Daily Current Affairs

Affairs

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The Hindu

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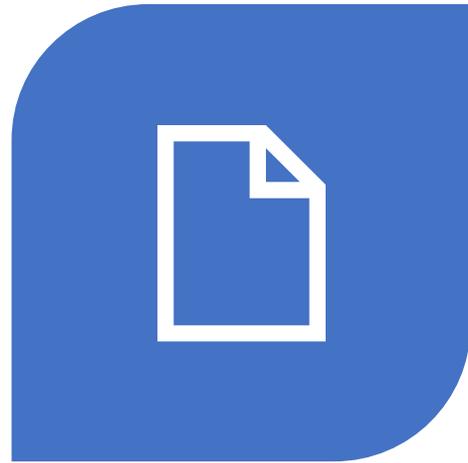**Financial Express**

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INTERNATIONAL EDITION
18 Pages

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NEARBY

Iran Minister says there is progress in talks with U.S.

TEHRAN

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday the latest talks with the U.S. saw them agree on "a set of guiding principles" that would pave the way for a deal. "Ultimately, we were able to reach broad agreement on a set of guiding principles, based on which we will move forward," he told state TV. » PAGE 14

J&K will become State in 'rightful process': Minister

SRINAGAR

Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir will be granted through a "rightful" process, Union Law and Justice Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said while addressing a tele-law event in Srinagar on Tuesday, even as the Union Territory's Chief Minister Omar Abdullah noted that this process "has taken longer than expected... but we have not lost hope". » PAGE 6

Ajit Pawar crash: AAIB says black box damaged

NEW DELHI

The black box of the aircraft that crashed in Baramati killing Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others was exposed to intense heat and sustained fire damage, and, as a result, the cockpit voice recording is yet to be retrieved, Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, which is probing the crash, said on Tuesday. » PAGE 6

HC quashes BJP's case against Rahul Gandhi

BENGALURU

In a relief to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday quashed the criminal defamation proceedings initiated against him based on a complaint filed in 2023 by the BJP's State unit. The case was filed for issuing advertisements allegedly with "defamatory" imputation in newspapers. » PAGE 3

HC pauses Kerala survey after plea on fund misuse

KOCHI

In a setback to the Kerala government, the High Court on Tuesday quashed a government order issued in October 2025 to conduct a door-to-door survey titled the 'Nava Kerala Citizen Response Programme.' A petitioner alleged that the LDF government was misusing public funds to implement the programme. » PAGE 3

Politicians, officials must foster fraternity: SC

■ Top court takes note of statements that 'stigmatise' communities, legitimise 'discriminatory governance'

■ It emphasises need for restraint in public comments by constitutional functionaries

■ This is a more than 75-year-old mature democracy, we do not expect people to behave like this: CJI

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Political leaders must foster fraternity and high public office-holders should live up to the ideals of the Constitution, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday. The court was hearing a petition highlighting instances of Chief Ministers, senior bureaucrats, and police officers making public statements that stigmatise entire communities, legitimise discriminatory governance, and erode public confidence in the state's commitment to equal citizenship.

"We would like to impress upon all political parties to follow the principles of constitutional morality, values, mutual respect, and self-respect. This is a more than 75-year-old mature democracy; we do not expect people to behave like this," Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a three-judge Bench, observed orally.

Justice B.V. Nagarathna advocated the need to "restrain" discriminatory and communally divisive speeches "from all sides".

'Control of thought'
"Political leaders must ultimately foster fraternity in the country," Justice Nagarathna remarked. However, she pointed out that the origin of speech was thought. "How can we control thought?" the judge asked.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate Fuzail

> There is a need to restrain discriminatory and communally divisive public speeches from all sides
> **B.V. NAGARATHNA**
> Supreme Court Judge

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> **SURYA KANT**
> Chief Justice of India

Ahmad Ayyubi, appearing for petitioner-activist Roop Rekha Verma, said the court could certainly control the "consequences of thought" by laying down guidelines to govern public speech by constitutional functionaries, so as to ensure fidelity to constitutional morality, without imposing prior restraint or censorship. "We have to do something now," Mr. Sibal urged the court.

The court said it was keen to lay down guidelines but noted that the petition seemed to name personalities only from a particular political party. The Bench indicated that the court did not want to enter the political thicket, following which Mr. Sibal sought two weeks to modify the petition.

Chief Justice Kant said the petition has raised a "very serious issue" even as Mr. Sibal pointed out that public statements have become increasingly "toxic".

Mr. Sibal highlighted the "normalisation of constitutionally unbecoming speeches by holders of high public offices". He said these statements were not merely political rhetoric, but have weaved their way into administrative and law enforcement establishments.

Chief Justice Kant asked whether party constitutions did not have any clauses to control public conduct and speeches of their leaders.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, the third judge on the Bench, said the public have an expectation that "democratic entities would live up to the constitutional ethos and values".

'Chilling effect'
The petition flagged statements of sitting Chief Ministers and holders of high public offices, which exemplify how constitutional and legal authority was used to legitimise discriminatory hostility. It drew attention to statements by senior bureaucrats and police officers that "reinforce exclusion, humiliation, or collective blame". It underscored that holders of public office and senior executive authorities who indulge in a continuing pattern of derogatory speech were not ordinary speakers.

"Their words carry the imprimatur of the State, influence administrative action, shape public perception, and can have a chilling or exclusionary effect on vulnerable communities, even in the absence of direct incitement or hate speech... No structured guidance or framework clarifying how constitutional morality applies to the public speech of constitutional functionaries. This vacuum has allowed discriminatory and derogatory speech," it pointed out.

"Let this not be a populist exercise. It should be a contemplative and constitutional exercise. We need to take an objective approach," Justice Bagchi addressed Mr. Sibal.

India-France partnership is a force for stability in the world, says PM

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

India and France elevated their relationship to a 'special global strategic partnership' on Tuesday when Prime Minister Narendra Modi met French President Emmanuel Macron.

The meeting also saw the amendment of the protocol on Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, establishment of an annual Foreign Ministers' Dialogue to review the Horizon 2047 Roadmap, and an agreement on reciprocal deployment of armed forces. At a time of global uncertainty, the India-French partnership is a force for stability, Mr. Modi said.

The bilateral talks between Mr. Modi and the French President in Mumbai resulted in a wide-ranging agreement covering health, critical minerals, defence, science and technology, renewable energy, and skilling.

'Way against hegemony'
With Mr. Macron by his side during a joint press conference at Lok Bhavan here, the Prime Minister was expansive in his description of bilateral ties. "The India-France partnership knows no boundaries. It can reach from deep oceans to the tallest mountains," he said, adding the relationship was "very special".

Mr. Macron also highlighted the unique nature of the relationship, based on common principles such as a shared agreement on the rule of law and a world order without hegemony.

"We will find a new way which is against hegemony. We want to walk together. We want to give a model to the world about how to work together. AI should respect each other, should respect diversity. The algo-

French President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurate the assembly line of Airbus H-125 helicopters at an event in Mumbai on Tuesday. AFP REPORT: PAGE 12

rithms should be transparent," he said. He emphasised the strategic partnership between the two countries in multiple sectors including defence, science and technology, nuclear power, and high speed rail networks.

During his first visit to Mumbai and fourth trip to India, Mr. Macron started the day with a jog along Marine Drive, south Mumbai's long coastal promenade, surprising residents. It sent a positive message about health for the youth, in a city which hosts marathons, the External Affairs Ministry said.

Mr. Macron paid tribute to the victims of the 26/11 terror attacks at Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace hotel, reiterating his country's strong stance against terror. "In the face of terrorism, unity and determination," he said. Later, Mr. Modi hosted a dinner for the French President. This visit follows Mr. Modi's visit to France last year, and marked the 20th meeting between the two leaders over the last few years.

Star-studded lunch
Mr. Macron had a cinema-themed lunch with a few film personalities, including Anil Kapoor, Manoj Bajpayee, and Niraj Ghaywan. "Alongside the legends of Indian cinema. Culture brings us together," he posted on X. He is expected to meet investors in Mumbai on Wednesday before heading to Delhi.

The two leaders launched the India-France Year of Innovation and the

India-France Innovation Network, with a cultural programme at the iconic Gateway of India. In a first for the private sector, Mr. Modi and Mr. Macron virtually inaugurated the H125 Helicopter Final Assembly Line at Vemagal, Karnataka, in the presence of the Defence Ministers from both the countries.

The Prime Minister also announced the launch of the Indo-French Centre for AI in Health, Indo-French Centre for Digital Science and Technology, and the National Centre of Excellence for Skilling in Aeronautics. "These are not just institutions, but future-building platforms," he said.

He mentioned the India-France cooperation in skilling.

DEFENCE COOPERATION
» PAGE 4

Need global cooperation to tackle AI bias, risks; tech must remain human-centric: Modi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that artificial intelligence (AI) now stood at "a civilisational inflection point" of expanding human capability but would test social foundations if left unguided. He said the technology must be used to accelerate global development while remaining deeply human-centric.

The Prime Minister made this observation in a text interview to the news agency Asian News International (ANI) as the India AI Impact Summit gets under way in India, the first country of the Global South to host such an event.

Mr. Modi spoke on the Indian government's AI initiatives, saying that through the IndiaAI Mission, "we are ensuring a code that reflects our values, serves our people and positions India as a responsible AI leader for the world".

'Mindful beverage'
He referenced some of the initiatives taken by India for addressing its own issues. "Leveraging AI mindfully, with a strategic lens, helps address deep developmental challenges while creating entirely new economic opportunities, enabling inclusive growth, bridging the urban-rural divide and expanding access to opportunity. In healthcare, AI is already delivering impact," he said.

He mentioned the use of AI-based solutions in the field of education and health, and by organisations such as Amul leveraging the technology to reach 36 lakh women dairy workers by providing guidance

Curious crowd: Visitors throng the India AI Impact Summit 2026 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

on cattle health and productivity.

He conceded that "concerns regarding bias and limitations in AI remain deeply relevant", especially related to gender and socio-economic background. He added that tackling the issue required global cooperation. "Our diversity – linguistic, cultural, regional – means that AI bias can manifest in ways that might not be obvious in Western contexts," he said, adding that India was beginning to address this more "systematically" with a focus on "creating diverse datasets that represent India's plurality, greater emphasis on AI development in regional languages, and growing research on fairness and bias in Indian academic institutions and tech companies".

Staying prepared
Addressing concerns over the changing nature of employment due to AI, he said that the "fundamental shift is that AI isn't replacing the IT sector. It is transforming it." He said "preparation is the best antidote to fear", and his government had launched "one of the most ambitious skilling initiatives in the world".

"We're not approaching this as a future problem but we're treating it as a present imperative," he said.

Minister apologises for summit troubles; Kharge slams 'chaos'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday apologised for the difficulties faced by attendees on the opening day of the India AI Impact Summit even as Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge criticised the Modi government for the "utter chaos and rank mismanagement" of "a showpiece AI Summit".

Mr. Vaishnaw assured participants that corrective steps had been taken to ensure a smoother experience in the event in the coming days.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 6

Politicians, officials must foster fraternity: SC

Top court takes note of statements that 'stigmatise' communities, legitimise 'discriminatory governance'

It emphasises need for restraint in public comments by constitutional functionaries

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1️⃣ Constitutional–Historical Dimension

🔹 Fraternity in Indian Constitutional Philosophy

• Fraternity is explicitly mentioned in the **Preamble** of the Constitution.
बंधुत्व भारतीय संविधान की प्रस्तावना में स्पष्ट रूप से उल्लिखित है।

• It ensures the dignity of the individual and the unity & integrity of the nation.
यह व्यक्ति की गरिमा और राष्ट्र की एकता व अखंडता सुनिश्चित करता है।

• The idea was inspired by the French Revolution (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity).
यह अवधारणा फ्रांसीसी क्रांति (स्वतंत्रता, समानता, बंधुत्व) से प्रेरित है।

• Dr. B.R. Ambedkar stressed fraternity as essential to sustain democracy beyond legal equality.
डॉ. भीमराव आंबेडकर ने कहा कि केवल कानूनी समानता पर्याप्त नहीं, लोकतंत्र को टिकाए रखने के लिए बंधुत्व आवश्यक है।

🔹 Constituent Assembly Context

• India adopted a model of "constitutional morality" rather than majoritarian morality.
भारत ने बहुसंख्यक नैतिकता के स्थान पर "संवैधानिक नैतिकता" को अपनाया।

• Ambedkar warned against "grammar of anarchy" if institutions fail.
आंबेडकर ने संस्थाओं के विफल होने पर "अराजकता के व्याकरण" की चेतावनी दी।

• 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976) added "Integrity" to Preamble.
42वें संशोधन (1976) द्वारा प्रस्तावना में "अखंडता" जोड़ा गया।

2️⃣ Legal–Polity Framework

🔹 Relevant Constitutional Articles

- Article 14 – Equality before law.
- Article 15 – Prohibition of discrimination.
- Article 19(1)(a) – Freedom of speech.
- Article 19(2) – Reasonable restrictions (public order, morality, etc.).
- Article 21 – Right to life & dignity.

🔹 Hate Speech & Penal Provisions

- IPC Section 153A – Promoting enmity between groups.
- IPC Section 295A – Outraging religious feelings.
- IPC Section 505 – Statements causing public mischief.

- Supreme Court in *Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan (2014)* urged Parliament to legislate on hate speech.
- In *Shreya Singhal (2015)*, Court protected free speech but struck down vague restrictions.

3️⃣ Historical & Sociological Context

• India is a plural society with 22 Scheduled languages & 1,600+ dialects.
भारत एक बहुलतावादी समाज है जिसमें 22 अनुसूचित भाषाएँ और 1600+ बोलियाँ हैं।

• Census 2011: 79.8% Hindus, 14.2% Muslims, 2.3% Christians, others minorities.
जनगणना 2011 के अनुसार धार्मिक विविधता अत्यधिक है।

• Communal tensions historically led to Partition (1947) and multiple riots.
सांप्रदायिक तनाव ने 1947 के विभाजन सहित कई दंगों को जन्म दिया।

• Fraternity is crucial in geographically diverse states like Northeast, J&K, and border regions.
पूर्वोत्तर, जम्मू-कश्मीर और सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों में बंधुत्व विशेष रूप से महत्वपूर्ण है।

4️⃣ Economic Dimension

• Social instability reduces FDI inflows and investor confidence.
सामाजिक अस्थिरता प्रत्यक्ष विदेशी निवेश और निवेशकों के विश्वास को कम करती है।

• According to World Bank studies, political stability correlates with economic growth.
विश्व बैंक के अनुसार राजनीतिक स्थिरता आर्थिक विकास से जुड़ी है।

• Communal violence leads to supply chain disruptions & fiscal burden on law enforcement.
सांप्रदायिक हिंसा आपूर्ति श्रृंखला बाधित करती है और कानून-व्यवस्था पर वित्तीय बोझ डालती है।

• Inclusive governance improves Human Development Index (HDI).
समावेशी शासन मानव विकास सूचकांक को बेहतर बनाता है।

6️⃣ International Comparison

- Germany bans Nazi hate propaganda (strong hate speech laws).

- USA protects speech strongly under First Amendment.

- India balances speech with "reasonable restrictions."

Exam Insight: India follows a "qualified free speech" model, not absolute free speech.

🔎 Key Exam-Oriented Takeaways

✔️ Fraternity is a constitutional value, not merely moral advice.

✔️ Constitutional morality > Popular morality.

✔️ Freedom of speech is not absolute.

✔️ Hate speech regulation debate ongoing in Law Commission reports.

Consider the following statements regarding Fraternity and Freedom of Speech in India:

1. The term "Fraternity" was inserted in the Preamble by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment.

2. Article 19(2) permits reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech in the interest of public order and morality.

3. Constitutional morality requires public officials to adhere to constitutional values even in their public speeches.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Congress, DMK together in fight against fascist forces: Venugopal

Party general secretary urges leaders in T.N. not to make any comments on the issues surrounding the alliance, and says high command will take final call; amid speculation over tie-up for Assembly polls, he adds that both parties are old allies

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In the wake of intense speculation over whether the Congress-DMK alliance would continue for the Assembly election in Tamil Nadu, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said on Tuesday that the "Congress and DMK are old allies" and "we are together" to fight the fascist forces.

Speaking to presspersons here after participating in a protest march against the Union government's decision to dismantle the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Mr. Venugopal urged the Congress leaders in Tamil Nadu not to make any comments on the issues surrounding the alliance.

"I can categorically say the Congress and DMK are old allies. We have a tradition to have an alliance on common issues... to fight the fascist forces... fight against the communal forces. We were together, and we are also together. Of course, Assembly elections are coming... we are in the process [of having discussions with the party], our people also have political ambition. There needs to be a clear cut coalition discussion. We are waiting for the discussion. I think the DMK will inform us when it is going to start," Mr. Venugopal said.

'Individual opinions'

"As far as the 'different voices' within the Congress party are concerned, I would like to categorically say that is not the party's stand. That is their individual opinion, not the party's view. Final decision will be taken by the [AICC] high command on the Tamil Nadu alliance," he said.

Asked about the demand for "power share" despite DMK leader and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin rejecting it, Mr. Venugopal said, "The Congress high command will inform you all in due course."

He further said, "Nobody has a right to speak against or in favour of alliance partners now. The Congress high command will take the final decision."

The clear cut directive comes after Congress Virudhunagar MP B. Manickam Tagore recently delivered a speech, which was considered critical of the DMK, in Madurai.

All India Professionals' Congress chairman Praveen Chakravarty has also been making comments widely perceived as against the DMK. These "out-of-turn" comments prompted the DMK leadership to consider demanding action against the two Congress functionaries before initiating the Congress for seat-sharing talks. The DMK had announced it would constitute its seat-sharing committee on or after February 22.

Call for unity: AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal participating in a meeting of newly appointed party district presidents in Chennai on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

IT Minister apologises for summit troubles; Kharge slams 'mismanagement'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday apologised for the difficulties faced by attendees on the opening day of the India AI Impact Summit even as Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge criticised the Modi government for the "utter chaos and rank mismanagement".

Addressing a press conference at Bharat Mandapam, the summit venue, Mr. Vaishnaw said the burnout on Monday was "phenomenal", and assured participants that corrective steps had been taken to ensure a smoother experience in the coming days.

More than 70,000 people attended the summit on the first day, he said. "This is the biggest AI summit in the entire world. The response is phenomenal. The energy is palpable. We can see the organisation is very smooth now. If anybody faced any problems yesterday, we apologise for that," Mr. Vaishnaw said. A "war room" had been set up to address grievances and operational issues, he added.

'Utter chaos'

Earlier, in a post on X, Mr. Kharge said that what could have been a global showcase of India's digital capabilities had turned into "utter chaos" due to mismanagement.

"What could have been a showcase AI Summit for the entire world demonstrating the digital & AI capabilities of India, has reportedly turned into utter chaos and rank mismanagement by this 'PR hungry' government" Mr. Kharge said on X.

He said founders, exhibitors and visitors faced distress because of security restrictions ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit (for the inauguration), and alleged that basic facilities such as food and water were lacking. He also cited reports of stolen products, failed digital systems, and restrictions on personal electronic devices.

"It is extremely unfortunate that, our country has to suffer this global embarrassment due to the incompetency of our own government. Perhaps the Modi govt should learn from the Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS), which is an annual feature, in smoothly organising such large-scale digital & tech congregations," the Congress chief posted.

The opening day of the summit saw packed halls, long queues and confusion over entry instructions, with mobile data connectivity also proving unreliable at the venue. Heavy footfall led to overlapping security checks and the temporary evacuation of some exhibitor stalls ahead of the Prime Minister's visit to the expo.

Amid the disruption, some participants reported misplaced or stolen items.

Punit Jain, founder of Reskill, initially criticised the arrangements, saying exhibitors and delegates were left outside without water or clarity on access.

"If access was limited to select high-value guests, just say it upfront. Don't mobilise the ecosystem and then displace them. This is not how we build India's AI future," Mr. Jain wrote on X on Monday.

However, he acknowledged that coordination improved significantly on Tuesday, the second day of the summit.

Organisers said corrective measures were taken through the day to ease congestion and improve coordination, and assured participants that the remaining days of the summit would run more smoothly.
(With PTI inputs)

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw says the turnout is phenomenal and corrective steps have been taken. ANI

More halls opened, crowd flow improves

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

After a relatively chaotic first day on Monday, the India AI Impact Summit saw smoother operations on Tuesday, with more areas opened to attendees and fewer surges of crowding, even as turnout remained strong. Students came in from local colleges, schools, and corporates queued up outside multiple gates, but the lines moved steadily.

Unlike on the opening day, there were no security-led evacuations of large areas. In fact, additional hall space at the 100-acre Bharat Mandapam complex was formally opened.

The three-day gap before the gathering of heads of State allowed organisers to address the initial glitches.

"Less crowd today, smoother movement, and big banners outside meeting rooms for better visibility," Vijay X., an attendee, said on X, calling it a "good recovery after yesterday's chaos". Visitors had also flagged inadequate clear signage on the opening day.

However, technical issues persisted. Many sessions continued to experience problems with livestreams, skipping speaker introductions, and audio going silent.

Two digital initiatives to boost health AI ecosystem launched

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda on Tuesday launched two digital health initiatives — SAHI (Secure AI for Health Initiative) and BODHI (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI) during the India AI Impact Summit.

"The launch marks a milestone in advancing safe, ethical, and evidence-based deployment of Artificial Intelligence in India's healthcare ecosystem," the Ministry said in a release.

He said that AI did not operate in isolation, but thrived on strong digital infrastructure and high-quality data. He noted that the National Health Policy, 2017, envisaged the creation of a comprehensive digital health ecosystem that would be interoperable, inclusive, and scalable.

"Building on this vision, the government launched the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission in 2020 to establish a robust digital public architecture for healthcare," he said.

SAHI and BODH

Describing SAHI as not merely a technology strategy but a governance framework, policy compass, and national road map for the responsible use of AI in healthcare, Mr. Nadda said that SAHI would guide India in leveraging AI in an ethical, transparent, accountable, and people-centric manner.

Additionally, collaboration between the government and academia had led to the development of BODH, which provides a structured mechanism to test and validate AI solutions before large-scale deployment.

"AI solutions must be rigorously evaluated for performance, reliability, and real-world readiness. Together, SAHI and BODH together, SAHI and BODH's commitment to building a trustworthy, inclusive, and globally competitive health AI ecosystem grounded in innovation, responsibility, and public trust," he said.

Indian Army puts up a show with homegrown dual-use AI systems

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Indian Army on Tuesday unveiled a suite of indigenous artificial intelligence (AI) solutions at the India AI Summit, underlining its ongoing transformation into a data-centric and AI-enabled force aligned with India's vision of technological self-reliance and secure digital capability.

The Army's display at Bharat Mandapam highlighted dual-use platforms designed to serve both defence operations and civilian applications such as disaster management, cybersecurity and governance.

The Indian Army said it showcased several key systems, including AI Examiner, an automated assessment and feedback platform aimed at modernising education and training frameworks. Another major highlight was XAM-UN, a geospatial and AI-enabled situational awareness system designed for mission planning, disaster response and integration with smart command centres.

The Army presented EKAM (AI-as-a-Service), a secure, air-gapped indigenous AI cloud platform focused on ensuring data sovereignty and secure processing of sensitive information. Complementing this was PRAKSHEPAN, an AI-driven climatology and disaster prediction system capable of providing early alerts for landslides, floods and avalanches.

In the security domain, the Army demonstrated XFace, an AI-powered facial recognition system for identity verification, along with advanced Deepfake Detection and AI Cyber Security Systems to counter synthetic media manipulation, malware and evolving cyber threats targeting critical infrastructure.

The technologies on display included Nabh Drishti, a mobile telemetry-based real-time reporting and visualisation platform; an AI-enabled Driver Fatigue Detection Device for real-time drowsiness alerts; a portable AI-in-a-Box solution designed for deployment in remote or disconnected environments; and an AI-powered Vehicle Tracking System for fleet monitoring and logistics optimisation.

The initiatives collectively signal a decisive push towards building a secure, networked and AI-empowered ecosystem.

New technology The Army uses AI to counter cyberthreats targeting critical infrastructure. REPRESENTATIVE/GETTY

Himanta says Rahul vetoed Sonia offer to make him CM in 2014

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Rahul was the Congress president when Sarma rebelled against the then CM Tarun Gogoi

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi vetoed senior party leader and his mother Sonia Gandhi's offer to make him the Chief Minister in 2014.

Ms. Gandhi was the Congress president when Mr. Sarma rebelled against the then Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and claimed the support of 58 party MLAs. The Congress had rushed current party president Mallikarjun Kharge to Assam to quell the dissidence.

"When Kharge came, 88 MLAs backed me for the Chief Minister's post, while some senior leaders remained neutral. Only 12 MLAs said that I should not become the CM and that the incumbent [Tarun Gogoi] should continue," the Chief Minister told presspersons.

"Sonia Gandhi called me to her residence and asked me to decide on the date of my swearing-in. I had told madam that I would take the oath the day after [the June-end] Ambubachi Mela. Later, we came to know that Rahul Gandhi, who was in the U.S.A., called up and Congress changed its decision," Mr. Sarma said.

Mr. Sarma said that Mr. Kharge kept reminding the party leadership that he enjoyed the support of most of the MLAs.

"Justice was not delivered, but I feel blessed that it did not happen then. I would have carried a blot forever had I become a Congress CM. I could not have worked for the Sanatani and the Assamese," he said.

Cong. to meet State leaders to plan strategy against U.S. deal

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Seeking to increase pressure on the Narendra Modi government regarding the interim India-U.S. trade agreement, the Congress has planned a meeting of leaders from five States and a Union Territory with party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on February 20 to chart its political strategy.

Leaders from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir will meet Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Kharge to discuss the fallout of the trade deal on farmers. The locations were shortlisted on the basis of the agricultural crops, fruits, and nuts grown there and the possible impact of the deal on them, a source said.

"We are already running a ground campaign against the Modi government for scrapping the MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). Now, we will add this too," a senior Congress leader said, adding, "We won't let off the government on this deal."

The party has accused the government of "surrendering" the interests of India's farmers, energy security, and digital and data autonomy.

Puri must clarify '62 emails, 14 meetings' with Epstein: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday accused Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri of "lying" on the controversy surrounding the "Epstein files", and asked him to explain the "62 email exchanges" with convicted American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein between 2014 and 2017.

The party reiterated its demand for the Minister's resignation.

Mr. Puri has denied the Congress's allegations, and said he had met Epstein on "a few occasions", and that the meetings were "professional" in nature.

Addressing a press conference, Congress media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said there were nine meetings alone in 2014, and 14 in all between 2014 and 2017. "Between 2014 and 2017, there were 62 email exchanges between Hardeep Puri and Epstein," he asked.

He said Mr. Puri had sent 32 emails, while Epstein had written 30 and the meetings took place soon after the Narendra Modi government assumed office in 2014 and continued till 2017.

"The question is what position did Hardeep Puri hold in June 2014, and in what capacity did he meet Epstein," Mr. Khera asked.

Mr. Khera took a swipe at the Centre over Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates's scheduled participation at the India AI Impact Summit, alleging contradictory claims by government sources.

Hardeep Singh Puri

Former Assam Congress chief to join ruling BJP on February 22

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Former Assam Congress chief Bhupen Kumar Borah will join the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party on February 22, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said after visiting his residence in Guwahati on Tuesday.

The announcement ended speculation about which way Mr. Borah would go — remain with the grand old party by withdrawing his resignation or join another political party ahead of the coming elections to the 126-member Assembly.

The Chief Minister said the BJP would give respect and dignity to Mr. Borah, who was the "last recognised Hindu leader at the Congress". He added that joining the BJP would be a homecoming for Mr. Borah.

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"AI solutions must be rigorously evaluated for performance, reliability, and real-world readiness. Together, SAHI and BODH represent India's commitment to building a trustworthy, inclusive, and globally competitive health AI ecosystem grounded in innovation, responsibility, and public trust," he said.

◆ Core Development

· Union Health Ministry launched **SAHI (Secure AI for Healthcare Initiatives)** and **BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Hub Platform for Health AI)** during India AI Impact Summit.

भारत के स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय ने इंडिया AI इम्पैक्ट समिट के दौरान SAHI और BODH पहल शुरू की।

· Objective: Advance ethical, secure, and evidence-based deployment of AI in healthcare.

उद्देश्य: स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र में एआई का नैतिक, सुरक्षित और साक्ष्य-आधारित उपयोग सुनिश्चित करना।

1️⃣ Historical Context

◆ Evolution of Digital Health in India

· 2017 – National Health Policy envisioned comprehensive digital health ecosystem.

2017 की राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति ने डिजिटल स्वास्थ्य पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र की परिकल्पना की।

· 2020 – Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) launched.

2020 में आयुष्मान भारत डिजिटल मिशन शुरू किया गया।

· ABDM created Health ID (ABHA), digital registries, interoperable health records.

ABDM ने ABHA हेल्थ आईडी और इंटरऑपरेबल स्वास्थ्य रिकॉर्ड की व्यवस्था की।

2️⃣ Policy & Governance Dimension

🔹 SAHI

- Governance framework for ethical AI deployment in healthcare.
- Focus on transparency, accountability, data protection.
- Aligns with principles of Responsible AI.

🔹 BODH

- Open platform to test and validate AI health solutions.
- Ensures performance, reliability, real-world readiness.
- Supports collaboration between government, academia & industry.

Exam Insight:

This aligns with India's push toward Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) like Aadhaar, UPI, CoWIN.

3️⃣ Constitutional & Legal Linkages

• Article 21 – Right to Life includes right to health (judicial interpretation).

• Data Protection Act 2023 – regulates digital health data use.

• Supreme Court in Puttaswamy (2017) recognized privacy as fundamental right.

Health AI must balance:

Innovation vs Privacy

Efficiency vs Ethics

4️⃣ Economic Significance

• India's healthcare AI market projected to grow at CAGR 40%+.

• AI reduces diagnostic costs & improves rural outreach.

• Telemedicine + AI can address doctor-patient ratio gap (1:834 approx, WHO standard 1:1000).

• Digital health improves productivity & reduces out-of-pocket expenditure (currently ~48% of total health expenditure).

5️⃣ Geographical & Social Relevance

• Rural India faces healthcare access issues.

• AI-driven tele-radiology & pathology helps remote regions (NE states, Himalayan belt).

• AI tools help manage non-communicable diseases (India = Diabetes capital).

6️⃣ International Comparison

Country	Health AI Model
USA	Private sector led (FDA regulated AI tools)
UK	NHS AI Lab initiative
China	Large-scale AI diagnostics integrated in hospitals
India	Public Digital Infrastructure + Open Innovation model

India's model = DPI-based scalable governance model.

Consider the following statements regarding India's Health AI initiatives:

1. SAHI is designed as a governance framework to ensure ethical and accountable use of AI in healthcare.

2. BODH provides a structured platform to test and validate AI solutions before large-scale deployment.

3. The National Health Policy 2017 explicitly rejected the idea of creating a digital health ecosystem.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Why Yuvraj Mehta's death was not an accident

On January 16, Yuvraj Mehta, a 27-year-old tech professional, was driving at night when his car veered off the road at a sharp turn and plunged into an unguarded, water-filled pit in Sector 150 of Greater Noida. His death has been described as a tragic accident caused by Noida Authority and builder negligence of safety norms at construction sites. That framing, however, leaves unresolved questions about responsibility and governance.

Rahul Verma
Independent researcher and sociology educator

A governance problem

In urban India, deaths caused by infrastructural failure are seen as unfortunate and incidental. In reality, cities do not witness such deaths, they produce them. When unsafe infrastructure becomes ordinary, harm is no longer unexpected. Data (2020) from the National Crimes Record Bureau shows 1.73 lakh road accident deaths; urban areas account for about 32% of these, with higher per lakh rates than rural areas.

The language of "accident" implies uncertainty. In Indian cities, however, risks tied to neglected roads, exposed wiring, unguarded construction sites, flooded basements, and collapsing public utilities are well documented. Civic complaints and official audits have recorded these condition for years. Filing from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs show that 70% of cities lack functional drainage audits, which helps explain why such risks go unaddressed.

Urban life is shaped by an everyday expectation that people adjust to risk. They slow down, choose routes carefully, avoid certain stretches during the monsoon, and learn to live with danger as routine. Over time, this shift places the burden of safety on individuals rather than institutions, even though the 74th Constitutional Amendment was meant to devolve urban governance, with only four of 18 functions effectively transferred.

This is not simply a failure of intention; it is a failure of priorities. Cities invest heavily in visible symbols of development, such as flyovers, expressways, and metro corridors. By contrast, the infrastructure that supports daily life draws far less attention. Footpaths, drainage networks, and electrical safety rarely attract urgency because they do not photograph well. Over time, this creates cities where everyday movement carries hidden risks.

In urban India, deaths caused by infrastructural failure are seen as unfortunate and incidental. In reality, cities do not witness such deaths, they produce them

This pattern becomes especially clear in places shaped by aspiration. In Delhi's Karol Bagh, a dense coaching hub associated with educational mobility, repeated episodes of monsoon waterlogging have exposed the lethal consequences of infrastructural neglect. In 2024, three students drowned in a flooded basement library that had already been flagged by audits by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. These basement rooms, where students live and study, are illegal yet widely tolerated. So, these deaths, explained away as seasonal misfortune, are, in fact, the result of regulatory failure and administrative indifference.

What connects such cases to Mehta's deaths is governance, which operates in similar ways across cities. Risks are known, violations are normalised, and responsibility is fragmented. Safety is consistently treated as secondary to speed, expansion, and appearance.

No accountability

When negligence leads to loss of life, responsibility disperses quickly, as multiple arms of the urban state enter the scene after the fact. Municipal bodies, public works departments, contractors, inspectors, and emergency services all appear in the aftermath. Each is responsible for a fragment of the system and none is accountable for the whole. In Mehta's case, the Noida Authority was responsible for oversight of the construction site, while police and fire services delayed their response for nearly 90 minutes

before the State Disaster Response Force handled recovery.

Committees are formed, inquiries are announced, and junior officials are suspended, as seen in Noida. The performance of action takes the place of accountability, as reflected in recent cases flagged by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) where accountability has largely stopped at junior officials despite wider systemic failures.

Mehta's case unsettles the belief, common in many cities, that education and professional status offer protection from everyday urban risk. In reality, vulnerability cuts across social and occupational categories. White-collar workers working extended hours and students living in basements and preparing for competitive exams navigate the same unsafe urban environments.

Negligent infrastructure rarely provokes sustained moral outrage because responsibility has no clear face. Instead, harm takes shape gradually, as repairs are delayed, inspections are missed, and small administrative failures are allowed to pile up.

Public grief is real, but it often settles quickly into expressions of sorrow and promises of inquiry. In Mehta's case, the government has ordered re-inspections of construction sites. Without deeper change, mourning turns into a ritual that absorbs failure rather than questioning it. Deaths like these need to be understood as political events, rooted in governance choices that favour visible development while safety recedes into the background.

The way forward demands three concrete steps: RTI-mandated urban risk registers linking citizen complaints to 30-day mitigation deadlines; quarterly CAG-style audits of preventable urban deaths with ministerial accountability; and independent urban safety commissions empowered under the 74th Amendment to enforce binding standards across States and municipalities.

A Delhi move by the 'Grand Mufti'

How Aboobacker Musliar reaffirmed his position without taking a partisan stand

The recent meeting between Kanthapuram A.P. Aboobacker Musliar, Kerala's prominent Sunni leader and general secretary of the All India Jamiyathul Ulama, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi was no routine courtesy call.

The timing was significant: held ahead of Ramzan, the meeting also came just ahead of the Kerala Assembly elections and during the centenary year of the Samastha Kerala Jamiyathul Ulama, the State's largest body of traditional Islamic scholars. In this context, it appeared less about the "Grand Mufti" asserting his religious stature or extracting concrete assurances from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government and more about carefully calibrated optics.

The meeting reinforced Mr. Aboobacker Musliar's standing as a powerful socio-political force within the Muslim community. In a State crowded with leaders claiming influence, his stature remains distinctive – not only within Kerala but also beyond it, where he is known as Sheikh Abubakr Ahmad.

The public relations exercise mattered for Mr. Modi too. Both the leaders shared multiple photographs and exchanged warm words on social media.

Mr. Aboobacker Musliar suggested that the meeting marked the capstone of his 16-day Kerala Yatra under the slogan "with humanity," during which he interacted with people across social and political divides. He indicated that he shared the concerns and expe-

riences gathered during that tour, including issues affecting minorities, with Mr. Modi. Yet little is known about the Prime Minister's response to these concerns or any substantive outcomes. The half-hour interaction, by all accounts, was cordial.

In Kerala, reactions to the meeting were predictably divided. The 87-year-old Sunni scholar has been lauded for reaching out to the Prime Minister and for highlighting the concerns of minority communities, essential during a time of growing polarisation. But he has also been widely condemned for his remarks to the Urdu media, saying Muslims in India have been experiencing no major problems under the BJP government. This has been seen by many as a way of softening criticism of the government's policies, widely viewed as unsettling to minorities. Among his critics were proponents of "political Islam," a group he recently described in a resolution as a major threat to communal harmony in Kerala. His supporters were quick to defend him, however, arguing that leaders like him must exercise caution and strategic restraint, particularly in statements to the media.

Mr. Aboobacker Musliar is known for his diplomacy in socio-political circles. Though he has often drawn sharp criticism for statements upholding orthodoxy, he has never

made his political stance explicit. During elections, his prime-time messages frequently convey the sentiment, "we will help those who help us."

Even his recent call for a reunification of the Samastha Kerala Jamiyathul Ulama – popularly known as Samastha – fits this pattern. The call – less a suggestion and more a moral imperative – is unlikely to make any major impact in Kerala's socio-political firmament, despite being welcomed by the rival Samastha faction and the Indian Union Muslim League thanks to the respect he has earned through decades of restraint. The rival Samastha faction commands greater numerical strength and operates with its own political calculations.

Publicly, Mr. Aboobacker Musliar has maintained equal distance from all parties and fronts, but the Samastha faction he leads is widely recognised for supporting the Left Democratic Front in Kerala. The participation of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Opposition Leader V.D. Satheesan in the grand finale of his Yatra in Thiruvananthapuram on January 16 testified how much the religious leader is sought after by the two major fronts in Kerala. Both fronts have been vying to get the support of Mr. Aboobacker Musliar and his Sunni group, but he has mastered the art of remaining non-committal.

Ultimately, the Delhi meeting was less about immediate political gain and more about reaffirming position. By engaging Mr. Modi without surrendering his posture of equidistance, Mr. Aboobacker Musliar has reminded both allies and adversaries that neither his leadership nor his Sunni faction can be ignored in Kerala.

Lower beedi taxes are short-term gain but long-term pain

Beedis are taxed much lower than cigarettes but they pose serious health risks, in many cases exceeding those of cigarettes

If increasing cigarette taxes is a public health measure to discourage smoking, then lowering beedi taxes to 'protect' rural workers ignores the long-term cost to their lives. While most tobacco products are taxed at the highest Goods and Services Tax (GST) slab of 40%, beedis are taxed at just 18%, making them significantly cheaper than cigarettes and other forms of tobacco. The latest tax rates became effective this month.

Several government reports affirm that beedis are no less lethal than cigarettes. In fact, studies quoted in reports suggest that cancer incidence is often higher among beedi smokers. Given that cancer treatment costs three times more than other ailments – even in public hospitals – capping beedi taxes is a short-sighted subsidy.

A critical distinction between beedi and cigarette consumption lies in demographics. Data suggest that there is a substantial overlap between the labour force that rolls beedis and the primary consumer base. While cigarette smokers lack a defining demographic profile, beedi consumption is confined to a much more specific socio-economic segment.

Data from the National Family Health Survey show that beedi smoking is most pronounced among older rural men from the poorest 20% of the population. So, keeping beedi taxes low may enable workers to save a few coins in their youth, only for those savings to be eroded by the exorbitant cost of healthcare in later years.

Tobacco use in India is overwhelmingly concentrated among men. As of 2019-21, about 13.3% of men smoked cigarettes, while 7.8% smoked beedis. Among women, smoking rates were around 0.1% or lower. Beedi smoking was almost twice as prevalent in rural areas (8.3%) compared to urban areas

(4.8%) among men (Chart 1).

While beedi smokers represent a relatively smaller share of the population than cigarette smokers, their frequency of consumption is significantly higher. Data reveal a stark divide: over 80% of beedi smokers consumed more than five sticks daily, whereas over 70% of cigarette smokers consumed fewer than five (Chart 2). So, an important distinction is that beedi policy should not just look at the number of people smoking; it needs to look at how much they are actually smoking.

The divide is more pronounced across education and age. While cigarette smoking is distributed relatively evenly across all schooling levels, beedi use is heavily concentrated among those with the lowest education levels. While younger and middle-aged men largely prefer cigarettes, beedi consumption is disproportionately prevalent among the older population.

Also, while there is almost no caste-based difference in cigarette smoking, beedi use shows a slight shift. Over 15% of the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations smoke cigarettes, which is similar to the share among the general category. With beedis, however, the numbers tilt slightly: 10.6% of the SC population smokes them, compared to 7% in the general category.

The economic disparity in tobacco choice is stark: while wealth has little impact on cigarette consumption, it is the primary driver of beedi use. Among India's poorest households, the share of beedi and cigarette smokers is nearly identical (around 14-15%). However, as household wealth increases, beedi consumption plummets. In the richest households, while cigarette use remains steady at 8.5%, beedi consumption drops to just 2.1% (Chart 3).

The 2022 Report on Tobacco Control in India indicates that beedi smoking poses serious health risks, in many cases exceeding those of cigarettes. The report
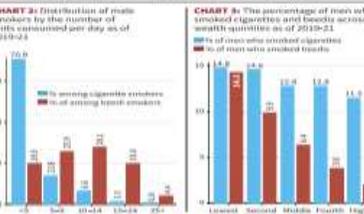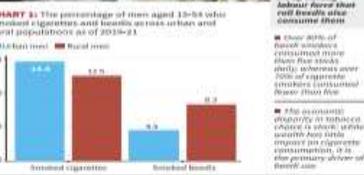
highlights striking differences in respiratory risk: beedi smokers are 2.87 times more likely to suffer from asthma, compared to 1.82 times for cigarette smokers.

Cancer risks show a similar pattern. A Mumbai cohort study found that beedi smokers faced a higher risk of all cancers than cigarette smokers, with particularly elevated risks for lung and laryngeal cancers. Tuberculosis mortality is also more severe, with beedi smokers facing 2.6 times the risk of death. "Poor people who are the main consumers of beedis end up spending more on health care," said health economist Rijo John. "That is only going to increase the existing inequality between the poor and the rich".

The Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2016-17 (GATS-2) shows that the average monthly expenditure of Indians on tobacco rose for both cigarette and beedi users, but for very different reasons. Daily smokers spent about ₹1,012 per month on cigarettes, up from ₹688 in 2009-10 (GATS-1), and spent ₹284 per month on beedis, up from ₹186, after adjusting for inflation.

For cigarettes, the increase was largely price-driven, the survey argued. The number of cigarettes smoked per day did not rise significantly between GATS-1 and GATS-2, indicating that higher spending reflects higher taxes and prices, rather than higher consumption. On the other hand, the number of bidis smoked per day increased significantly between the two surveys, driving up overall expenditure. This suggests that tax policy has been effective in containing cigarette consumption, but not beedi use.

John said specific excise is considered a better form of taxation in regulating consumption. "If the tax is levied solely on the basis of the quantity consumed, we pay the same tax whether the beedi is sold at a lower price or at a higher price by the manufacturer. This directly discourages consumption," he said.

No smoke without harm

The data for the charts were sourced from the National Family Health Surveys, the Global Adult Tobacco Survey Second Round India (2016-2017) and the Report on Tobacco Control in India (2022)

CHART 1: The percentage of men aged 15-54 who smoked cigarettes and beedis across urban and rural populations as of 2019-21

Over 80% of beedi smokers consumed more than five sticks daily, whereas over 70% of cigarette smokers consumed fewer than five

The economic disparity in tobacco choice is stark: while wealth has little impact on cigarette consumption, it is the primary driver of beedi use

CHART 2: Distribution of male smokers by the number of units consumed per day as of 2019-21

CHART 3: The percentage of men who smoked cigarettes and beedis across wealth quintiles as of 2019-21

World recognition for small savings drive

New Delhi, Feb. 18: India has been specially invited by the United Nations to attend a 10-day workshop in Colombo on the mobilisation of personal savings in developing countries. Mr. R.G. Khedekar, National Savings Commissioner, is representing India at the workshop.

The seminar is intended for the South American countries, but the invitation to India is in recognition of its success in enlisting the voluntary co-operation of the various agencies and building up the image of small savings as people's movement, according to an official press release.

There are nearly 2,00,000 volunteers in the country engaged in mopping up small savings. They include students at the schools and university level who go to slum areas in cities and to the villages, women social workers, trade union workers and others.

Saving deposits in India aggregated to Rs. 3,578 crores upto March 1976 and were the highest for any thrift organisation in the country. Last year alone, the deposits amounted to Rs. 327 crores. These savings accounted for nearly 30 per cent of the internal public debt of the country. India offers the largest variety of savings schemes to the people and some of these like the protected savings scheme for low income groups are unique in the world.

Finding work for disabled ex-service men

Rugby, Feb. 17: In both Houses of Parliament yesterday the problem of finding work for some 32,000 disabled ex-service men, who are still unemployed in this country, was raised. Government cooperation was urgently solicited in an effort which is now being made to secure the final absorption of these men. A resolution suggesting that Government contractors should be confined, save in exceptional circumstances, to employers whose work-people include a percentage of disabled men, were sympathetically received by Ministers. It was stated that up to the present, efforts to secure employment of disabled men in England had resulted in three hundred seventy thousand disabled men being employed by twenty-eight thousand employers.

Devyanshi Bihani

If increasing cigarette taxes is a public health measure to discourage smoking, then lowering beedi taxes to 'protect' rural workers ignores the long-term cost to their lives. While most tobacco products are taxed at the highest Goods and Services Tax (GST) slab of 40%, beedis are taxed at just 18%, making them significantly cheaper than cigarettes and other forms of tobacco. The latest tax rates became effective this month.

Several government reports affirm that beedis are no less lethal than cigarettes. In fact, studies quoted in reports suggest that cancer incidence is often higher among beedi smokers. Given that cancer treatment costs three times more than other ailments – even in public hospitals – capping beedi taxes is a short-sighted subsidy.

A critical distinction between beedi and cigarette consumption lies in demographics. Data suggest that there is a substantial overlap between the labour force that rolls beedis and the primary consumer base. While cigarette smokers lack a defining demographic profile, beedi consumption is confined to a much more specific socio-economic segment.

Data from the National Family Health Survey show that beedi smoking is most pronounced among older rural men from the poorest 20% of the population. So, keeping beedi taxes low may enable workers to save a few coins in their youth, only for those savings to be eroded by the exorbitant cost of healthcare in later years.

Tobacco use in India is overwhelmingly concentrated among men. As of 2019-21, about 13.3% of men smoked cigarettes, while 7.8% smoked beedis. Among women, smoking rates were around 0.1% or lower. Beedi smoking was almost twice as prevalent in rural areas (8.3%) compared to urban areas (4.5%) among men **(Chart 1)**.

While beedi smokers represent a relatively smaller share of the population than cigarette smokers, their frequency of consumption is significantly higher. Data reveal a stark divide: over 80% of beedi smokers consumed more than five sticks daily, whereas over 70% of cigarette smokers consumed fewer than five **(Chart 2).** So, an important distinction is that beedi policy should not just look at the number of people smoking; it needs to look at how much they are actually smoking.

The divide is more pronounced across education and age. While cigarette smoking is distributed relatively evenly across all schooling levels, beedi use is heavily concentrated among those with the lowest education levels. While younger and middle-aged men largely prefer cigarettes, beedi consumption is disproportionately prevalent among the older population.

Also, while there is almost no caste-based difference in cigarette smoking, beedi use shows a slight shift. Over 15% of the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations smoke cigarettes, which is similar to the share among the general category. With beedis, however, the numbers tilt slightly: 10.6% of the SC population smokes them, compared to 7% in the general category.

The economic disparity in tobacco choice is stark: while wealth has little impact on cigarette consumption, it is the primary driver of beedi use. Among India's poorest households, the share of beedi and cigarette smokers is nearly identical (around 14-15%). However, as household wealth increases, beedi consumption plummets. In the richest households, while cigarette use remains steady at 11.5%, beedi consumption drops to just 2.1% **(Chart 3)**.

The 2022 Report on Tobacco Control in India indicates that beedi smoking poses serious health risks, in many cases exceeding those of cigarettes. The report highlights striking differences in respiratory risk: beedi smokers are 2.87 times more likely to suffer from asthma, compared to 1.82 times for cigarette smokers.

Cancer risks show a similar pattern. A Mumbai cohort study found that beedi smokers faced a higher risk of all cancers than cigarette smokers, with particularly elevated risks for lung and laryngeal cancers. Tuberculosis mortality is also more severe, with beedi smokers facing 2.6 times the risk of death. "Poor people who are the main consumers of beedis end up spending more on health care," said health economist Rijo John. "That is only going to increase the existing inequality between the poor and the rich."

The Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2016-17 (GATS-2) shows that the average monthly expenditure of Indians on tobacco rose for both cigarette and beedi users, but for very different reasons. Daily smokers spent about ₹1,192 per month on cigarettes, up from ₹668 in 2009-10 (GATS-1), and spent ₹284 per month on beedis, up from ₹156, after adjusting for inflation.

For cigarettes, this increase was largely price-driven, the survey argued. The number of cigarettes smoked per day did not rise significantly between GATS-1 and GATS-2, indicating that higher spending reflects higher taxes and prices, rather than higher consumption. On the other hand, the number of bidis smoked per day increased significantly between the two surveys, driving up overall expenditure. This suggests that tax policy has been effective in containing cigarette consumption, but not beedi use.

John said specific excise is considered a better form of taxation in regulating consumption. "If the tax is levied solely on the basis of the quantity consumed, we pay the same tax whether the beedi is sold at a lower price or at a higher price by the manufacturer. This directly discourages consumption," he said.
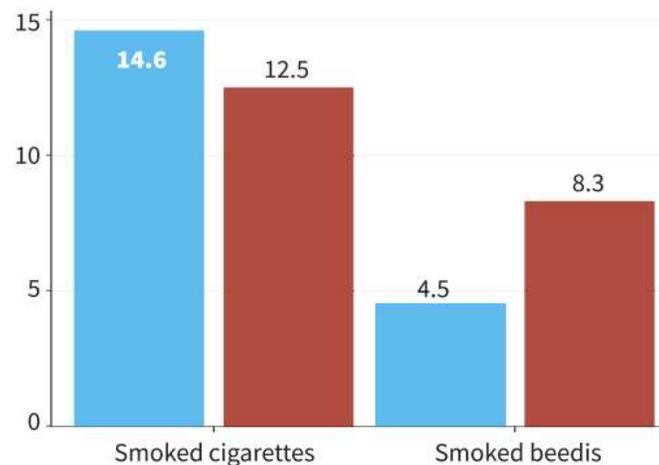
No smoke without harm

The data for the charts were sourced from the National Family Health Survey-5, the Global Adult Tobacco Survey Second Round India (2016-2017) and the Report on Tobacco Control in India (2022)

CHART 1: The percentage of men aged 15-54 who smoked cigarettes and beedis across urban and rural populations as of 2019-21

■ Urban men ■ Rural men

Many among labour force that roll beedis also consume them
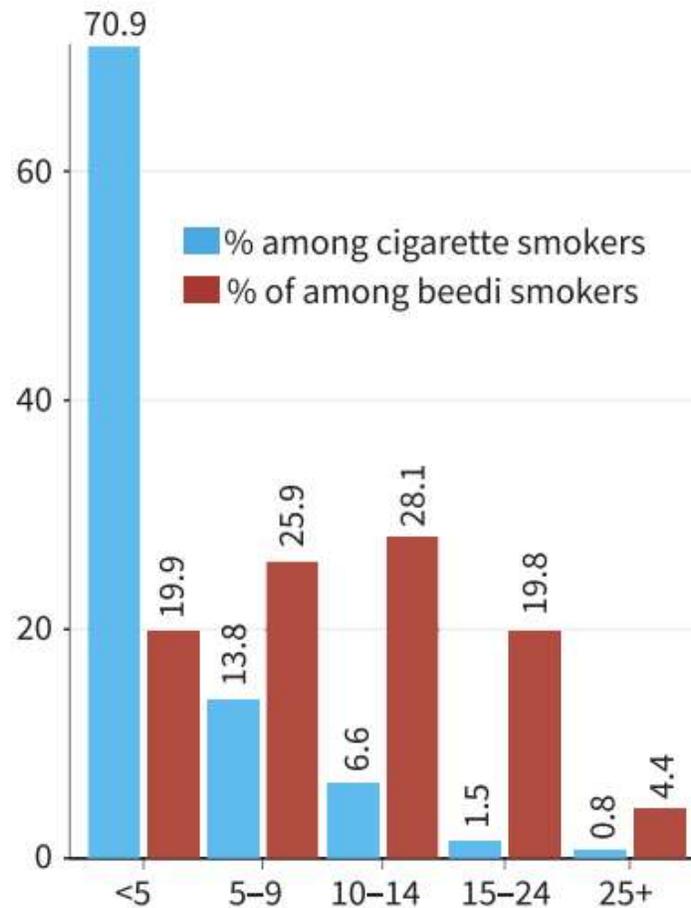
■ *Over 80% of beedi smokers consumed more than five sticks daily, whereas over 70% of cigarette smokers consumed fewer than five*

■ *The economic disparity in tobacco choice is stark: while wealth has little impact on cigarette consumption, it is the primary driver of beedi use*

CHART 2: Distribution of male smokers by the number of units consumed per day as of 2019-21

- ■ % among cigarette smokers
- ■ % of among beedi smokers

	<5	5–9	10–14	15–24	25+
% among cigarette smokers	70.9	13.8	6.6	1.5	0.8
% of among beedi smokers	19.9	25.9	28.1	19.8	4.4

CHART 3: The percentage of men who smoked cigarettes and beedis across wealth quintiles as of 2019-21

- ■ % of men who smoked cigarettes
- ■ % of men who smoked beedis

	Lowest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Highest
% of men who smoked cigarettes	14.8	14.6	12.8	12.8	11.5
% of men who smoked beedis	14.3	9.9	6.4	3.8	2.1
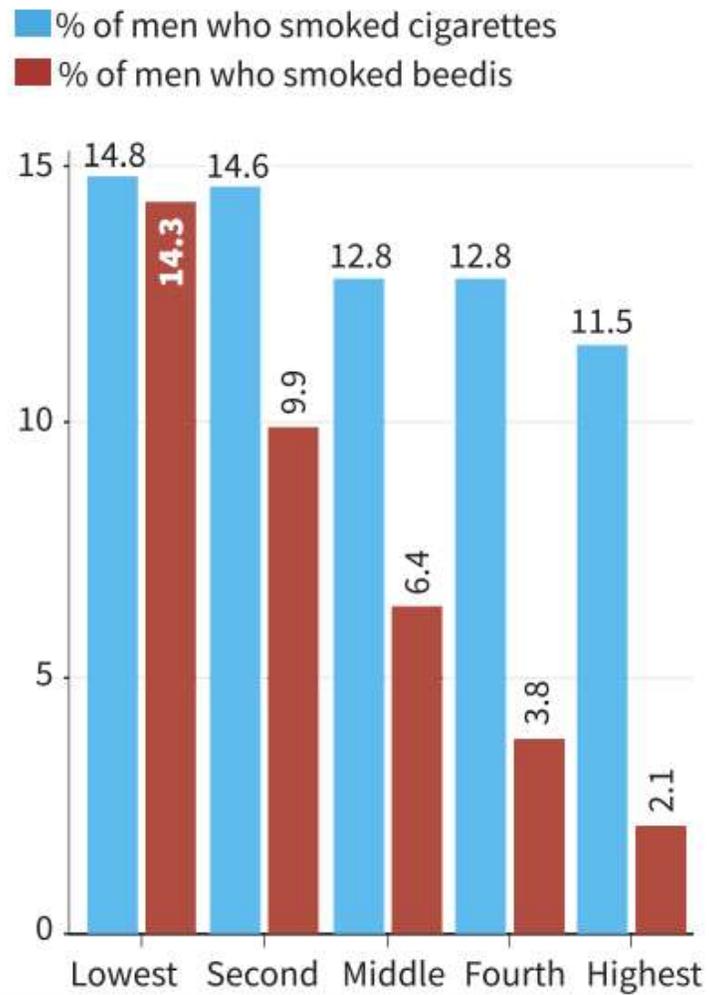
1️⃣ Core Argument of the Article

• While cigarettes are taxed at the highest GST slab (40%), beedis are taxed at just 18%, making them cheaper.

सिगरेट पर 40% GST है जबकि बीड़ी पर केवल 18%, जिससे बीड़ी सस्ती है।

• Lowering or keeping beedi taxes low to "protect rural workers" ignores long-term health costs.

ग्रामीण श्रमिकों की सुरक्षा के नाम पर बीड़ी पर कम कर लगाना दीर्घकालिक स्वास्थ्य लागत की अनदेखी है।

• Evidence suggests beedis are as harmful — sometimes more harmful — than cigarettes.

प्रमाण बताते हैं कि बीड़ी सिगरेट जितनी या उससे अधिक हानिकारक है।

2️⃣ Historical & Policy Context

🔷 Tobacco Regulation in India

• Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003 regulates tobacco.

• India ratified WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2004.

• GST regime (2017) placed tobacco in highest slab + compensation cess.

Beedis, due to political economy and rural employment concerns, have historically received lighter taxation.

3️⃣ Health & Epidemiological Facts

- NFHS & GATS surveys show tobacco use concentrated among poorer, rural, and less educated groups.
- India accounts for ~1.3 million tobacco-related deaths annually (WHO estimates).
- Beedi smokers consume more sticks per day compared to cigarette smokers.
- Beedi smokers have:
– 2.87 times higher asthma risk
– 2.6 times higher tuberculosis mortality risk
– Higher lung & laryngeal cancer risk

Exam Insight: Tobacco burden directly linked to SDG-3 (Good Health & Well-being).

4️⃣ Socio-Economic Dimension

🔷 Poverty & Tobacco Trap

- Poor households spend significant income share on tobacco.
- Out-of-pocket health expenditure in India ≈ 48% of total health expenditure.
- Tobacco-induced illnesses push families into poverty.

Economic paradox:

Short-term income from beedi production vs long-term healthcare burden.

5️⃣ Geographical & Demographic Patterns

• Beedi use concentrated among rural, older, less-educated men.

• Urban areas show higher cigarette prevalence.

• SC/ST communities show slightly higher beedi usage than general category.

• Rural beedi smoking prevalence almost double that of urban areas.

Public policy must consider regional disparities (e.g., tobacco-growing states like MP, Karnataka).

6️⃣ Taxation & Economic Policy Insight

🔹 Tax Elasticity

• Higher cigarette taxes reduced consumption (GATS comparison).

• Beedi consumption increased when taxes remained low.

• Specific excise tax (quantity-based) more effective than ad valorem tax.

Principle:

Price ↑ → Demand ↓ (Law of Demand).

Country	Tobacco Policy
Australia	Plain packaging + very high taxes
UK	Heavy excise + NHS cessation support
Thailand	Aggressive tax & anti-smoking campaigns
India	High cigarette tax, lower beedi tax disparity

Consider the following statements regarding tobacco taxation and public health in India:

1. Article 47 of the Indian Constitution directs the State to raise the level of nutrition and public health.

2. India is a signatory to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

3. Under the GST regime, beedis are taxed at a higher rate than cigarettes to discourage rural tobacco consumption.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Child, 14 security personnel among 17 killed in two attacks in Pakistan

Two bomb attacks and a gunfight between police and militants in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province killed at least 14 security personnel and three civilians including a child. The incidents on Monday, which left dozens wounded, come as Pakistan's forces battle insurgents in provinces that border Afghanistan. AFP

Jesse Jackson, key voice of the U.S. civil rights movement, dies at 84

Veteran U.S. civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, one of the nation's most influential Black voices, died on Tuesday, his family said in a statement. He was 84. A protege of Martin Luther King Jr. and a two-time presidential candidate, Jackson led the Civil Rights Movement for decades after the revered leader's assassination. AFP

Russia, Ukraine sit down for new round of U.S.-led talks to end war

Russian and Ukrainian negotiators on Tuesday began U.S.-brokered talks in Geneva seeking to end the four-year war, hours after both sides launched fresh long-range strikes. U.S. President Donald Trump is seeking to position himself as a peacemaker, but previous talks mediated by Washington have yielded no breakthrough. AFP

'Godfather' and 'Apocalypse Now' actor Robert Duvall dies aged 95

Robert Duvall, who played the smooth mafia lawyer in *The Godfather* and stole the show as a surfing-crazed colonel in *Apocalypse Now*, died on Monday. He was 95. Duvall won an Oscar for best actor for *Tender Mercies*. Over his six decades-long career, he shone in both lead and supporting roles. AFP

Tarique Rahman sworn in as Bangladesh PM

As the new Prime Minister, the BNP chief will head a team of 25 Cabinet Ministers and 24 Ministers of State, all of whom were sworn in by President Shahabuddin; BNP lawmakers were administered the oath as members of Parliament, but not as members of the Constitution Reform Commission

Kallol Bhattacherjee
DHAKA

Five days after the parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, Tarique Rahman, chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), was sworn in as the new Prime Minister on Tuesday.

The swearing-in of the new Prime Minister and his ministerial colleagues came hours after Chief Election Commissioner A.M.M Nasir Uddin administered the oath of Parliament to the newly elected members of the BNP in Parliament, Jatiyo Sansad.

As the new Prime Minister, Mr. Rahman will lead a team of 25 Cabinet Ministers and 24 Ministers of State, who were all administered oath by President

Mohammed Shahabuddin. Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Amir Khosru Mahmud Chaudhury, Salahuddin Ahmed, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku – prominent members of the National Standing Committee of the BNP; and Nitai Roy Choudhury, Kazi Shafi Mofazzal Hossein, Abdul Awal Mintu, Shama Obaid from the BNP executive committee were sworn in as Cabinet Ministers.

While most of the Ministers sworn in were elected MPs in the February 12 election, the council will also include Mohammed Amir Uz Rashid under the 'technocrats' category.

The BNP's ally Ganosanghati Andolan's Jonaid Saki, a popular face among the Gen Z protesters for his

radical comments, will be a State minister.

The current National Security Adviser, Khalilur Rahman, has been included among the Cabinet Ministers as a 'technocrat'.

Foreign dignitaries

Around 1,200 foreign and domestic guests attended

Way forward: Tarique Rahman takes oath as Prime Minister from President Mohammed Shahabuddin in Dhaka on Tuesday. AP

the swearing-in ceremony that took place in the South Plaza of Parliament. Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, Pakistan's Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri were among the foreign dignitaries.

The process of transfer of power from the interim government led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus started earlier in the day when Tarique Rahman led the BNP-alliance members to Parliament, where they were administered the oath of membership.

Before the procedure, standing committee member Salahuddin Ahmed took the microphone and said the BNP members who were present on the occasion in Parliament will not take oath for being part of the 'Constitution Reform Commission'.

"None of us were elected as members of the Constitution Reform Commission and the oath for this commission has not yet become part of the constitutional process," said Mr.

Ahmed, asserting that he is conveying the decision of the party. Jamaat-e-Islami lawmakers arrived in Parliament, accompanied by the newly elected independent MPs and they were administered two separate oaths for Parliament as well as the Constitution Reform Commission.

The twin-oath procedure was conceived to integrate the results of the parliamentary election as well as referendum for constitutional amendment by including the July Charter into the Constitution. The July Charter is a document adopted by the interim government in consultation with political parties on October 2025 after the overthrow of Sheikh Hasina-led government in August.

Iran and U.S. agree on 'guiding principles' for future discussions

Stanly Johny

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that a general agreement on guiding principles for future talks has been reached in the second round of discussions with the U.S. in Geneva.

The talks were "serious and more constructive" than the previous round, Mr. Araghchi told reporters in Geneva, reported the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

Mr. Araghchi had met Steve Witkoff, U.S. special envoy, and Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law, in Muscat on February 6 amid high tensions in West Asia, when the U.S. has deployed fighter jets, warships and an aircraft carrier. Tuesday's

talks were mediated by Oman in the Swiss city.

"Finally, we were able to reach an agreement on a set of guiding principles based on which we will move forward and discuss the text of a potential deal," said Mr. Araghchi. He added that reaching a final agreement may not be immediate, noting that technical work on the text would be complex.

Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi, who mediated the talks, also said talks concluded with "good progress". "Today's indirect negotiations between Iran and the U.S. concluded with good progress towards identifying common goals and relevant technical leaders," Mr. Albusaidi wrote in a social media post.

Bangladesh reform agenda wins voters' backing, but rifts remain among parties

Rabiul Alam
DHAKA

Bangladesh's landmark referendum on constitutional reforms delivered a decisive mandate in favour of the July National Charter 2025, setting the stage for the most far-reaching reformation of the country's governance framework since independence. According to official results published by the Election Commission, more than 48 million voters backed the Charter in the February 12 referendum, with 60.26% of participants voting "Yes". The vote coincided with the country's 13th parliamentary elections.

The endorsement places immediate political and legal obligations on the new government, being led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which secured a two-thirds majority in Parliament. While the BNP signed the Charter last year, it did so with a note of dissent on several key provisions raising questions about how smoothly the reform process will unfold.

The July Charter is a 28-page reform blueprint born from the July 2024 uprising which toppled the 15-year rule of Sheikh Hasina. It consolidates reform proposals aimed at preventing what its architects describe as the "recurrence of authoritarian and fascist rule".

In February 2025, the interim government of Muhammad Yunus established six reform commissions to examine the constitution, judiciary, electoral system, police, public administration, and anti-corruption mechan-

isms. Their recommendations were distilled into the July Charter through a National Consensus Commission process. In October, 33 political parties, including the BNP, signed the Charter. The document was subsequently given legal effect through a Presidential order in November 2025.

Proposed changes

The referendum presented voters with four consolidated reform areas. First, the establishment of a non-partisan caretaker government to administer future elections, along with the reconstitution of the Election Commission and other key constitutional bodies based on the Charter's guidelines. Second, the creation of a bicameral Parliament. A new 100-member upper house will be formed based on the proportional vote share received by political parties in the national election. Any future constitutional amendments will require majority approval from this chamber.

Third, the implementation of 30 specific reform proposals previously agreed upon by major political factions. These include capping the tenure of the Prime Minister, ex-

panding presidential powers, securing judicial independence, strengthening local government, and broadening fundamental citizen rights. Fourth, provisions for inclusive parliamentary representation. The mandate guarantees increased representation for women and dictates that the Deputy Speaker and Parliamentary committee chairs must be selected from the Opposition benches. Additional reforms embedded in the Charter include protections for fundamental rights such as uninterrupted Internet access, enhanced checks on executive authority, and measures to strengthen democratic accountability.

The referendum's passage imposes specific obligations on the new Parliament. Under the Constitution Reform Order 2025, the newly elected legislature will function as a Constitutional Reform Council with a fixed tenure of 180 working days to implement the Charter's provisions.

Elected members will be required to take two separate oaths, one as members of Parliament and another as members of the Constitutional Reform Council.

The BNP has given "notes of dissent" to several provisions, including the expanded powers of the President, the design and legislative role of the proposed upper house, etc.

Disagreements

However, shortly after the elections, the composition of the upper house has emerged as a particular point of contention. While the referendum mandates a chamber based on proportional representation using national vote share, the BNP's manifesto proposes allocating upper house seats based on parliamentary strength.

The National Citizen Party (NCP), founded by student leaders who led the uprising, has said the legitimacy of the referendum was stronger than that of the parliamentary election itself. "The referendum carries greater legitimacy than the national election, all Members of Parliament must enter the House with the responsibility of implementing the July Charter," said NCP spokesperson Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan.

Political analysts say the coming months will test whether the BNP's commitment to the Charter withstands the practical challenges of implementation. The disagreements over specific provisions will require negotiation between the government and Opposition parties represented in Parliament.

Ali Riaz, an adviser to Muhammad Yunus, said, the referendum has delivered a direct mandate from the people for substantial constitutional reform. "It must be viewed as a public verdict and as an expression of the people's will for reform."

Bold reset: Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus displays the 'July National Charter' outside Parliament in Oct. 2025. AP

Copies of the book *Et la joie de vivre* by French survivor Gisèle Pelicot seen at a bookstore window in Paris. The memoir, released on Tuesday in 22 languages, retraces the 2024 mass-rape case that turned Ms. Pelicot into a global symbol in the fight against sexual violence. REUTERS

Family claims former Pak. PM enduring 'mistreatment' in jail

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's incarcerated former Prime Minister Imran Khan's family claimed on Tuesday that he is enduring "unimaginable mistreatment" in prison under the directives of Field Marshal Asim Munir, the country is under "illegitimate and un-Islamic rule".

The country's Opposition alliance continued its sit-in in Islamabad for the fifth day on Tuesday, demanding better health facilities Mr. Khan.

The sit-in is led by the Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Ain Pakistan (TTAP), an alliance set up last year to protest the constitution of the country.

Mr. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is its main force, while the alliance is led by Mahmood Khan Achakzai, a Pashtun

Opposition alliance continued its sit-in demanding better health facilities for Imran Khan

tribal leader from Balochistan who is also the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly.

The sit-ins were prompted by the concerns regarding the health of Mr. Khan, who recently told a visiting lawyer that he lost about 85% of vision in the right eye due to alleged lack of health services, a charge rejected by the government.

"Imran Khan has endured unimaginable mistreatment in prison under the directives of 'Asim Law', now facing irreversible damage to his right eye as a direct consequence," Mr. Khan's sister Noreen

Niazi said in a post on X, referring to Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir.

She said it has been established that Mr. Khan's medical complaints were ignored "unduly and unjustly" for three months while he was kept in "illegal solitary confinement".

The sit-ins were prompted by the concerns regarding the health of Mr. Khan, leading to devastating effects on his eye, now diagnosed as retinal vein occlusion. This isn't mere negligence. It's deliberate cruelty, executed through an evil and conniving master plan of Gen. Asim Munir.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi told the media that the government has no intention to "politicise" the matter of Mr. Khan's health, while blaming the Opposition for doing the same.

Baku jails ex-Karabakh leader on war crimes charge

In the latest ruling against Armenian secessionists detained after its takeover, Azerbaijan on Tuesday sentenced Ruben Vardanyan, former Karabakh separatist leader, to 20 years in prison.

The Baku Military Court sentenced Mr. Vardanyan to 20 years behind bars "under articles of the criminal code relating to crimes against peace and humanity, and war crimes". Mr. Vardanyan has rejected the charges and declared himself a political prisoner.

Armenia has demanded the release of the separatist leaders arrested by its neighbour after it took control of the breakaway enclave of Karabakh in 2023.

Tarique Rahman sworn in as Bangladesh PM

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INDIA - BANGLADESH LAND BORDER

(TOTAL BOUNDARY= 4096 KM)

ASSAM
(262 KM)

MEGHALAYA
(443 KM)

BANGLADESH

TRIPURA
(856 KM)

MIZORAM
(318 KM)

WEST
BENGAL
(2,217 KM)

1️⃣ Core Event Summary

• Tarique Rahman, Chairman of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), sworn in as Prime Minister.

• Sworn in by President Mohammed Shahabuddin in Dhaka.

• Cabinet: 25 Cabinet Ministers + 24 Ministers of State.

• Transfer of power from interim government led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

• BNP lawmakers took oath as Members of Parliament but not as members of the Constitution Reform Commission.

2️⃣ Political–Historical Context

🔷 Bangladesh Political Evolution

• 1971 – Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan.

• 1972 – Constitution adopted (4 pillars: Nationalism, Socialism, Democracy, Secularism).

• Alternating dominance between Awami League (AL) and BNP since 1990s.

• 1996–2011 – Caretaker Government system existed to oversee elections.

• 2011 – Caretaker system abolished via 15th Amendment.

Current transition from interim government indicates constitutional and electoral reconfiguration phase.

3️⃣ Constitutional Framework of Bangladesh

- Executive power vested in Prime Minister (Parliamentary system).
- President is ceremonial head of state.
- Parliament (Jatiya Sangsad) is unicameral.
- Constitution Reform Commission suggests possible amendments.

Exam Insight:

Bangladesh follows Westminster-style parliamentary democracy similar to India.

4️⃣ Regional & Geopolitical Significance

🔷 India–Bangladesh Relations

- 4,096 km long border (India's longest international border).
- Key issues:
– Teesta water-sharing agreement
– Border management & illegal migration
– Trade (India is one of Bangladesh's largest trade partners)
– Connectivity (BBIN initiative)

- Bangladesh strategically located between South Asia and Southeast Asia (Act East Policy relevance).

5️⃣ Economic Context

• Bangladesh GDP growth averaged 6–7% pre-pandemic.

• Major sectors:

– Ready-made garments (RMG) – 80% of exports

– Remittances

– Agriculture

• Political stability crucial for:

– Foreign Direct Investment

– Trade with India & China

– IMF programs & debt sustainability

Aspect	Details (English + श्रीस्त्रि
Event	Swearing-in of Bangladesh PM Tarique Rahman's Cabinet / काॅनकॉट्ट इङ इशेत्ररकॢ ल्कॐड घणरक इङ रॐत्ररकॉन्च इव ट् र्हॕ इणर्
Key Highlight	Nitai Roy Chowdhury is the lone Hindu minister in the cabinet / श्ल्वह घूश्र द्ऱ१घॢ रॐत्ररकॉन्च रॢडडरॐद् श्रॐन रॐह्ह णॐ
Political Party	Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) / काॅनकॉट्ट ड्ट्र श्श्रa ह्व्रब जBNP)
Significance	Symbol of minority representation in executive / इव्रगॢकॐश्रडव रॢ१ हृदॢड ॐत्श्रॐर्टु इव ह्ल्हड

Feature	Bangladesh	India
Legislature	Unicameral	Bicameral
Executive	PM-led Cabinet	PM-led Cabinet
Constitution Amendment	Parliamentary majority	Special majority (Art 368)
Caretaker Govt	Abolished (2011)	Not applicable

Consider the following statements regarding Bangladesh:

1. Bangladesh follows a parliamentary form of government with a unicameral legislature.

2. The caretaker government system in Bangladesh was abolished through a constitutional amendment.

3. Bangladesh shares its longest international border with Myanmar.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

As critical minerals become strategic assets, U.S. looks to realign supply chain

Trump administration's Project Vault aims to create a reserve of critical minerals to protect domestic industry from a disruption as witnessed when China restricted export of rare earth magnets to retaliate against U.S. tariffs, causing a near shutdown of car manufacturing operations in the U.S.

Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2nd right) poses with revellers at the Rio Carnival on Monday. AFP

Flattering carnival in poll year could land Lula in legal trouble

Associated Press
RIO DE JANEIRO

Rio de Janeiro's Sambadrome hosted a glitzy parade Sunday evening celebrating Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in a year he bids for a fourth term. However, his adversaries are seeking legal action against the 80-year-old leader and the samba school, alleging the tribute kicked off his campaign six months in advance.

The parade by top samba school Acadêmicos de Niterói centred on Mr. Lula's trajectory from a childhood of poverty in Brazil's northeast region to his current standing as one of Latin America's most prominent leaders.

Mr. Lula, Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin and their wives attended the parade.

João Santana, Mr. Lula's campaign manager in his 2006 bid for re-election, does not foresee any electoral gains from the tribute. "The president and the first lady have dangerously approached this parade," he said in a video published on Thursday. "This could all backfire."

In 2003, his first year as President, the prominent samba school Beija Flor featured a float depicting him as a courageous politician fighting hunger. Nine years later, the São Paulo-based samba school Gaviões da Fiel also centred its parade on Mr. Lula.

But never had such a Carnival tribute happened for a sitting President in an election year and with an electoral court closely watching.

Within months, the electoral court's leadership will pass to Supreme Court Justice Kássio Nunes, who was appointed by Mr. Lula's foe and predecessor Jair Bolsonaro, a Carnival critic during his presidency. Mr. Nunes will also be in charge during Brazil's presidential election in October.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Hariamdar Kumar

In the first week of February, the Trump administration unveiled Project Vault, an independently governed and operated public-private partnership aimed at establishing a strategic domestic reserve of critical minerals in the U.S. The partnership, backed by $10 billion in financing by the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) and an additional $2 billion in private funds, aims to store 60 critical minerals listed in the U.S. Geological Survey's 2025 Critical Minerals List to strengthen the resilience of civilian industries against supply chain disruptions. Under this development model, EXIM provides long-term loans to purchase and store critical minerals in the country. This stockpile build-up represents a whole-of-government transformative approach to reduce dependence on foreign-controlled supply chains prone to geopolitical risks and economic coercion, complementing other major policy efforts to build substantive domestic production and processing of critical minerals.

Reason for the move

The concept of strategic reserves in the U.S. goes back to 1975 when it established its Strategic Petroleum Reserve to protect its economy from the energy shocks caused by the 1973 Arab oil embargo. In the 21st century, critical minerals are foundational to modern economic and technological power, and China dominates different stages of mineral production such as mining, processing, and magnet manufacturing. In 2025, China retaliated against U.S. tariffs by restricting exports of rare earth magnets, causing a near shutdown of operations of car manufacturing in the United States and across the world. The unprecedented disruption forced production lines to rethink shifting some production to China, whose finished exports had minimum restrictions. Importantly, the disruption laid bare the vulnerabilities in the supply chain and caused a decisive blow to the Trump administration's plan to shore up manufacturing in the U.S. Therefore, the project to maintain critical mineral strategic reserves is underlined by the growing risks posed by the concentration of critical minerals and rare earth elements in the hands of one player, which directly affects access, affordability, and geopolitical leverage.

In this context, Project Vault is intended as a long-term insurance for domestic manufacturers, who could procure minerals without geographic restrictions, based on supply availability and commercial considerations, and store them. Moreover, withdrawal from the reserves and their replenishment are guided by clear and predefined conditions of market disruption. In short, Project Vault represents not another industrial policy but a new strategic doctrine, in which critical minerals and rare earth elements are not just commodities but strategic assets that underpin comprehensive national power.

U.S. first, allies second?

EXIM chairman John Jovanovic emphasised that Project Vault will initially focus on building and securing domestic manufacturing capacity in critical minerals, with a broader focus on allied engagement to strengthen shared supply chains through partnerships. However, analysts point out that given the deep pockets of the U.S. and the exhaustive list of stockpiles, its interventions could directly help non-Chinese producers, who have struggled in competing against cheaper Chinese mining. Diversified purchases by the U.S. could directly contribute to the strengthening of alternative supply chains globally if partner countries also agree to trade minerals between each other at border-adjusted price floors (minimum price). In this regard, the U.S. administration has already signed 11 new bilateral agreements, with Japan, the EU, Mexico, and the United Kingdom, announcing action plans to develop border-adjusted price mechanisms.

On a multilateral level, the Trump administration's decision to host 54 countries at the Critical Minerals Ministerial signalled a welcome return to plurilateral initiatives to create a preferential trading bloc that would enforce similar rules. The multilateral initiative was named by Secretary of State Marco Rubio as the Forum on Resource Geostrategic Engagement (FORGE), whose broader objectives are to coordinate on critical minerals policy, pricing, and project development. For allies and partners, the FORGE initiative provides a platform to collaborate at the policy level on investments and access to critical minerals and set the price floor to build resilient supply chains.

Pax Silica

The Pax Silica initiative was launched by the United States in December 2025 to form a coalition of capable countries committed to building secure and resilient supply chains foundational to artificial intelligence (AI), which include energy, critical minerals, and semiconductors. Its members include Australia, Greece, Israel, Japan, Qatar, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates, with India being invited to join as a full member and the European Union, Canada, the Netherlands, and Taiwan as guest contributors. The U.S., through Pax Silica and several bilateral agreements, intends to combine capital, energy, mineral reserves, knowledge, and demand across allied jurisdictions to multiply capabilities in AI by coordinating investment and aligning regulatory standards.

However, even as Project Vault and Pax Silica complement each other and represent a holistic approach to critical minerals diplomacy, their implementation remains vulnerable to being dominated by 'America First' politics, which tends to treat partners hierarchically and prefer absolute alignment with American national security priorities. This behaviour is already evident in the asymmetrical nature of U.S. trade deal negotiations as partner countries had to not only assess the risks of long-term commitments to join U.S.-led supply chains but also hedge against the volatile and coercive behaviour of the Trump administration. Such an approach remains relevant here against the backdrop of the recently released U.S. National Security Strategy, which asserts that U.S. exports in technology and U.S. standards drive the world forward. In the end, stable and coercive behaviour, trust, and less volatility, and ensuring these will remain the biggest challenge for the U.S.-led initiatives.

Hariamdar Kumar is an NASP Fellow at the Takshashila Institution.

The public-private partnership aims to store 60 minerals listed in the U.S. Geological Survey's 2025 Critical Minerals List. GETTY IMAGES

China's humanoid robots take the lead at Lunar New Year showtime

Reuters
BEIJING

China's most-watched TV show, the annual CCTV Spring Festival gala, on Monday showcased the country's cutting edge in industrial policy and Beijing's push to dominate humanoid robots and the future of manufacturing.

Four rising humanoid robot startups - Unitree Robotics, Galbot, Noetix and MagicLab - demonstrated their products at the gala, a televised event and touchstone for China comparable to the Super Bowl for the United States.

The programme's first three sketches prominently featured humanoid robots, including a lengthy martial arts demonstration where over a dozen Unitree humanoids performed sophisticated fight sequences waving swords, poles and nunchucks in close proximity to human children performers.

The fight sequences included a technically ambitious one that imitated the wobbly moves and backward falls of China's "drunken boxing" martial arts style, showing innovations in multi-robot coordination and fault recovery - where a robot can get up after falling down.

The programme's opening sketch also prominently featured ByteDance's AI chatbot Doubao, while four Noetix humanoid robots appeared alongside human actors in a comedy skit and MagicLab robots performed a synchronised dance with humans.

The hype surrounding China's humanoid robot sector comes as major players prepare for initial public offerings this year, and domestic artificial intelligence startups release a raft of frontier models during the lucrative nine-day Lunar New Year public holiday.

Last year's gala stunned viewers with 16 full-size Unitree humanoids twirling handkerchiefs and dancing in unison with human performers.

President Xi Jinping has met five robotics startup founders in the past year, comparable to the four electric vehicle and four semiconductor entrepreneurs he met in the same time, giving the nascent sector unusual visibility.

A humanoid robot performs a dance during celebrations on the first day of the Lunar New Year in Beijing on Monday. REUTERS

Protective shield: Syrian soldiers outside a stall operated by the Syrian Defence Ministry at 57th Damascus International Book Fair, the first edition since the collapse of the Assad regime, on Monday. AP

Two years on, Navalny's death casts a shadow over Russia and wider Europe

The Associated Press
MOSCOW

Mourners gathered in Moscow on Monday to mark two years since the death in custody of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, under the shadow of a Kremlin crackdown and just two days since a new analysis reinforced the suspicion that he was killed by poisoning.

Navalny died in an Arctic penal colony on February 16, 2024, while serving a 19-year sentence that many believed to be politically motivated. His death at the age of 47 left the Russian opposition leaderless and divided, struggling to build an effective or united front without one of its most visible and charismatic figures.

On the second anniversary of Navalny's death, we look at the latest investigation into its cause and the continuing political repercussions, both within Russia and beyond.

'He was murdered'

Navalny's mother, Lyudmila Navalnaya, and his mother-in-law, Alla Abrosimova, were among the mourners laying flowers on his grave. A mound of bouquets rose above the heavy drifts of snow that blanketed Moscow's Borisovsky Cemetery.

Representatives from several European embassies also paid their respects, watched by a conspicuously high security presence. Later, a small choir gathered to sing by Navalny's graveside.

Addressing the crowd, Lyudmila Navalnaya reiterated her belief that her son was killed by the Russian authorities, a scenario which has also been backed by several European countries in recent days. "We knew that our son did not simply die in prison," she said. "He was murdered."

The Kremlin has denied the allegations, saying that Navalny died of natural causes.

Flowers were also laid at the memorial to the victims of political repression in St. Petersburg. Access to the site was later blocked with temporary fences, local news outlets reported.

The anniversary coincides with the release of a joint statement by five European countries, which said that Navalny was poisoned by the Kremlin with a rare and lethal toxin found in the skin of potato dart frogs.

The foreign ministries of the U.K., France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands said on Saturday their analysis in European labs of samples taken from Navalny's body "conclusively confirmed the presence of epibatidine." The neurotoxin secreted by dart frogs in South America is not found naturally in Russia, they said.

A joint statement said: "Russia had the means, motive and opportunity to administer this poison."

In a written tribute to Navalny on Monday, French President Emmanuel Macron also linked the Kremlin with the opposition leader's death.

"Two years ago, the world learned of the death of Alexei Navalny. I pay tribute to his memory," Mr. Macron wrote on social media. "I said then that I believed his death said everything about the Kremlin's weakness and its fear of any opponent. It is now clear that this death was premeditated.

"Truth always prevails, while we await justice to do the same."

Moscow has vehemently denied its involvement in Navalny's death, saying that he had become unwell after going for a walk.

Charges 'unfounded'

When asked about the allegations by journalists on Monday, presidential spokesperson said that the Kremlin does "not accept such accusations."

"We consider them biased and unfounded. In fact, we resolutely reject them," he said.

Saturday's announcement came as Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalnaya, attended the Munich Security Conference in Germany. She said she had been "certain from the first day" that her husband had been poisoned, "but now there is proof."

"Putin killed Alexei with a chemical weapon," she wrote on social media.

Navalny was the target of an earlier poisoning in 2020, with a nerve agent in an attack he blamed on the Kremlin, which always denied involvement. He is only alive because he was flown to Germany for treatment and recovery. Five months later, he returned to Russia, where he was immediately arrested and imprisoned for the last three years of his life.

Second anniversary: Foreign diplomats lay flowers at the grave of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny in Moscow on Monday. AFP

China's humanoid robots take the lead at Lunar New Year showtime

Reuters
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A humanoid robot performs a dance during celebrations on the first day of the Lunar New Year in Beijing on Monday. REUTERS

formed sophisticated fight sequences waving swords, poles and nunchucks in close proximity to human children performers.

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直播

• China showcased advanced humanoid robots during the CCTV Spring Festival Gala (Lunar New Year show).

• Major startups: Unitree Robotics, Galbot, Noetix, MagicLab.

• Robots performed synchronized dances, martial arts, multi-robot coordination & fault recovery (getting up after falling).

• Demonstrates Beijing's push to dominate humanoid robotics & next-gen manufacturing.

2️⃣ Historical Context – China's Tech Rise

🔷 Made in China 2025

• Strategic policy launched in 2015.

• Aimed at dominance in high-tech sectors: robotics, AI, semiconductors, EVs.

• Reduced reliance on Western technology.

🔷 AI Development Plan (2017)

• Goal: China to become global AI leader by 2030.

• Strong state support + capital infusion.

Humanoid robotics = Convergence of AI + Manufacturing + Sensors + Semiconductors.

3️⃣ Technological Significance

🔷 Key Capabilities Demonstrated

- Multi-robot coordination
- Real-time AI decision-making
- Balance & fault recovery
- Human-robot interaction

These indicate advances in:

✔️ Reinforcement learning
✔️ Computer vision
✔️ Actuator technology
✔️ Edge AI processing

4️⃣ Economic & Industrial Implications

- China faces aging population (Median age rising rapidly).
- Labor costs increasing → automation push.
- Humanoid robots could replace repetitive manufacturing & service jobs.

China is already world's largest industrial robot market (IFR data).

Industrial robotics share:

China > Japan > Germany > South Korea > USA

Humanoid robotics could be next wave of Industry 4.0.

Country	Humanoid Robotics Focus
USA	Boston Dynamics, Tesla Optimus
China	State-supported startup ecosystem
Japan	SoftBank robotics tradition
South Korea	Advanced service robots

Aspect	Details (English + श्र(garbled))
Festival Name	Chinese New Year / Lunar New Year / Spring Festival / द्हष्ह ष्त्र ञ्क्षण ञद्क्क ह्ंटूत्र
Calendar Basis	Lunar Calendar (based on moon cycles) / द्क्र ड्रक्क्ष्-घ् ह्घ् ष श्क्ष्झ्क
Start Date	Between 21 January – 20 February / 21 न ष्ञघ्ह – 20 घ्त्रघ्ह ड्ड् ह्हद्
Duration	15 days (ends with Lantern Festival) / 15ऋष्ष ज्ख्क्ष्झ ह्ंटूत्र ड्ड् द्व्क्क द्रक्ॅंझ
Celebrated In	China, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Korea etc. / द्हष, ल्क्र-ञक, श्क्त्र्क्ह्स्म रव्च्झ्क्ग्त्र, श्ग्त्ऽ्व्रव, ड्क्ष्क्ग्त्र ष्श्द्

Feature	Details (English + श्रमस्ज
Zodiac Cycle	12-year cycle / 12 ऋड़ाग्र द्र्ह्र
Animals	Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, Pig / द्ऱ्यम्र, ऻघ्र, ऻव्त, ढ्घ्ऱ्ह्र्त, म्म्रार्ष, ढ्व्क्ह्, ढ्क्त्ऱ्व, ऻड्घ्ह्, ऻघ्र, ऱ्श्ख्र ऄक्ह्व्र, द्श्ऱ्घ
Current Cycle Example	2024 – Year of Dragon / 2024 – म्म्रार्ष ऋड़्ऱ
Cultural Meaning	Each animal symbolizes traits / ब्ड्ड्ढ् ह्क्ह्र श्म्ऱ्ड्ड् फ्ऱ्ड्झ्म् ड्व ब्ल्ह्ड

Aspect	Details (English + 中文)
Theme	Renewal, prosperity, good fortune / 更新、繁荣、好运
Colour Symbolism	Red signifies luck & protection / 红色象征幸运与保护
Firecrackers	Used to ward off evil spirits / 用来驱赶邪灵
Family Reunion	Largest annual human migration (Chunyun) / 最大的年度人类迁徙（春运）

Ritual	Details (English + श्रीमद्)
Reunion Dinner	Family meal on New Year's Eve / ष्न्न अक्ष् इह्ह हत्क्ष् द्क्रेन ह्घ ह्क्ष्यत्क्क्य्ड् व्ह्ज्न् ष्
Red Envelopes (Hongbao)	Money given to children / क्ष्य्य इय्न चत्क्य श्य्व्ड् रक्ष्ष् ष्
Dragon & Lion Dance	Symbol of strength & prosperity / ट्स्क् र्घ द्रक्ष्ष् इय् ब्ल्ह्ड्
Lantern Festival	Marks end of celebrations (15th day) / 15क्र श्ष् चक्ष्ष् ह्ट्न्

CHINESE ROBOTS PERFORM KUNG FU PERFECTLY!

INDIA TODAY Global

直播

Consider the following statements regarding humanoid robotics and China:

1. China's "Made in China 2025" strategy identifies robotics as a priority sector for technological self-reliance.

2. Humanoid robots integrate artificial intelligence, advanced sensors, and actuator systems for coordinated movement.

3. A declining working-age population can increase a country's incentive to invest in automation technologies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 1 and 2 only

C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

RECORD-BREAKER

From Canadian winters to WC history: Samra's dream journey

S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Yuvraj Samra is the first male player from an Associate nation to score a century in the T20 World Cup. At 19 years old 141 days, he also became the youngest to hit a ton in the men's global T20 showpiece, eclipsing Pakistan batter Ahmed Shehzad's record (22y, 127d) in 2014 (versus Bangladesh).

MAXIMUMS GALORE

Phillips is now New Zealand's joint second-highest six-hitter

S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Glenn Phillips on Tuesday pulled level with Colin Munro to become New Zealand's joint second-highest six-hitter in T20Is (107). Phillips smashed six maximums in the T20 World Cup match against Canada in Chennai and is behind former opener Martin Guptill, who holds the record with 173 sixes.

FANTASTIC FEAT

'It's an achievement that our whole country and people should enjoy'

AP

To qualify for the Super Eight with a game to spare for the first time in our history is certainly no small achievement. It's an achievement that our whole country and people should enjoy. Super Eight is certainly a tick in the box, but it's certainly not the whole line we set out for — Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza.

OPTIMISTIC

'Hopefully, our performances can help grow cricket in Netherlands'

FILE PHOTO: R. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Cricket is growing in the Netherlands. Obviously, football is the main sport, and we probably will never get to that level. But for us, it's about promoting the game, and, hopefully, our performances can help it grow. There are also restrictions with funding for us, but that's not under our control — captain Scott Edwards.

Seakash: The Pallekele Stadium remains under covers as weather has the final say. AFP

Rain gods favour Zimbabwe as it seals qualification spot

T20 WORLD CUP

Amlan Pathivil
PALLEKELE

When Australia captain Mitchell Marsh was asked about his team's hopes of making it through to the Super Eight after a demoralising loss against Sri Lanka on Monday, he mentioned "the luck of the Irish".

Australia needed Zimbabwe to falter against both Ireland and Sri Lanka in its next two games before it faced Oman in its last game with the hopes of overturning a Net Run Rate deficit.

Unfortunately for the Aussies, the rain gods in Pallekele did not get the memo.

The ICC T20 World Cup Group-B encounter against Ireland being called off before the toss meant Zimbabwe accumulated enough points to join Sri Lanka in the final eight. As for Australia, it failed to qualify out of the group stage for the first time since 2009.

A nagging drizzle since the morning of the game meant the entire ground was covered long before the scheduled start of 3 p.m. local time.

The grass banks of the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium, which were teeming with passionate Sri Lankan supporters just 18 hours ago, wore a desolate look.

The 400-odd fans that were waiting patiently in the stands did not even need an umbrella for the drizzle.

But in one of cricket's mysterious idiosyncrasies, that was enough to prevent the contest from getting underway.

Zimbabwe isn't complaining. Nor is Ireland, which had very little to gain out of the contest.

A downcast Australia, though, will have to complete the formalities against Oman and head back home without a semifinal appearance for the third successive edition since its 2021 triumph.

Points table

GROUP A

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
India (Q)	5	3	0	0	8	1.050
USA	4	2	2	0	6	0.190
Pakistan	3	2	1	0	4	-0.902
Netherlands	3	1	2	0	2	-1.352
Namibia	3	0	3	0	0	-2.443

GROUP B

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Sri Lanka (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	2.463
Zimbabwe (Q)	3	2	0	1	5	1.584
Ireland	4	1	2	1	3	0.190
Australia	3	1	2	0	2	0.414
Oman	3	0	3	0	0	-4.346

GROUP C

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
West Indies (Q)	4	3	1	0	6	1.620
England (Q)	4	3	1	0	6	0.201
Scotland	4	1	3	0	2	0.164
Italy	4	1	3	0	2	-0.588
Nepal	4	1	3	0	2	-1.340

GROUP D

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
South Africa (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	1.477
New Zealand (Q)	4	3	1	0	6	1.537
Afghanistan	3	1	2	0	2	-0.215
UAE	3	1	2	0	2	-0.797
Canada	3	0	3	0	0	-1.865

Q—QUALIFIED

Samra sparkles, but Kiwis stroll into the Super Eight

The opener's record century takes Canada to 173 for four; Phillips and Rachin make short work of the target despite the early dismissals of the in-form Seifert and Allen

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

He was named after former India cricketer Yuvraj Singh. Like his illustrious namesake, Canada's Yuvraj Samra has roots in Punjab and bats left-handed.

On Tuesday, the 19-year-old took those comparisons to the next level against New Zealand through some exquisite strokeplay, scoring a scintillating 110 (65b, 11x4, 6x6). His efforts powered Canada to 173 for four after opting to bat.

And when the North American outfit reduced the Kiwis to 30 for two by removing openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen, Dilpreet Bajwa's men would have sensed something momentous.

However, as is often the case, the more established teams have greater depth and temperament to navigate tricky situations. Glenn Phillips (76 n.o., 39b, 4x4, 6x6) and Rachin Ravindra (59 n.o., 39b, 4x4, 3x6) quickly turned the tables, putting the pressure back on Canada's inexperienced attack.

Their knocks ensured the Black Caps cantered home to an eight-wicket win with 29 balls to spare in their final Group D league fixture.

Phillips was particularly severe on the spinners, bludgeoning them down the ground and into the stands with disdain to propel his side into the Super Eight stage.

Despite the result, the day belonged to Samra. The tall opener may not be big on footwork, but he more than makes up for it through great bat swing and impeccable timing.

In the final over of the PowerPlay, he went after James Neesham, pocketing 18 runs with a hat-trick of fours and a six. New Zealand's bowlers were guilty of offering width, and Samra feasted on it by hitting through the line and targeting the cover region to bring up his century off just 58 balls. He also became the youngest centurion in the T20 World Cup.

With skipper Bajwa, he added 116 for the opening wicket to lift Canada to a competitive total.

Yet, on a good batting surface, it was always going to be a tall order to keep the Kiwis at bay.

The scores: Canada 173/4 in 20 overs (Yuvraj Samra 110, Dilpreet Bajwa 36) lost to New Zealand 176/2 in 15.1 overs (Rachin Ravindra 59 n.o., Glenn Phillips 76 n.o.).
Toss: Canada; **PoM:** Phillips.

Acing the chase: Rachin and Phillips put on 146 for the unbroken third wicket. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Samra signals his arrival on the world stage

C. Shyam Sundar
CHENNAI

Canada's teen opener Yuvraj Samra announced himself on the world stage with a record-breaking hundred against New Zealand in the T20 World Cup here on Tuesday.

Samra, named after former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh, smashed a 68-ball 110 which included half-a-dozen sixes and 11 fours.

Though the knock went in vain as the Kiwis romped home in 15.1 overs, Yuvraj showcased champion stuff against a quality attack.

In smashing the century, he became the first from an Associate nation to breach the three-figure mark in the T20 showpiece and also the youngest (19 years and 141 days) to register a ton in the World Cups (T20 and 50-over) beating the record of Ireland's Paul Stirling, who was 20 years and 196 days old when he scored a hundred against Netherlands in the 2011 ODI World Cup.

"I enjoyed the whole innings, I feel like it just went my way today and I felt great. Yes, I've been thinking about this moment every day," he told after the match.

Turning point

Samra, whose lofted shots bear an uncanny resemblance to Yuvraj's, said the innings could be a turning point in his career as he would have caught the eye of franchises across the various T20 leagues.

"I feel this innings could change my life. I can actually make a good living out of this sport," he said.

New Zealand all-rounder Glenn Phillips, who stole Samra's thunder with a 36-ball unbeaten 76 to steer the team to victory, was all praise for the latter.

"Yeah, obviously he batted unbelievably well. It's fantastic for him and he hit the ball really well today."

Simply sensational: Samra's 65-ball 110 included half-a-dozen sixes and 11 fours. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

I understand I can go through troughs: Rachin on his form

C. Shyam Sundar
CHENNAI

Rachin Ravindra wasn't in the best of form coming into the T20 World Cup and if that wasn't enough he was under the weather too. Somehow, global showpieces seem to bring out the best in him and he has probably run into form for New Zealand as the Super Eight looms.

After enjoying a wonderful run in the 2023 ODI World Cup in the sub-continent, the 26-year-old wasn't able to reproduce the magic as often as he would have liked in the shortest format but seems to be hitting the right notes again.

The elegant left-handed batter got into the groove in the company of the ultra-aggressive Glenn Phillips as the two helped Canada's 173 rather comfortably at the MAC Stadium here on Tuesday.

Rachin. AP

Reflecting on his fluent 39-ball unbeaten 59, he said, "Yeah, it obviously means a lot. You always want to score runs as a batter in T20 but I also understand the game is quite fickle and you go through little troughs in places."

Looking ahead to the Super Eight stage, he said the conditions in Colombo would be different.

"It's still T20 cricket at the end of the day and the team does well to adapt to whatever surface is put in front of it," he said.

Airee stars as Nepal finishes on a high

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

For the fourth time in less than two weeks, a sea of red and blue descended on the Wankhede Stadium. And it turned out to be a case of fourth-time lucky for Nepal as it ended its T20 World Cup sojourn by gifting the 19,000-odd fans a much-anticipated win against Scotland.

The two Michaels — Jones and Leask — excelled with the willow and the orb, respectively, to put Scotland in the ascendancy. But a late charge in both the halves of the game meant Nepal eventually crossed the target of 171 with four balls to spare and seven wickets in hand on Tuesday night.

Veteran all-rounder Dipendra Singh Airee (50 n.o., 23b, 4x4, 3x6) turned out to be Nepal's star. His unbroken 73-run partnership off 36 balls with left-hander Gulshan Jha took it home. When Jha walked out to bat, Nepal required 73 off 40 balls and with off-ie Leask having claimed all three wickets, Scotland was in charge. Airee started the onslaught by targeting Leask in the 16th over that went for 20 runs.

However, it was Jha who played the shot of the day, an inside-out lofted drive off pacer Brad Currie that sailed into the Divecha Pavilion over covers.

With the target in sight, Airee preferred to rotate strike. Nepal needed five off the final over bowled by Brad Wheal and Jha finished it off with a four through midwicket.

Had it not been for the bowlers pulling it back in the last five overs, Nepal would have been chasing a bigger target. At 131 for one in 15 overs and Jones well-set, Scotland was eyeing 200. But Sompal Kami spun a web as Nepal claimed six for 39 in the last five overs to swing the contest in its favour.

The scores:
Scotland 170/7 in 20 overs (Michael Jones 71, Sompal Kami 3/25, Nandan Yadav 2/30) lost to Nepal 171/3 in 16.2 overs (Kushal Bhurtel 43, Aasif Sheikh 33, Dipendra Singh Airee 50 n.o., Michael Leask 3/30).
Toss: Nepal; **PoM:** Airee.

Turning the tide: Airee ensured a consolation win for Nepal. PTI

From Canadian winters to WC history: Samra's dream journey

S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

▶ Yuvraj Samra is the first male player from an Associate nation to score a century in the T20 World Cup. At 19 years and 141 days, he also became the youngest to hit a ton in the men's global T20 showpiece, eclipsing Pakistan batter Ahmed Shehzad's record (22y, 127d) in 2014 (versus Bangladesh).

Delhi Launches AI-Driven CM Shri School Model

Aspect	Details (English + श्रारह्हा
Initiative Name	CM Shri School Model – AI-Driven Comprehensive Education System / ढ्हड्रव्र व्ह Wधा रख्ूच्र – ड्ष ह ष श्रूकबल ढ्रवड़ श्र्ल्व ब्र्वच्ह
Launched By	Delhi CM Rekha Gupta / श्रँह ड्ह रख्ूरक्ल घ्ूव ैँव ोघ्म
Date	18 February 2026 / 18 घ्रघ्ह 2026
Location	Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi / ढ्घ्रक्न ष्ह ९ण्घ, ९ह श्रँह
Number of Schools	Foundation stones for 75 schools laid / 75श्रॉक्वग्ह्न्ड्ह ष श्वघ्ष्ट्र च्व घ्ढ्ह ९ह
Objective	Provide high-quality, tech-integrated public education / छ्द ख्ूऱ्ऱ्ूव ऱक्ह ल्ड् ह्ड्घ्ढ्त्र्श्य ढ्रक्ष्य्श्य्ड् श्रूल्व ब्व्रष ड्घ्ष्र
Target Group	Economically weaker, lower & middle-income families / ९श्र्क्ह च ह ढ्ू ड्रक्न्झ्घ, श्र्ह ड्ऱ्य रख्रेव ऱ्फ्र ड्ु ध्वद्
Policy Alignment	National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 / घ्न्य श्र्ल्व ह्क्र 2020 ड्ु १ ष्र्र ह
Vision	Develop schools as Centres of Excellence / श्रॉक्य्ग्ह्नड्न छ्क्ह्ल्व ड्ु ड्ु च ह रक्ू श्रड्श्ढ्ह ड्घ्ष्र

Area	Relevant Provision / Fact
Right to Education	Article 21A – Free & compulsory education (6–14 years)
Directive Principle	Article 45 – Early childhood care & education
NEP 2020 Focus	Digital learning, multidisciplinary education, equity
Digital India Mission	Promotes technology integration in governance & education
IndiaAI Mission	Strengthens AI ecosystem in education & governance

📊 4️⃣ Governance & Administrative Dimension

Factor	Details
Model Type	State-level public education reform
Public-Private Comparison	Facilities comparable to leading private schools
Implementation Strategy	Infrastructure upgrade + digital pedagogy
Stakeholders Present	Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood
Broader Aim	Strengthening Delhi's public education model

Consider the following statements regarding the CM Shri School Model: / सीएम श्री स्कूल मॉडल के संबंध में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. It aligns with the objectives of the National Education Policy 2020. / यह राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 के उद्देश्यों के अनुरूप है।

2. It is exclusively based on privatization of school education. / यह पूर्णतः शिक्षा के निजीकरण पर आधारित है।

3. It integrates AI-enabled smart classrooms to promote personalized learning. / यह व्यक्तिगत अधिगम हेतु एआई-सक्षम स्मार्ट कक्षाओं को सम्मिलित करता है।

Options

A. 1 and 3 only / केवल 1 और 3

B. 2 and 3 only / केवल 2 और 3

C. 1 and 2 only / केवल 1 और 2

D. 1, 2 and 3 / 1, 2 और 3

Menstrual Health Recognised as Fundamental Right

Aspect	Details (English + श्रीमद्)
Judgment Body	Supreme Court of India / क्रघट ड्व द्ऋाद विग्रक्यग
Key Holding	Menstrual health is part of Right to Dignity and constitutional protection / रब्ष्ड श्रा स्ग एष्घरक्ष ड्ड श्रश् ड्वघ ड्ऋ द्ऋक्ष्कर्ड द्ऋघल्ऋ ड्व श्गाव प्ऋ
Constitutional Basis	Article 21 – Right to Life & Dignity / १ ष्क्र 21 – न्हऋष ड्ऋ एष्घरक्ष ड्व १श्श् ड्वघ
Broader Principle	Equality & Public Health responsibility / द्रक्रष्ल्व ड्ऋ द्वऋष्थ्श्ड स्ग ड्ह श्र क्ष्वघ्र
Policy Reframing	From welfare issue to rights-based approach / ड् ाऋर् ड्वघ्र रष्ड्ड् द्ऋ १श्१ ड्वघ्रघ श्क्रक्र «श्मड्ऋर ड्ह ड्घ

2️⃣ Governance & Implementation Gaps

Issue	Details (English + हिंदी)
Reporting Failure	10 States & 8 UTs failed to respond on menstrual hygiene compliance / 10 राज्य एवं 8 केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों ने अनुपालन रिपोर्ट नहीं दी
Ministries Involved	Drinking Water & Sanitation, Women & Child Development, Education / जल एवं स्वच्छता, महिला एवं बाल विकास, शिक्षा मंत्रालय
Administrative Concern	Lack of prioritisation of menstrual health / प्रशासनिक प्राथमिकता का अभाव
Policy Gap	Infrastructure created but not effectively functional / अवसंरचना बनी परंतु प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन नहीं

3️⃣ Health Implications & Medical Dimension

Health Aspect	Details (English + हिंदी)
Undiagnosed Conditions	PMS, PMDD, Endometriosis underreported / पीएमएस, पीएमडीडी, एंडोमेट्रियोसिस कम पहचाने जाते हैं
Impact Areas	Health, education, mobility, livelihood / स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा, गतिशीलता एवं आजीविका
Period Poverty	Lack of access to sanitary products & facilities / स्वच्छ उत्पादों एवं सुविधाओं की कमी
Fertility Impact	Untreated menstrual disorders affect reproductive health / अनुपचारित विकार प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य को प्रभावित करते हैं

4️⃣ Constitutional & Legal Linkages

Provision	Relevance (English + हिंदी)
Article 14	Equality before law / विधि के समक्ष समानता
Article 15	Prohibition of discrimination / भेदभाव का निषेध
Article 21	Right to life includes dignity & health / जीवन का अधिकार जिसमें गरिमा एवं स्वास्थ्य शामिल
Article 42	Provision for just & humane conditions of work / मानवीय कार्य दशाएँ
DPSP Article 47	Duty of State to improve public health / राज्य का दायित्व – जन स्वास्थ्य में सुधार

5️⃣ Education, Gender & Social Dimension

Area	Details (English + हिंदी)
Gender Inclusion	Menstrual education for all genders / सभी लिंगों के लिए मासिक धर्म शिक्षा
Stigma Reduction	Awareness to dismantle taboos / सामाजिक कलंक को समाप्त करना
Environmental Angle	Information on reusable & disposable products / पुन: प्रयोज्य एवं एकल उपयोग उत्पादों की जानकारी
School Role	Functional toilets & hygiene facilities essential / विद्यालयों में कार्यशील शौचालय एवं स्वच्छता सुविधाएँ आवश्यक

Consider the following statements regarding menstrual health in India: / भारत में मासिक धर्म स्वास्थ्य के संबंध में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. The Supreme Court recognised menstrual health as part of the Right to Dignity under Article 21. / सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने मासिक धर्म स्वास्थ्य को अनुच्छेद 21 के तहत गरिमा के अधिकार का हिस्सा माना।

2. Menstrual health is treated solely as a welfare scheme issue and not as a constitutional right. / मासिक धर्म स्वास्थ्य को केवल कल्याणकारी योजना के रूप में देखा जाता है, संवैधानिक अधिकार के रूप में नहीं।

3. Poor menstrual health management can impact education and livelihood outcomes. / खराब मासिक धर्म प्रबंधन शिक्षा एवं आजीविका को प्रभावित कर सकता है।

Options

A. 1 and 3 only / केवल 1 और 3

B. 2 and 3 only / केवल 2 और 3

C. 1 and 2 only / केवल 1 और 2

D. 1, 2 and 3 / 1, 2 और 3

SACRED CHADAR MAHOTSAV IN JAISALMER

Aspect	Details (English + श्रीमंत्र
Event Name	Jain Chadar Mahotsav / न्क्रे द्ऱठ्घ रव्ण्झ्क्ऱ
Location	Jaisalmer, Rajasthan / न्क्रेड्ड चरख्क्ष्म, घक्रे ळिष
Date	6–8 March 2026 / 6–8 रक्क्ऱ 2026
Significance	First-ever Jain Chadar Mahotsav in India / क्क्यक्रे इ्ऩ ह्ण्ऱच्ऱ न्क्रे द्ऱठ्घ रव्ण्झ्क्ऱ
Focus	Worship of 872-year-old garments of Dada Shri Jindatt Suri Maharaj / व्ऱव्ऱ व्ह श्रे ष्द्ऱठु द्रय्ह रव्णक्क्ऱे इ्ऱु 872 अक्क्ऱ ह्ऱ्म्यड़ु अक्क्रा ड्ह ह्ऱव्ऱ
Preservation Site	Gyan Bhandar Library, Jain Temple, Jaisalmer / ळिष क्क्रऱ-ऱघ्म, न्क्रे रक्क्ख्य़्य, न्क्रेड्ड चरख्क्ष्म
Expected Participation	30,000+ devotees across India / 30,000 ड्ऱु श्र्श्रे ड़ व्ह्ष्व्क्क्ऱ

Aspect	Details (English + श्रामति
Historical Origin	Garments date back to Vikram Samvat 1211 / ऋद श्रब्ट्रव द्क्ग्र 1211 इड् पभ्र
Religious Context	Associated with Khartar Gachchh sect of Jainism / न्त्रि शरक्न इड् ढ़ ल्फ्पर दक्न्व्ग्र दू द्न्लाभि ल
Relics Included	Chadar, Cholpatta & Muhpatti / द्व्ल्घ्र, दूक्घ्रह इव इ्ब्रा रष्प्रह इ्ल
Epidemic Episode	Brought from Patan (Gujarat) to Jaisalmer during VS 1945 epidemic / श्रब्ट्रव द्क्ग्र 1945 रछरव्णभ्रक्म्ह इड् द्ल्घ्क हव्क्ब जक्नि घव्ल्झ दू च्व्ग्र एग्र
Preservation	Stored in temple manuscript repository / रख्रघ्र इड् ह्त्भ्रक्मष्रह क्म्न्व्घ रछ द्क्ग्र्ल

Topic	Explanation (English + हिन्दी)
Article 25	Freedom of religion / धर्म की स्वतंत्रता
Article 26	Manage religious affairs / धार्मिक मामलों का प्रबंधन
Cultural Heritage	Protection of religious relics & manuscripts / धार्मिक अवशेषों एवं पांडुलिपियों का संरक्षण
Tourism Impact	Boost to Rajasthan desert tourism / राजस्थान रेगिस्तान पर्यटन को बढ़ावा
Soft Power	Cultural diplomacy & heritage promotion / सांस्कृतिक कूटनीति एवं विरासत प्रचार

Topic	Important Facts (English + श्रणाक्स)
Founder	Rishabhanatha (1st Tirthankara) / क इक्र्ष्त्रल जाल्रय ह्ल्लष्ट्घ्ह
24th Tirthankara	Mahavira / रव्रणक्क्ह्य
Key Principles	Ahimsa, Anekantavada, Aparigraha / श्श्रणात्व, १ ष्ड्ड्क्र-अक , १ ह्ष्घ्र्ह्ण
Major Sects	Digambara & Shvetambara / श्ह प्श्र्य इझ्र ट्क्र्याघ
Khartar Gachchh	Sub-sect of Shvetambara tradition / ट्क्र्याघ ह्घष्ह्घ्र इव् ह्ह ट्रक् व्रग्र

Consider the following statements regarding Jainism and religious freedom in India: / जैन धर्म एवं भारत में धार्मिक स्वतंत्रता के संबंध में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. / अनुच्छेद 25 धर्म की स्वतंत्रता की गारंटी देता है।

2. Khartar Gachchh is a sub-sect of the Digambara tradition of Jainism. / खर्तरगच्छ जैन धर्म के दिगंबर संप्रदाय का उपसंप्रदाय है।

3. Mahavira is regarded as the 24th Tirthankara in Jainism. / महावीर जैन धर्म के 24वें तीर्थंकर माने जाते हैं।

Options

A. 1 and 3 only / केवल 1 और 3

B. 2 and 3 only / केवल 2 और 3

C. 1 and 2 only / केवल 1 और 2

D. 1, 2 and 3 / 1, 2 और 3

Bhavya Bharat Bhushan Award Launched by Sadhguru

Aspect	Details (English + श्रामक्ता
Award Name	Bhavya Bharat Bhushan Award / क्रा क्रत्राप्ट क्रक्षूर ह्स्पावृघ्र
Launched By	Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev / ढ़ ड़ूक्ष्रू न ढ़ह ऋक्ष्म्ड्त्र
Occasion	Mahashivaratri Celebrations / रब्ण्क्ष्ट ऋघ्रक्ष् ढ़रक्क्ष्म्र
Venue	Isha Yoga Center / हट्त्र ग्क्ष्म इट्ष्क्
Chief Guest	Defence Minister Rajnath Singh / घ्त्ब्र रक्ष्ह घक् प्त्रल श्क्त्प्र
Nature of Award	National civilian honour recognising exceptional contributions / घ्रत्क्ष्र प्त्रण्घ्ड़ ढ़ ह्त्र्ष्

Category	Details (English + श्रमिक्षा
Objective	Recognise outstanding contributions to India's growth & well-being / क्रव्य ङ्ड़ श्रम्ड़व्द्ढ़ ङ्ञ ड़ ख़िर् रक़् ङ्ञम ग़ुञ्व्ष ड़ह ह्ण्द्व्ष
Fields Covered	National security, business, arts, sports, science & technology, literature, academia / घ्न्वेक्ष्य ह्ष्म्न्त्र, क्षद्ध्व्ग्य, ड़ च्व्त्र, द्ध्ुच्य, श्रव्बिष ड़्ञ व्क्षॅ॑ष्प ड़ह, द्क्रभ्ग्ड़ु, १ ड़व्क्षरव्ड़ ल्ष्ु
Organising Body	Isha Foundation (Non-profit) / ह्ट्व ख़िव्क्ष्ड्ड़् ष जख़्घ्र च्क्क्ड़व्घ्ह द्क्षि
Vision	Promote sustained service & transformative national impact / द्ध्ल्ह द्ध्ुञ्त्र ड़्ञ ह्ष्घ्न्त्रक्क़ड़व्घ्ह घ्न्वेक्ष्य ह्क्व्त्र ड्ड्ञ ख़िप्व्त्र

3️⃣ Notable Awardees

Name	Contribution (English + हिंदी)
N. Rajam	Eminent violinist, contribution to Indian classical music / प्रसिद्ध वायलिन वादक, भारतीय शास्त्रीय संगीत में योगदान
S. Kiran Kumar	Former ISRO Chairman; contribution to Indian space programme / पूर्व इसरो अध्यक्ष; भारतीय अंतरिक्ष कार्यक्रम में योगदान

4️⃣ Mahashivaratri – Religious & Cultural Context

Aspect	Details (English + हिंदी)
Festival	Mahashivaratri / महाशिवरात्रि
Deity	Dedicated to Lord Shiva / भगवान शिव को समर्पित
Observance	Celebrated annually with fasting & night vigil / प्रतिवर्ष उपवास एवं रात्रि जागरण के साथ मनाया जाता है
Cultural Significance	Spiritual renewal & devotion / आध्यात्मिक नवचेतना एवं भक्ति

Ol Chiki Script

Aspect	Details (English + श्रणहान्त्न्न
Event	Centenary Celebration of Ol Chiki Script / इ च श्ड्ह् श्ररश् ड्व ट् ल्वड्ह् द्रव्यक्याय
Inaugurated By	President of India / क्रघन् ड्ड् घ्रानस्श् ब्रेघ्न ह्ड्त्वह्ष
Organised By	Ministry of Culture / द्रMक्षर् रक्ष्क्व्रग्र
Year of Celebration	2025–26 (100 Years Completion) / 2025–26 (100 ञड्न ह्रक्न
Special Releases	Commemorative Coin & Postage Stamp / न्वड्ड् श्ड्द्व इ्क्र म्वड् श्रड् ह न्व्घ्न

Aspect	Details (English + श्राह्ला
Inventor	Pandit Raghunath Murmu / हम्न ल घद्क्ष्त्रळ रक्षस
Year of Invention	1925 / 1925
Purpose	To create a distinct script for Santali language / द्क्र्त्रह क्क्ष्त्र ड़ु श्र्चड़ श्र्भ्र्क् H श्र्त्रक्क ड़्व श्र्र्क्ख़
First Book	High Serena (1936) / एक्ल द्क्त्रव जा1936छ़ा
Other Work	Bidu-Chandan reflecting Santhali culture / श्र म्र्भ्र्क् ण द्क्र्त्रह द्M्भ्र हघ्र ण श्क्भ्क्झ
Earlier Scripts Used	Roman, Devanagari, Oriya, Bengali / छ्भ्व, द्क्ष्त्रण्घह् क्श्त्रग्त्र, क्भ्त्र

Feature	Details (English + ᱥᱟᱱᱛᱟᱲᱤ)
Number of Letters	30 letters / 30 ᱯᱮ ᱞᱟᱦᱟ
Nature	Completely phonetic script / ᱥᱟᱸᱯᱩᱨᱱᱟ ᱯᱷᱳᱱᱮᱴᱤᱠ ᱞᱤᱯᱤ
Special Features	Represents glottal stops & specific vowel patterns / ᱜᱞᱚᱴᱟᱞ ᱥᱴᱚᱯ ᱟᱨ ᱢᱟᱦᱤᱛ ᱥᱣᱚᱨ ᱯᱮᱴᱟᱨᱱ ᱩᱫᱩᱜ ᱫᱟᱲᱮᱭᱟᱜᱼᱟ
Language Family	Santali belongs to Austroasiatic family / ᱥᱟᱱᱛᱟᱲᱤ ᱚᱴᱳᱼᱮᱥᱤᱭᱟᱴᱤᱠ ᱜᱷᱟᱨᱚᱸᱡᱽ ᱨᱮᱭᱟᱜ ᱠᱟᱱᱟ

4️⃣ Geographic Distribution

Region	Details (English + हिंदी)
Major States	Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Assam / झारखंड, ओडिशा, पश्चिम बंगाल, बिहार, असम
Community	Primarily used by Santhal tribe / मुख्यतः संथाल जनजाति द्वारा उपयोग

5️⃣ Constitutional & Legal Status

Provision	Details (English + हिंदी)
Eighth Schedule Inclusion	Santali added in 2003 / 2003 में संताली को शामिल किया गया
Amendment	92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003 / 92वाँ संविधान संशोधन अधिनियम, 2003
Current Total Languages	22 Scheduled Languages / 22 अनुसूचित भाषाएँ
Linguistic Justice Step	Constitution translated into Santali (2025) / 2025 में संविधान का संताली अनुवाद

Consider the following statements regarding the Ol Chiki script and Santali language: / ओल चिकी लिपि एवं संताली भाषा के संबंध में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. Ol Chiki was invented by Pandit Raghunath Murmu in 1925. / ओल चिकी की रचना पंडित रघुनाथ मुर्मू ने 1925 में की।

2. Santali belongs to the Indo-European language family. / संताली भाषा इंडो-यूरोपीय भाषा परिवार से संबंधित है।

3. Santali was added to the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution through the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003. / संताली भाषा को 92वें संविधान संशोधन अधिनियम, 2003 द्वारा आठवीं अनुसूची में जोड़ा गया।

Options

A. 1 and 3 only / केवल 1 और 3

B. 2 and 3 only / केवल 2 और 3

C. 1 and 2 only / केवल 1 और 2

D. 1, 2 and 3 / 1, 2 और 3

PM RAHAT Scheme

PM RAHAT Scheme

Life-Saving Protection for Every Citizen

The Prime Minister has approved the launch of the PM RAHAT Scheme

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Under this initiative, accident victims will get cashless treatment of up to ₹1.5 lakh, ensuring that no life is lost due to lack of immediate medical help

Aspect	Details (English + श्रभक्ष
Scheme Name	PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) Scheme / ह्ह्डरघ घत्रग्रू ग्क्रू ष्त्र
Launched By	Union Government / क्रब्घरू ढ्घ्रड्त्रघ
Ministry	Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) / ढ्नड् ह्ष्रघत्रऋणरू ड्ऋग्र घक्ररक्रवष्र रक्स्क्त्रग्र
Objective	Provide immediate, cashless treatment to road accident victims / ढ्नड् क्स्क्क्ष्र ह्क्ष्त्रड्झग्र्ड्ज्र ल्रूवत्र ष्ड् व्घक्षग्रू क्ष्ह्द्त्रघ ह्व्रष् ड्घ्रष्त्र
Key Focus	Timely treatment during Golden Hour / फ्क्ष्ष् छ्त्रघ रक्क्ढ्रख्रग्र ह्घ क्ष्ह्द्त्रघ

2️⃣ Golden Hour Concept

Concept	Details (English + हिंदी)
Golden Hour	First hour after serious injury / गंभीर चोट के बाद पहला घंटा
Importance	Nearly 50% road accident deaths preventable with timely treatment / समय पर उपचार से लगभग 50% मौतें रोकी जा सकती हैं
Public Health Link	Reduces trauma mortality / आघात मृत्यु दर में कमी

3️⃣ Cashless Coverage & Benefits

Provision	Details (English + हिंदी)
Coverage Amount	Up to ₹1.5 lakh per victim / प्रति पीड़ित ₹1.5 लाख तक
Duration	First 7 days of hospitalization / अस्पताल में भर्ती के पहले 7 दिन
Road Coverage	Applicable on National, State & City Roads / राष्ट्रीय, राज्य एवं शहरी सड़कों पर लागू
Stabilisation Care	24 hrs (non-life threatening) & 48 hrs (life-threatening cases) / 24 घंटे (सामान्य) एवं 48 घंटे (गंभीर मामलों में)

Source	Details (English + श्रागरहरा
Primary Fund	Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAF) / रक्षघ आरूणा दस्कर श्र ड्जड्
Insured Vehicle	Payment through General Insurance Companies / हरिश्रक आरूणा ड् रक्षरक्च रक्ष हरिक्ष ड्रह्श्रगर् क्ष ल्व ड् घरुह्
Uninsured/Hit & Run	Covered via Government budget allocation /श्र ष्व हरिक्ष ग्र श्रगहघड्श-घघर रक्षरक्ह्रक् ढघड्वघ् न ष द्ध् क्ष ल्व

Provision	Relevance (English + हिंदी)
Article 21	Right to Life includes emergency medical care / न्हऋष इव श्श इव्रघ ण ह्व्ल्इव्रच्हष श्र्ऋड् द्व ड्ञ ट्र्क्ष्व्च ड्घ्ल्व प्ब्र
Good Samaritan Guidelines	Supreme Court protection for helpers / ढ्ण्क्य्ल्व ड्घ्ष् ऋक्ष्ञ ड्ञ विक्च्ग्ह्य द्क्घ्ल्र
MV Act 2019	Strengthened road safety provisions / रक्ष्क्घ ऋक्ग्ऋ श्श्श्ष्ग्र्व 2019 – ढ्न्ड् द्क्घ्ल्व ब्व्ञ्श्व्ष

Word of the day

Incommode:

to cause inconvenience or discomfort to

Synonyms: bother, disoblige, inconvenience, put out, trouble

Usage: *The snow greatly incommoded them.*

Pronunciation:
newsth.live/incommodepron

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˌɪnkəˈməʊd/

Word of the day

Delectation:

a feeling of extreme pleasure or satisfaction; act of receiving pleasure from something

Synonyms: delight, enjoyment

Usage: *Here is some ice cream for your delectation.*

Pronunciation:
newsth.live/delectationpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˌdiːlɛkˈteɪʃən/, /ˌdɪlɛkˈteɪʃən/

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This country has the maximum number of coaches in the ongoing T20 World Cup. **Ans: South Africa – 5**

2. This country's current coach has won the T20 World Cup title twice before. **Ans: West Indies**

3. This player played in the ODI World Cup in 1975 but is now coach of another country. **Ans: Duleep Mendis (SL) coach of Oman**

4. Only seven nations have a coach who has played for their country. Among these seven, only these two have not played any international matches. **Ans: Ingleton Liburd (Canada) and Shukri Conrad (South Africa)**

5. There are three coaches who have moved from one country to another when compared with 2024. **Ans: Pubudu Dassanayake, Rob Walter and Stuart Law**

Visual: Name this former manager and now coach. **Ans: Lalchand Rajput**

Early Birds: Nobody got all the correct answers.

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Part-6 Governor & Com, High Court Class-2
2024-06-21 at 10:00 AM   Watch Now

Part-6 Governor & Com, High Court
2024-06-20 at 10:00 AM   Watch Now

Part-6 Governor & Com Class-2
2024-06-13 at 11:00 AM   Watch Now

Part-6 Governor & COM
2024-06-12 at 11:00 AM   Watch Now

Part-5 Supreme Court Class-2 & Part-6 Governor
2024-06-11 at 11:00 AM   Watch Now

Part-5 Supreme Court
2024-06-08 at 11:00 AM   Watch Now

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  5. **International Affairs (India + Major Summits)**
  6. **Science & Tech**
  7. **Environment & Ecology**
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  9. **Awards & Honours**
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  14. **Books & Authors**
  15. **Important Days & Themes**
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  17. **States in News**
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  19. **Sports + Govt Sports Schemes**
  20. **Miscellaneous Must-Do**

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Thank you ☺