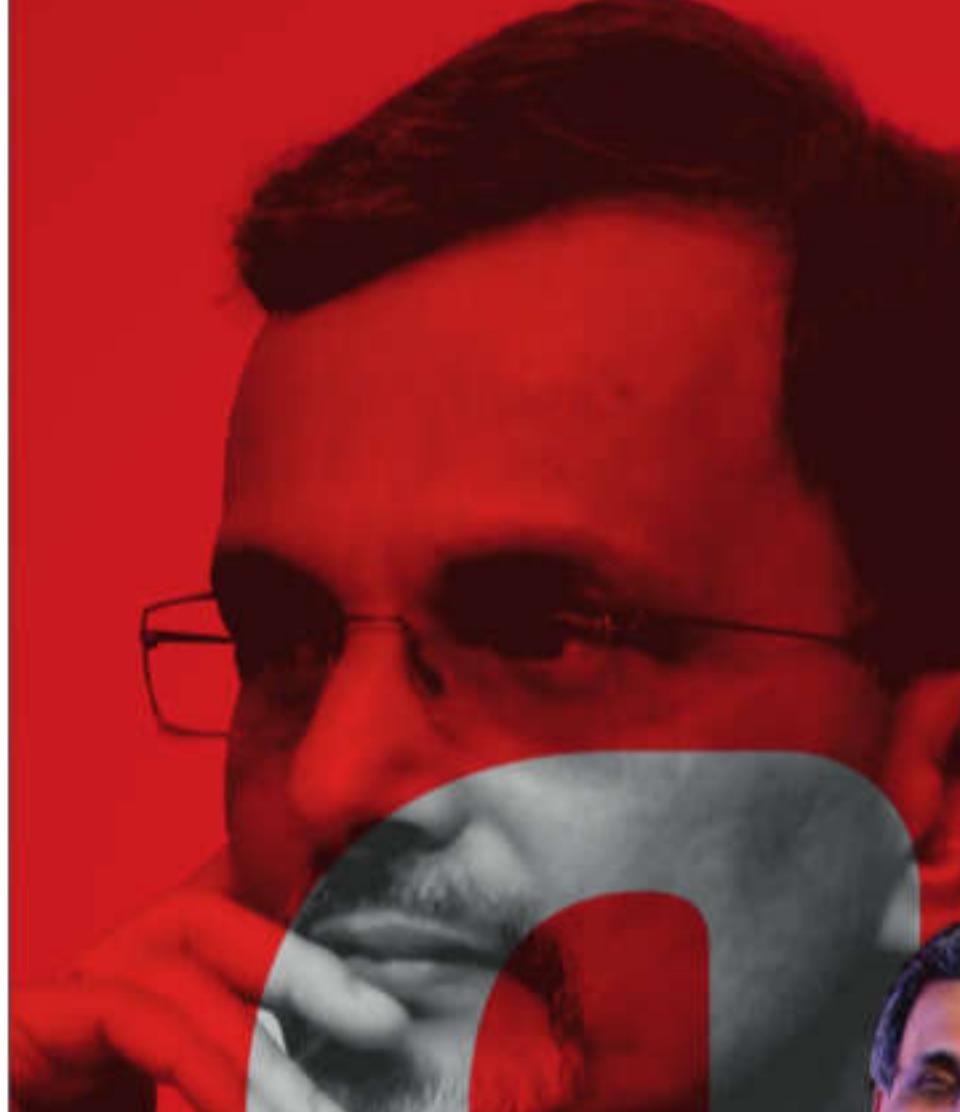


Neeraj Chopra will be joined by three other Indians for the men's javelin event. AP

Radico
SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE

presents

EXPRESS ADDA



V. Anantha Nageswaran
Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India

WHERE NEWSPACKERS DROP IN FOR A CANDID CHAT.

in conversation with

P. Vaidyanathan Iyer
Managing Editor, The Indian Express

Associate Partner
Experience Partner

Parul University
Aditya Birla Group

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE