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## AIADMK's Palaniswami Meets Shah Amid Talks About Revival Of Party's Alliance With BJP

(Gns). AIADMK general secretary and former Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami met Union Home Minister Amit Shah at his residence on Tuesday, amid talks that his party might revive its alliance with the BJP ahead of the assembly polls in the state.

Sources said the AIADMK leader discussed a host of issues, including the alleged imposition of Hindi in Tamil Nadu, with Shah and conveyed his party's views on them. The AIADMK, the main opposi-

tion party in Tamil Nadu, snapped ties with the BJP party's state leadership. The move came after



in September 2023 in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls following some differences with the saffron

senior AIADMK leaders called on BJP chief J P Nadda here and apprised him about the situation aris-

ing out of Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai's aggressive style of politics.

AIADMK leaders had also sought Annamalai's apology over his remark on Dravidian stalwart C N Annadurai or that he be replaced. Annamalai has dialled down his criticism of the AIADMK for some time.

There is a view that if the AIADMK and the BJP revive their alliance, they will put up a strong challenge to the ruling DMK-led INDIA bloc in the state. The AIADMK has seen erosion of its vote share over the years.

## 'Lotus' will bloom in West Bengal too: Amit Shah

(Gns). Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah on Wednesday in the Lok Sabha exuded confidence that the BJP will win assembly elections in West Bengal which are scheduled to be held next year, adding that Centre's Ayushman Bharat Yojana will also be implemented in the state.

Shah was replying to debate in the Lok Sabha on the "Tribhuvan" Sahkari University Bill, 2025.

The Bill, which aims to establish the Institute of Rural Management Anand in Gujarat as a University, was passed by voice vote in the Lok Sabha after the Union Home Minister's reply.

Earlier, replying to debate in the House on the Bill, Shah mentioned about the Centre's Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

The Union Home Minister said the result of the work of Modi

Government is that today lotus has bloomed in Delhi and Ayushman Bharat Yojana has come here too.

Today every poor person of the country does not have to worry about spending up to Rs. 5 lakhs for treatment, he said.

"Now only West Bengal is left, after the elections, lotus will bloom here too and Ayushman Bharat will come here too," Shah said.

"After Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power, poor people no longer have to worry about medical expenses up to Rs 5 lakh. Now, the people of Delhi also won't have to worry now that we are in power. Only West Bengal remains... The lotus will bloom there as well," the Union Home Minister said.

Speaking about the Bill, the Union Home Minister said, "The Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill honours TribhuvanDas Patel, an important person in India's cooperative dairy

movement, Amul. He was encouraged by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who saw how farmers were being taken advantage of by middlemen. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel asked Tribhuvan to start a cooperative."

"In the 1940s, this gave farmers control over milk production, pricing, and distribution. This helped start India's dairy revolution, empowering rural communities and creating opportunities for Indians," Shah said.

During the discussion of the bill, Shah affirmed that after the Bill is passed, "it will strengthen the rural economy, self-employment and small entrepreneurship will develop, social inclusion will also increase and there will be opportunities to set new standards in innovation and research."

The Union Home Minister emphasised that India's Cooperative sector connects every family in the country, noting that there's

some unit in every village contributing to the country's development through cooperation.

"Cooperation is a sector that connects every family in the country. There is some unit in every village which is engaged in agriculture, rural development and self-employment through cooperation and is contributing to the progress of the country," Shah said.

He further said there's only one way to connect a person with entrepreneurship with capital is through the cooperative sector.

"The only way to connect a person with entrepreneurship without capital is the cooperative sector, through which crores of people are coming together with a capital of Rs 100 each and are starting their own ventures, living equally, getting jobs and contributing to the development of the country through self-employment," the Union Home Minister said.

## SP not questioning valor, patriotism of Raja Rana Sanga: Akhilesh Yadav

(Gns). Amid raging controversy over his party MP Ramji Lal Suman's remarks on Rajput ruler Rana Sanga, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday said his party believes in social justice and establishment of an equilibrium society.

"We also want to honor every person. Our aim is not to insult a history man and Samajwadi Party is not questioning the valor and patriotism of Raja Rana Sanga of Mewar. The BJP has always used some topics of history to take political advantage and divide

the country on a religious-caste basis," he said.

Rajput or any other community. In today's time, the



Yadav, in a statement here, said his MP has tried to give the example of just one -sided history and one -sided interpretation. "None of our efforts is to insult

events of 'history' cannot be explained in the current situation. The decisions of governance were taken according to the demand of the then circumstances at

that time," he said.

The SP chief said that today's democratic system cannot run on the basis of history. The BJP government should improve its divisive habit and pay some attention to the livelihood, health and safety of the people.

The statement on Rana Sanga by SP President comes in wake of violent protest in Agra by Karni Sena at the residence of SP MP Ramjilal Suman, who made the comment on Rana Sanga as the person who invited Babur in India to fight against Ibrahim Lodhi.

## Sonia accuses BJP govt of 'non-fulfillment' of maternity entitlements under NFSA

(Gns). Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday accused the BJP-led government at the Centre of non-fulfillment of maternity entitlements under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, and the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY).

Raising the issue during Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha, Gandhi said, "I rise to address this House on a matter of great importance. The non-fulfillment of maternity entitlements under the National Food Security Act, 2013 and the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana. "Raising the issue during Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha, Gandhi said, "I rise to address this

House on a matter of great importance. The non-fulfillment of maternity entitlements under the National Food Security Act, 2013 and the Pradhan Mantri

entitlement. But, it provides only Rs 5,000 for the first child, which is extended to the second child also if it is a girl," the CPP chairperson said.



Matru Vandana Yojana."

"The Act also includes Rs 6,000 per child as maternity entitlement for pregnant women in the informal sector. The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana launched in 2017, seeks to fulfill this

She claimed that according to an informed analysis in 2022-23, about 68 per cent of pregnant women received at least one installment of PMMVY for their first birth.

"But in the very next year, this number drastically

dropped to 12 per cent. I would like to ask the Union government why this was allowed to happen," Gandhi said.

Asserting that the full implementation of the maternity benefits provision of the NFSA, 2013 requires an annual budget of around Rs 12,000 crore, she said the budget documents do not contain separate information on allocations for the PMMVY.

"There is a program called Samartha in the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The allocation in 2025-26 for Samartha is only Rs 2,521 crore. This clearly shows that the PMMVY is severely underfunded, thereby violating the key provisions of the law passed by Parliament," Gandhi added.

## Eknath Shinde Joke Row: 500 Threat Calls to Kunal Kamra, Comedian Delays Police Visit By A Week

(Gns). Comedian Kunal Kamra has allegedly been receiving death threats from Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) workers following his controversial 'gaddar' (traitor) joke, which was perceived as a dig at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Summoned by the Mumbai Police in connection with the controversy, Kamra has sought a week's time to appear before authorities.

Eknath Shinde Joke Row 500 Threat Calls to Kunal Kamra Comedian Delays Police Visit By A Week

According to NDTV, sources reveal that Kamra has received over 500 threat calls, with some callers allegedly threatening to kill him and cut him into pieces. The outrage erupted after a video of his joke went viral, triggering backlash from Shiv Sena supporters. olice Action



by modifying a song from the Bollywood film Dil Toh Pagal Hai. Enraged by the remarks, Shiv Sena workers vandalized the venue.

Following the incident, police arrested 12 Shiv Sena workers and leaders in connection with the vandalism. However, they were later released on bail.

Another case was registered against 40 Sena workers for damaging the venue.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena MLA Murji Patel filed an

FIR against Kamra at Khar police station, prompting authorities to issue a notice summoning him for questioning. A police official, quoted by PTI, confirmed the probe but did not specify the date of Kamra's summons. Sources suggest the comedian has requested a one-week extension.

Additionally, an FIR was lodged against Kamra in Thane for allegedly defaming the Shiv Sena chief. He has been booked under Section 356(2) (defamation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita following a complaint by a Shiv Sena functionary at the Dombivli police station.

## Saints fostered unity in society during Mahakumbh: Yogi Adityanath

(Gns). Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath participated in the Shankhadhar and Bhandara programme in the honour of late Yogi Siddhnath in Agra on Wednesday.

He offered prayers at the ancient Dariya Nath Temple in Raja Ki Mandi and addressed the Dharm Sabha of saints.

Speaking on the occasion, CM Yogi highlighted the significance of the religious congregation, stating that after the Mahakumbh, the land of Braj is witnessing one of the largest assemblies of saints.

He emphasized the grandeur and divinity of the Mahakumbh, calling it a testament to the blessings and resolve of the saints.

He remarked that the world witnessed the spiritual power of Sanatan Dharma, as over 66 crore devotees gathered in Prayagraj over 45 days.

The CM also announced efforts to establish a museum dedicated to Sanatan Dharma and the Nath sect, reinforcing the significance of preserving this rich tradition. Attending the event as

the Peethadheeshwar and National President of the Nath sect, he was joined by over 1,000 saints nationwide.

Reflecting on the successful construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya after 500 years, Yogi expressed the confidence that similar possibilities exist elsewhere in the country.

He credited the collective resolve of saints for completing the Ram Temple and the Mahakumbh, which saw an unprecedented participa-

tion of 66 crore devotees, including 50 lakh saints.

He noted that this overwhelming response demonstrated the increasing global influence of Sanatan Dharma. He further emphasized that the resurgence of Sanatan Dharma is a manifestation of the saints' spiritual practices and unwavering determination.

The Mahakumbh showcased its unparalleled strength to the world, with no other event of such magnitude recorded anywhere. Recognizing the vital role of the Nath sect in India's spiritual and cultural heritage.



## Rahul Gandhi Accuses Speaker Om Birla Doesn't Let Him Speak In Lok Sabha

(Gns). In a charged press interaction, Rahul Gandhi dramatically exposed what he perceives as a systematic suppression of democratic dialogue within the Lok Sabha. The Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi painted a stark picture of parliamentary dysfunction, alleging that Speaker Om Birla has consistently denied him the fundamental right to speak, transforming the legislative chamber into an arena of imposed silence.

Rahul Gandhi's narrative is unequivocal and pointed. He claims that for 7-8 consecutive days, he

has been systematically prevented from participating in parliamentary discussions. "Whenever I stand up, I am not allowed to speak," he declared, highlighting a troubling pattern that he argues represents a

deliberate strategy to marginalize the opposition. Even during the Prime Minister's address about the Kumbh Mela, Gandhi



asserted his desire to contribute perspectives on crit-

ical issues like unemployment was summarily dismissed.

Speaker Om Birla, responding to the escalating tensions, invoked Rule 349 of parliamentary conduct. He strategically referenced

the House's illustrious history, which has witnessed familial political legacies, while subtly suggesting that Gandhi's behavior falls short of expected legislative decorum. Birla's statement was a calculated blend of

procedural reminder and subtle reproach.

Context of the Confrontation

The confrontation emerged against the backdrop of a heated parliamentary session where Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the Maha Kumbh gathering in Prayagraj. While Modi praised the event's organization, opposition members protested, particularly concerning the tragic stampede that resulted in significant loss of life. Gandhi emphasized his willingness to support the Prime Minister's statements about a culturally significant event,

## Safety First, Expansion Next: Government Strengthens Nuclear Power with Stringent Measures, Says Dr. Jitendra Singh

Nuclear Sector Opens to Private Players as Budget Sees 170% Growth: Dr. Jitendra Singh

India's Nuclear Energy Capacity Doubled in a Decade, More Expansion Ahead: Dr. Jitendra Singh (Gns).

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh, while addressing the Lok Sabha today, reaffirmed the government's commitment to nuclear energy expansion, safety protocols, and private sector participation in India's nuclear power sector. Responding to a parliamentary discussion on nuclear power plants, he emphasized the unprecedented growth in reactor installa-

tions and advancements in nuclear energy generation over the past decade.

Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted Rajasthan's significant contribution to India's nuclear energy sector, stating that the state houses seven of the country's 25 operational reactors. He noted that a previously non-functional unit has been revived, further strengthening the state's nuclear output. Additionally, he announced the establishment of a new reactor in Gorakhnagar, Haryana, marking a geographical expansion of India's nuclear infrastructure beyond its traditional strongholds in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.

He also pointed to the 2017 decision by the Union Cabinet, which granted bulk approval for 10 new reactors in a single sitting—an unprecedented move in India's nuclear history. The

recent Union Budget has further bolstered the nuclear sector with the announcement of a dedicated nuclear



mission, which includes significant budgetary allocations. "Before 2014, the total budget of the Department of Atomic Energy stood at Rs 13,879 crore. This year, it has expanded to Rs 37,483 crore, marking a 170% increase," he said, underscoring the government's focus on nuclear energy growth.

The Minister stressed that India's nuclear energy policy is moving towards greater private sector

involvement. "The Prime Minister has decided to open up the nuclear sector to private players, ensuring a larger resource pool and faster development," he stated. This move aligns with global best practices, allowing India to enhance its nuclear power capabilities while reducing dependency on public funds. He noted that nuclear power generation capacity has increased from 22,480 MW in 2014 to 35,333 MW currently, while installed capacity has doubled from 4,780 MW to 8,880 MW.

On safety measures, Dr. Jitendra Singh assured the House that stringent protocols are in place to safeguard plant workers and nearby communities. He emphasized that India follows a "safety first, production next" approach, with periodic monitoring every three months during construction, biannual checks during operation.



## Editorial

### War risks entrenching a deeper

The recent recapture of Sudan's presidential palace by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) is being heralded as a significant milestone in a brutal conflict that has devastated the nation for nearly two years. Yet, beneath the scenes of jubilant soldiers reclaiming Khartoum's symbolic centre of power lies an uncomfortable truth ~ Sudan's tragedy is far from over. This war is no longer just a battle for the capital; it risks entrenching a deeper, more permanent division within the country.

The SAF's seizure of the palace from the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, is certainly a tactical victory. It marks the first time in two years that the army has reestablished control over one of Khartoum's most important landmarks. However, control of the presidential complex does not equate to control of the entire capital, let alone the rest of Sudan.

The RSF still maintains positions within Khartoum, including parts of the airport and areas south of the palace. Their ability to launch counterattacks, including a recent deadly drone strike, highlights their enduring capacity to inflict damage despite losing ground. More broadly, the RSF controls much of the Darfur region and areas in the south.

There, the rebel forces are entrenching themselves, creating parallel governance structures and even drafting political charters. This signals an intention to hold territory long-term, effectively setting the stage for Sudan's de facto partition. Meanwhile, the SAF, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, solidifies its control over the north and east of the country.

The result is an increasingly fractured Sudan, with each side governing its own zone and neither showing signs of backing down. For ordinary Sudanese, these military manoeuvres offer little relief. Over 12 million people have been displaced, and millions more are suffering from food shortages, with famine looming in several areas, including Khartoum itself. Both the SAF and the RSF have been accused of obstructing humanitarian aid, turning it into a weapon of war.

Additionally, both have been implicated in war crimes, though the RSF stands particularly accused of mass atrocities, including genocide and systematic sexual violence in Darfur. For many Sudanese civilians, the battle for Khartoum offers little hope. Survival remains the priority as they navigate violence, hunger, and displacement with no end to the suffering in sight. Even if the SAF eventually secures full control of Khartoum, it is unlikely to bring an end to the conflict. Without a political solution and genuine reconciliation efforts, Sudan risks becoming a permanently divided nation. Military victories alone cannot address the deep grievances or rebuild trust among the country's fragmented communities.

The reclaiming of the presidential palace may be a symbolic achievement for the SAF, but without a path toward peace, it risks becoming yet another fleeting success in a war defined by human suffering and national disintegration.

(Gns).

The unfolding political crisis in Romania reflects a deeper reckoning with the nation's democratic identity. Once hailed as an Eastern European democratic success story, Romania now finds itself teetering on the edge of a dangerous shift. At the heart of this struggle is the rise of far-right populism, amplified by economic frustration, disillusionment with political elites, and external interference that preys on domestic grievances. In many ways, Romania's challenges are not unique.

Across Europe, nationalist movements have gained traction by exploiting fears over sovereignty, economic security, and cultural identity. What sets

(Gns).

Donald Trump's presence on the global stage has always been a subject of intense discussion, fascination, and, at times, apprehension. Whether as a businessman, reality TV star, or political leader, he has consistently dominated headlines. Since his entry into politics, he has sparked debates worldwide, with his policies, rhetoric, and leadership style evoking strong reactions from allies and adversaries alike. Many nations, including India, closely follow his actions, attempting to gauge the implications of his policies on global affairs, trade, and diplomacy.

The question that arises is ~ what is it about Trump that compels the world to scrutinize his every move? Why do his policies, statements, and decisions create such a ripple effect across continents? One of

Romania apart is the intensity of its current political upheaval. The cancellation of its presidential election, following allegations of foreign meddling, has only deepened public mistrust in the political system. For many Romanians, it is not simply a legal or constitutional debate ~ it feels like a betrayal of their democratic aspirations. Voters in rural areas, especially those left behind by economic modernisation, have turned to candidates who offer simplistic solutions to complex problems.

Promises to cut taxes, restore national pride, and reject outside influence resonate in villages where young people leave in search of work and public services crumble. These

the primary reasons for the global focus on Trump is the sheer power and influence of the United States. As the world's largest economy and a dominant military force, American policies invariably impact global markets, international alliances, and strategic balances.

When Trump assumed office, he ushered in an era of unpredictability, breaking away from traditional diplomatic approaches. His "America First" policy redefined international relations, leading to trade wars, economic nationalism, and strained alliances. For countries like India, which had built a steady relationship with the U.S. over decades, these shifts meant continuous recalibration of diplomatic and economic strategies. Another factor contributing to the fear and fascination surrounding Trump is his

## Romania's Choice

communities feel forgotten by mainstream politicians, and their support for far-right figures is often less about ideology and more about desperation. However, the danger lies in



how easily economic discontent can be manipulated into extremist rhetoric. When political leaders evoke nostalgia for a mythical past or promote exclu-

sionary policies in the name of national renewal, they risk undermining the democratic foundations a country has worked so hard to build. The demonisation of minorities, calls for

restrictions on free speech, and attacks on judicial independence are clear warning signs of democratic backsliding. What complicates matters further is

## Reshaping the global discourse

unfiltered communication style.

Unlike most world leaders who carefully craft their public statements, Trump often relies on direct and blunt remarks, primarily through social media. His tweets, sometimes impul-



sive and controversial, have the power to move stock markets, alter diplomatic relations, and create uncertainty in global affairs. World leaders are often left guessing about his next move, making long-term strategic planning difficult. His unpredictable nature leads to volatile situations, such as the abrupt withdrawal from international agreements, diplomatic spat with allies, and aggressive rhetoric against adversaries.

Trump's economic policies also play a significant role in global discussions about him. His aggressive stance on trade, particularly against China, has reshaped global supply chains and forced many nations to reassess their trade dependencies. His decision to impose tariffs on imported goods has disrupted international markets, affecting industries

worldwide. India, with its growing trade relationship with the U.S., had to navigate these changes carefully, balancing its economic interests while maintaining a stable diplomatic relationship. His insistence on renegotiating trade deals,

pulling out of multilateral agreements, and prioritizing domestic industries over global cooperation signals a shift that many countries find challenging to adapt to.

Beyond economic concerns, Trump's approach to international alliances and organizations adds to the uncertainty. His skepticism towards institutions like the United Nations, Nato, and the World Health Organization have weakened global cooperation. His decisions, such as pulling out of the Paris Climate Accord and the Iran Nuclear Deal, signaled a retreat from global leadership roles traditionally held by the U.S. This created a vacuum, leaving other nations to fill the gaps or adjust to a world order where American commitments were no longer guaranteed.

For India and other

### "Sourcex India 2025 Kicks Off with Global Momentum, Paving the Way for India's Export Growth": Federation of Indian

The 3rd edition of Sourcex India 2025, organized by the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) with support from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, was inaugurated March 26, 2025 at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, New Delhi. The event was officially opened by Mr Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Government of India, with prominent attendees including Mr Ashwani Kumar, Officiating President, FIEO; Dr Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, FIEO; Ms Indu Mahajan, FIEO MC Member and Mr Ashish Jain, DDG, FIEO.

In his keynote address, Mr Sarangi emphasized that Sourcex India plays a crucial role in fostering an ecosystem for promoting India's foreign trade, particularly exports. He highlighted the government's commitment to supporting sourcing from India through various incentive schemes and initiatives like Make in India, Startup

India, and the PLI Scheme. These efforts, he noted, are designed to boost manufacturing competitiveness, encourage the adoption of the latest technologies, and further improve India's position in global markets. He also pointed to the growing role of digitization and ease of doing business in enhancing product quality and standardization, which are vital for increasing the global acceptance of Indian goods. Additionally, Mr Sarangi mentioned that the government is exploring new market access opportunities through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with complementary economies to further boost exports.

Mr Ashwani Kumar, Officiating President of FIEO, described Sourcex India 2025 as a milestone event that strengthens India's role as a global supplier of high-quality products. He emphasized the importance of direct engagement between Indian exporters and inter-

the shifting international context. Traditional alliances are no longer as stable or predictable.

External actors, including global powers with authoritarian leanings, find common cause with far-right movements in Europe, including Romania. This convergence of interests creates an environment where misinformation spreads quickly and democratic norms are challenged from within and without. Romania now stands at a crossroads. The country's history offers painful reminders of what can happen when democratic principles are abandoned. Yet its future is not predetermined. Civil society activists, independent institutions, and engaged

nations that rely on stable international frameworks, these shifts introduce new complexities in diplomatic decision-making. Trump's stance on immigration is another contentious issue that has resonated globally. His strict policies, including travel bans, visa restrictions, and efforts to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, reflect a broader narrative of nationalism and protectionism. These measures have direct consequences for countries with strong migration ties to the U.S., including India, which sends a significant number of students, professionals, and workers.

The tightening of visa policies, particularly for highly skilled workers under the H-1B program, has created uncertainties for Indian professionals and businesses dependent on access to the American job market. His approach to global conflicts and security matters has also fueled apprehensions. Unlike his predecessors, Trump often takes a transactional approach to foreign relations, prioritizing immediate gains over longterm strategic alliances. His dealings with North Korea, his fluctuating stance on Russia, and his withdrawal of troops from conflict zones raise questions about global security dynamics. While some have praised his unconventional diplomacy, others fear that his lack of consistency could lead to destabilization in regions already plagued by conflict.

Another reason Trump has commanded global attention is his ability to reshape political discourse. His rise to power symbol-

citizens continue to push back against extremism. Their efforts highlight the resilience that still exists within Romanian democracy.

But this is not a battle that can be left to a few voices. It requires a collective commitment to the difficult work of addressing economic inequality, restoring trust in public institutions, and reaffirming the values of inclusion and pluralism. The stakes are high ~ not just for Romania, but for the broader European project. The defense of democracy here will signal whether Europe can withstand the growing tide of illiberalism or if it will falter at one of its most vulnerable points.

ized a shift in global politics, where populism, nationalism, and direct political messaging gained traction. Leaders across the world took note of his campaign strategies, rhetoric, and ability to mobilize mass support despite controversies. In countries like India, where political strategies are constantly evolving, Trump's methods of communication, his outsider image, and his appeal to nationalistic sentiments became subjects of study and discussion.

At the heart of the fear and fascination with Trump lies the unpredictability he brings to governance. World leaders, investors, policymakers, and citizens across nations remain alert to his statements and actions, knowing that they could lead to immediate and far-reaching consequences. His ability to defy traditional political norms, his emphasis on economic nationalism, his aggressive stance on global matters, and his willingness to challenge established institutions make him an unavoidable topic of discussion in every corner of the world. Whether viewed as a disruptor, a reformer, or a leader who upended global politics, Trump's influence remains undeniable. His policies, decisions, and leadership style have forced nations to rethink their strategies, adapt to new global realities, and prepare for unexpected shifts. Even outside of office, his presence continues to shape political debates, ensuring that discussions about him remain at the forefront of international affairs.

## View from Dhaka

What do Indians really feel about the environment of hostility against Bangladesh prevailing in India in the wake of last year's political upheaval when former Bangladesh Prime Minister Hasina was overthrown by a popular movement? The perception in Bangladesh is that few notable Indian personalities have spoken objectively on the subject, even in West Bengal, the closest neighbour that shares a common language and cultural heritage with Bangladesh. A notable exception was Kabir Suman, a singer and former parliament member from Jadavpur who took a public position against the anti-Bangladesh narrative and Islamophobia in India.

At a press conference on 4 December 2024, leaders of the Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist Christian Kalyan Front demanded the cessation of anti-Bangladesh propaganda by Indian media and some religious groups. The chairman of this Front, Bijan Kanti Sarker, urged that relations be built between peoples of the two countries on the basis of common humanity, not religious faith. Eight months ago, before Hasina's ouster, Bangladesh was regarded by India as a close and trusted ally. But now mainstream political parties including the Congress, Trinamul Congress, CPI-M and even the Naxalites appear influenced by the Hindutva-style narrative on Bangladesh.

Political parties across the spectrum have adopted the narrative uncritically, which is projected on communications platforms and then magnified by social media, especially Facebook and Instagram. Soon after taking office on 8 August last year, Muhammad Yunus, leader of the Bangladesh interim government, rang Prime Minister Narendra Modi

and remarked on the misreporting in the Indian media about Bangladesh. He requested Indian journalists and academics to visit Bangladesh and apprise themselves of the situation.

There appears to be scant response to this sug-



gestion; no initiative was taken by media houses or the intellectual community to visit either as a team or individually, and the negative commentaries proceed unabated. It could be that the rise of the Hindutva ideology has created a mindset that places the overwhelmingly Muslim majority in Bangladesh in the category of an adversary. The ruling parties in Bangladesh in the past, for political reasons, similar to what transpires in India, played the religious card and allied with religious parties such as the Jamaat-e-Islami. But unlike in India, religion-oriented parties there never commanded much support, never more than ten per cent of the electorate. India regarded Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina as a dependable friend.

She was sheltered by India for years after her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, president, symbol of the liberation struggle and 'Father of the Nation', was assassinated in 1975 and military rule introduced in Bangladesh. The popular perception in Bangladesh, rightly or otherwise, is that India fully backed Hasina after she became prime minister for 15 years after

2009 and Hasina reciprocated by agreements on trade, transit, sharing of river water, construction projects and investments, often without due protection of the national interest. A case in point is a large thermal plant undertaken by the Adani group on the

edge of Sundarbans, a world natural heritage site, considered by analysts as disadvantageous to Bangladesh and environmentally damaging.

A general conclusion is that India supported Hasina as an individual rather than cultivating a sustainable state-to-state and people-to-people relationship, with the outcome that the turn of events last August was a setback that India has found hard to adjust to. Indian media have failed to report the damage done by the Hasina government to the economy, public institutions, the banking system and the rule of law. It is widely supposed both in Bangladesh and abroad that the three successive parliamentary elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024, in which Hasina's Awami League claimed victory, were rigged by denying the opposition political space and citizens their right to vote freely.

A report on the economy in the public domain prepared by a distinguished panel headed by Debapriya Bhattacharjee has documented the distressing scale of corruption, nepotism, money laundering, and siphoning of funds abroad by the Awami

League. Hasina's oligarchy and kleptocracy had brought the country to the brink of a failed state. Bangladesh is not a paragon of communal harmony but few nations are. Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India all live with the burden of the postcolonial dispensation of religion-based politics in the subcontinent. The rich and powerful in the mainstream of society exploit in different ways the disadvantaged groups, be they poor, Dalits, ethnic or religious minorities, despite the protection supposed to be extended by law.

Bangladesh is no exception. However, neutral observers consider that sporadic incidents of harm to people and properties of the Hindu minority in Bangladesh have been more frequent at certain times during the past 15 years under the Awami League rule than in period of the Yunus administration. The interim government under Yunus, heeding the call for 'state repair' by the studented protesters, appointed eleven commissions to prepare recommendations in the short time of around three months.

The reform commissions on the constitution, the electoral system, judiciary, anti-corruption, police, public administration, media, labour, women's affairs, health and local government have now presented their reports to the government. Building consensus on the reform recommendations through public dialogue is to be followed by charting a roadmap and timetable for elections to form a national parliament or a constituent assembly-cum-parliament. This process will mark the end of the interim period. Bangladesh looks for friendship from India in its difficult journey to democracy.



## Kerala Chief Secretary Faces Unfair Comparisons with Husband Over Skin Colour

(Gns). Kerala Chief Secretary Sarada Muraleedharan has spoken out against the colour and gender bias she has faced and how it still persists in society, sparking off a discussion on social media about the issue and support pouring in for her from various quarters.

In a Facebook post, Muraleedharan refers to how, since she was a child, she felt like a lesser person for being dark-skinned, till her children helped her see that black was "beautiful".

Kerala Chief Secretary Sarada Muraleedharan Muraleedharan, who succeeded her husband, Dr V Venu, for the post of Kerala chief secretary, said that recently her stewardship as chief secretary was compared with that of her husband's by someone who commented that -- "it is as black as my husband's was white".

Hurt by the comment, Muraleedharan had put up a Facebook post about it but later deleted it because she was "flustered by the flurry of responses".

Also Read  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar Takes Charge As BJP Kerala Chief, Vows To Bring NDA To Power In State

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, V D Sathesnan, shared her post with the comment -- "Salute dear Sarada Muraleedharan. Every word you have written is heart-touching. It deserves to be discussed. I too had a dark-skinned mother."

Muraleedharan, while not naming who made that comment, said that she wanted to call this particular instance out, as she was

Chief secretary, there has been a "relentless parade" of comparisons with her predecessor, and she had become "quite injured" to it.

"It was about being labelled black (with that quiet sub-text of being a woman), as if that were something to be desperately ashamed of. Black is as black does. Not just black the colour, but black the ne'er do good, black the malaise, the cold despotism, the heart of darkness," she said.

She further questioned why black was vilified when it was the "all pervasive truth of the universe".

Black can absorb anything, is the most powerful pulse of energy known to humankind and is a dress colour that works for everyone -- be it office or evening wear, she added.

## CBI Conducts Searches At Former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel's Residence

(Gns). The CBI on Wednesday conducted searches at the residence of former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, officials said.

The agency teams swooped down at Baghel's residences in Raipur and Bhilai, as well as the houses of a senior police officer and a close associate of the former CM, they said.

CBI Conducts Searches At Former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel's Residence

The CBI has taken over the investigation from the Economic Offences Wing of the Chhattisgarh Police, which had earlier named Congress leader Baghel, promoters of the app, Ravi Uppal, Chandrakar, Shubham Soni, and Anil Kumar Agrawal, and 14 others in its FIR.

Baghel had termed the EOW FIR "politically motivated".

## EC commences first ever training of over 1 lakh Booth Level Officers (BLOs) at IIIDEM in batches

First batch of BLOs from Bihar, West Bengal & Assam participate in 2-day training program at IIIDEM

Continuous, practical, scenario-based training for grassroot Election functionaries

Well-trained BLOs to become Assembly Level Master Trainers to strengthen nationwide network of BLOs

(Gns). CEC Shri Gyanesh Kumar inaugurated the first ever training of BLOs along with EC Dr. Vivek Joshi at India International Institute of Democracy & Election Management (IIIDEM), New Delhi today. Over 1 lakh BLOs with an average of one BLO per 10 polling stations will be trained in such training programmes over the next few years. These well-trained BLOs will form a corps of Assembly Level Master Trainers (ALMTs) to strengthen the entire network of BLOs nationwide, who are the first and most important interface between the 100 Crore electors and the Commission.

This unique capacity building program will continue in phases focussing first on poll-bound states. Currently, 109 BLOs from Bihar, West Bengal and Assam are participating in this 2-day residential training programme along with 24 EROs and 13 DEOs from Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.

The training is planned

to familiarise the BLOs with their roles and responsibilities as per the RP Act 1950, the Registration of Electoral Rules 1960 and instructions of the Commission issued

are appointed by the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) after the approval of the District Election Officers (DEOs). CEC Shri Gyanesh Kumar

from time to time and to equip them with requirements of filling relevant forms for an error free updation of electoral rolls. They will be familiarised with IT applications designed to support their work.

BLOs are State Government officials and

Bengaluru ACP, ASI Arrested for Taking ₹2 Lakh Bribe in Cyber Fraud Case

(Gns). An Assistant Commissioner of Police and an Assistant Sub-Inspector were arrested in Bengaluru on charges of receiving a bribe of Rs two lakh, Lokayukta police said on Wednesday.

The two were arrested based on a complaint by a 42-year-old software engineer on Tuesday night, they said.

Bengaluru ACP ASI Arrested

ACP Tanveer S R and



The chief secretary also shared a childhood memory of her, as a four-year-old, asking her mother whether she could put her back in the womb and bring her out again "all white and pretty".

Recommended For You

Rahul Gandhi Asserts 'Unity' In Kerala Congress Amid Internal Row Over Shashi Tharoor

Rahul Gandhi Asserts 'Unity' In Kerala Congress Amid Internal Row Over Shashi Tharoor

She said that she has lived for over 50 years buried under the narrative of not being a colour that was good enough and also bought into it by not seeing beauty or value in black and being fascinated by fair skin.

It led to her feeling like a lesser person for not being fair, which had to be compensated somehow, she said in her post.

But her children, who "gloried in their black heritage", changed her point of view.

"Till my children. Who gloried in their black heritage. Who kept finding beauty where I noticed none. Who thought that black was awesome. Who helped me see. That black is beautiful. That black is gorgeousness. That I dig black," she said.

David Jordens, spokesperson for Belgium's Federal Public Service (FPS) Foreign Affairs, confirmed the development while responding to inquiries about Choksi's whereabouts, ANI reported.

Mehul Choksi's Whereabouts No Secret Fully Aware Of Fugitive Presence Keeps A Close Watch

"I can confirm that FPS Foreign Affairs is aware of this case and considers it significant. However, we do not comment on individual cases. Additionally, this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Public Service Justice," David Jordens said.

Although Belgian

authorities are monitoring the situation, the justice department holds primary authority over any legal proceedings related to Choksi. Jordens further assured that FPS Foreign Affairs remains engaged in tracking updates regarding the case but did not disclose Choksi's exact location.

Meanwhile, Antigua and Barbuda's Foreign Minister, E.P. Chet Greene, had previously clarified that Choksi had left the island for medical treatment but remains an Antiguan citizen.

"Mehul Choksi is not in

## India-China Diplomats Meet In Beijing, Review Situation Along LAC

(Gns). The India-China border relationship has been fraught with challenges, most notably the 2020 Galwan Valley clash that resulted in the first deadly confrontation between the two nations in decades. During this incident, 20 Indian soldiers and an undisclosed number of Chinese troops lost their lives in a brutal hand-to-hand combat, dramatically escalating bilateral tensions.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) revealed that both nations have mutually agreed to intensify preparations for an upcoming meeting of Special Representatives. This strategic dialogue represents a calculated effort to transform previous diplomatic resolutions into tangible actions, demonstrating a commitment to de-escalating regional tensions.

Historical Context of Border Tensions

have included:

- Multiple military stand-offs in disputed territories
- Repeated intrusions across the undefined border
- Strategic infrastructure development near border regions
- Geopolitical tensions related to territorial claims in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh

## Mehul Choksi's Whereabouts No Secret: Belgium 'Fully Aware' Of Fugitive Presence, Keeps A Close Watch

(Gns). The Belgian government has acknowledged that it is aware of fugitive Indian businessman Mehul Choksi's presence in the country, emphasizing that the case is being closely followed.

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"Mehul Choksi is not in

of Antigua and Barbuda. Our governments are collaborating on this matter while upholding democratic principles and the rule of law," Greene told ANI.

He added that Choksi's legal status remains under review, and no further comments could be made until a final decision is reached.

Also Read

Fugitive Businessman Mehul Choksi Living In Belgium's Antwerp: Report

Fugitive Businessman

## Transparency in Coal Production and Distribution

(Gns). The steps taken to bring transparency in coal production and distribution are as under:

Major Information Technology (IT) initiatives have been taken up by Coal India Limited (CIL) / Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) and reporting of coal production is done through the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Systems.

CIL/SCCL follow the policy and guidelines issued by Ministry of Coal to distribute coal in a transparent manner. The current policies in place are New Coal Distribution policy (NCDP), Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala (Coal)

Transparently in India (SHAKTI), Linkage auction policy for Non Regulated Sector (NRS), Bridge Linkage Policy, Single Window Mode Agnostic Auctions, Linkage rationalization etc., and these policies are modified as and when required. The coal is

supplied to the consumer as per the Fuel Supply Agreement between coal companies and the consumers.

To promote environmental sustainability in coal mines in the country, various sustainable & environment friendly initiatives have been taken such as plantation/ bio-reclamation, mine water utilization for community use, development of eco-parks and adoption of energy efficiency measures.

Further, the Coal Block Development and Production Agreement for commercial mining executed between Successful Bidder and Nominated Authority mandates that the Successful Bidder shall implement mechanised coal extraction, transport and evacuation in the coal mine, in line with modern and prevalent technologies. Accordingly, the Successful Bidder shall strive to minimise the carbon footprints from operations at the coal mine, undertake steps to reduce environmental pollution and promote sustainability, in accordance with Good Industry Practice.

The following activities are being taken by the coal companies to reduce carbon emissions from coal mines:

- Creation of carbon sink through plantations.
- Restoration of degraded land.
- Adoption of clean coal technologies including extraction of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) and Coal Gasification.
- Minimizing road transportation and enhancing mechanized coal loading and transportation including First Mile Connectivity projects.
- Implementing Energy Efficiency measures
- Undertaking Renewable energy projects including solar, wind, pumped stor-

The arrest was made based on a complaint by Kumar P, Executive Officer, Primary Agriculture Credit Cooperative Society, Madadadhakere, Hosadurga.

In Belagavi, Mohammed Saab Moosamiya and Vinayak Patil, who are Forest Department staff at Ramdurg, were arrested for taking a bribe of Rs 7,000 to avoid legal action under the Wild life protection Act 1972 against the complainant's relatives.

Panchayat Development Officer of Soumedyappanahalli village in Ramanagara district, G Muniraju, was arrested for receiving a bribe to sanction material supplied bill for MGNREGA programme.

In Chitradurga, the District Credit Cooperative Bank supervisor at Hosadurga branch, Naveen AM, was arrested for taking a bribe of Rs 15,000 to sanction loans to farmers.



Current Diplomatic Trajectory

By agreeing to substantial preparatory measures for the upcoming Special Representatives meeting, India and China are signaling a pragmatic approach to managing their complex border dynamics. The discussions aim to explore comprehensive strategies that could potentially mitigate long-standing disputes and establish more stable communication channels.

Implications for Regional Stability

This diplomatic initiative reflects a sophisticated understanding that bilateral tensions can be more effectively managed through dialogue rather than military posturing. The mutual consent to engage constructively suggests a recognition of the potential consequences of prolonged confrontation.



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Mehul Choksi Living In Belgium's Antwerp: Report

Reports have suggested that Choksi has been living in Antwerp, Belgium, with his wife, Preeti, after securing residency using allegedly misleading documentation to avoid extradition to India. Additionally, sources indicate he may be planning a move to Switzerland for treatment at a specialized cancer hospital.

Meanwhile, Indian authorities have reportedly urged Belgium to initiate extradition proceedings, as per a report by the Associated Times.

However, New Delhi has yet to confirm this officially.

Choksi is a key accused in the ₹13,500 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) loan fraud case, along with his nephew, Nirav Modi. While Choksi has remained overseas, Nirav Modi is currently jailed in London and has been repeatedly denied bail as he fights extradition to India.

age projects, geo-thermal, etc.

The total number of captive / commercial private coal mines allocated by Ministry of Coal which has received Mine Opening Permission is 28, out of which 26 coal mines have started production.

Coal India Limited (CIL) / Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) provides the facility of medical treatment for self and dependent family members of its employees in hospitals / dispensaries of CIL / SCCL. Further, employees and their dependent family members are also referred to empaneled hospitals across the country, as per the requirement, for availing specialized facility of medical treatment. The contractors' workers engaged in establishments of CIL/Subsidiaries are also being extended indoor and OPD facility, as available in company's hospitals/dispensaries. The Not on Roll Employees of SCCL and their spouses are enrolled in Contributory Post Retirement Medicare Scheme on paying stipulated membership fees, wherein they can avail cash less treatment in empaneled hospitals.

CHANGE OF NAME

I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM GIRISHKUMAR VITTHALBHAI MISTRI TO MISTRI GIRISHBHAI ADDRESS: 09 SHIVAM PARK NR NEW SAURABHA SOCIETY N.H.8 GHODASAR KANS AHMEDABAD GUJARAT 380050



# 3rd Session of India-Uganda Joint Trade Committee held in New Delhi

India and Uganda to explore MoUs in key sectors including Public Works, Agriculture, Traditional Medicine, and Tele-medicine

Both sides identify key areas to boost bilateral trade, including minerals, coffee, pulses, spices, and dairy products (Gns).

The Third Session of the India-Uganda Joint Trade Committee (JTC) was held in New Delhi on 25th-26th March 2025. The session marked a significant step in strengthening India-Uganda trade relations after a gap of 23 years. Both sides reviewed the bilateral trade and agreed that the current trade volume does not reflect the full potential of economic collaboration. They resolved to take concerted efforts to enhance, deepen, and diversify bilateral trade. Discussions were also held on the formation of an India-Uganda Joint Business Forum to facilitate increased engagement between industry leaders from both nations.

Key areas identified for enhancing cooperation included minerals, coffee, cocoa products, pulses,

residual chemical and allied products, spices, dairy products, essential oils, plastic raw materials, fruits, and vegetables, as well as mining, banking, digital infrastructure, agri-



culture, MSME growth, health, pharmaceuticals, electric vehicles, and critical minerals, including Rare Earth Elements (REE) and petrochemicals. Both sides also agreed to strengthen collaboration between their respective investment promotion agencies. Additionally, both sides agreed to explore Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for the recognition of Indian

Pharmacopoeia and cooperation in Public Works and Infrastructure Development, Agriculture and Allied sectors, Traditional Medicine, Tele-medicine, and strengthening collaboration

in Standardization. Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, Shri Ajay Bhadoo addressed the inaugural session and emphasized the strong bilateral ties between India and Uganda. He highlighted the growing trade and investment partnership and underscored the importance of collaboration in key sectors such as e-commerce, pharmaceuticals, MSME cluster

development, solar energy, and rural electrification.

The JTC was co-chaired by Economic Adviser, Department of Commerce of Ms. Priya P. Nair, from the Indian side, Head of International Political Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Uganda, Amb. Elly Kamahungye Kafeero, He was accompanied by Amb. Prof. Joyce Kikafunda Kakuramatsi, Head of Mission, Uganda High Commission, New Delhi, along with a 28-member Ugandan delegation comprising officials from various ministries and Uganda's Mission in India. The discussions were held in a cordial and cooperative atmosphere, with both sides expressing enthusiasm for expanding trade and investment.

On the sidelines of the JTC, the Ugandan delegation visited the Noida SEZ to gain insights into India's industrial and export ecosystem. The deliberations at the 3rd Session of the India-Uganda JTC were forward-looking and indicative of the strong and amicable relations between the two nations.

## Contribution of post offices in rural economy

(Gns). The Department through its vast network of around 1.64 lakh post offices, with around 1.39 lakh in rural areas, complemented by the India Post Payment Bank, and around 2.4 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks, is providing digitally enabled postal, financial and citizen-centric services.

Post offices ensure the timely and reliable delivery of documents and parcels, in every nook and corner in the country.

All Post Offices in the country are functioning with Core Banking Solution. The following facilities are available to the customers:

- Internet Banking & Mobile Banking
- National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT)/ Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) services for transfer of funds
- Electronic Clearing Services (ECS) facility – for crediting the interest & maturity amount in bank

accounts e-Passbook facility to view the balance and mini-statement India Post Payments Bank – Post Office Savings



Accounts linkage service for all types of digital transactions

Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Citizen Centric Services like Aadhaar enrolment and updation

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) provides digital and paperless banking, Aadhaar enabled

Payments System (AePS), DBT facility and assisted digital services.

Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI) scheme has been designed to pro-

complete solutions from induction, transmission and delivery of consignments across the country. Various value-added services like insurance, track and trace, cash on delivery, Application Programming Interface (API) integration, Management Information System (MIS) dashboard, Book Now Pay Later facility (BNPL).

A dedicated national road transport network has been established to enhance connectivity to tier-2 and tier-3 towns, serving as a critical infrastructure initiative that extends e-commerce benefits to urban and rural areas. These are further supplemented by state-level transport routes.

To strengthen last-mile delivery, nodal delivery centres (NDCs) have been set up for exclusive and expedited parcel distribution using mechanized modes of transport.

vide affordable insurance coverage to people in rural areas.

The steps taken to connect widespread network of post offices with online business and expand its access to the market are as follows:

Department, with its extensive reach provides

## Schemes to increase Investment in NER

(Gns). The Government of India had introduced a new scheme UNNATI (Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme) on March 9, 2024 for extending support to the industries for enhancing regional infrastructure, create employment opportunities, and promote resilience and prosperity in the region. Under the UNNATI Scheme, the following incentives are provided to the industrial Units:

- Capital Investment Incentive (CII)
- Capital Interest Subvention (CIS)
- Manufacturing & Services linked incentive (MSLI)

Under the UNNATI scheme the total budget outlay of the Scheme is Rs 10,037 cr. The total budget outlay is divided into two parts – Part A and Part B. Part A of the scheme, with an outlay of Rs 9,737 cr., if for providing incentives to eligible new industrial units and those undergoing substantial expansion. Part B of the scheme, with an outlay of Rs 300 cr. is for implementation & institutional arrangements for the scheme. 60% of the scheme outlay of part A is earmarked to all States of

North Eastern Region (NER). The districts are categorized in two zones: Zone A (industrially advanced districts) and Zone B (industrially backward districts) based on NER district SDG index (2021-22). A total of 56 units registration has been grant-



ed in the scheme till date. In addition to the above, Government of India, with an intent to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation, startups and encouraging investments in the country also launched the Startup India initiative on 16th January 2016. For the North Eastern States, 2,109 entities have been recognized as startups by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) as on 31st January 2025.

Further, to facilitate credit access for the Micro,

Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) & Micro Finance sectors in the North Eastern Region, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) has been providing annual budgetary allocation to North Eastern

Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi), a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) under administrative control of MDoNER, in the form of an interest free loan under the North East Enterprise Development Scheme (NEEDS) for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26, with a total allocation of Rs. 300 crore.

The initiatives undertaken by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for promotion of entrepreneurship in Northeastern

states under Startup India, are as follow:

ASCEND Startup Workshop Series and Women for Startups Workshops: The Government has organized a series of startup workshops – ASCEND (Accelerating Startup

Calibre Entrepreneurial Drive), for entrepreneurs, aspiring entrepreneurs, and students from the North-eastern region.

Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building Workshops: DPIIT organized knowledge exchange workshops for dissemination of good practices and mutual learning among States and UTs.

Startup India Yatra Initiative: Startup India launched Startup India Yatra in 2017 to promote entrepreneurship in rural and non-metro regions across States.

WING: As a part of DPIIT's program WING - a capacity development program for existing and aspiring women entrepreneurs.

District Outreach Initiative: DPIIT is promoting entrepreneurship by striving to establish at least one DPIIT-recognized startup in every district of India.

## Aatmanirbhar Bharat: MoD inks Rs 6,900 crore contracts for 155mm/52 Calibre Advanced Towed Artillery Gun Systems & High Mobility Vehicle 6x6 Gun Towing Vehicles to enhance Indian Army's operational readiness

Capital procurement pacts worth Rs 1.40 lakh crore signed in FY 2024-25 till date (Gns).

Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed contracts with Bharat Forge Limited and Tata Advanced System Limited for the procurement of 155mm/52 Calibre Advanced Towed Artillery Gun Systems (ATAGS) and High Mobility Vehicle 6x6 Gun Towing Vehicles respectively at a total cost of about Rs 6,900 crore. The contracts were signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh at South Block in New Delhi on

March 26, 2025.

With the signing, total contracts worth Rs 1.40 lakh crore have been

realisation of the project was felicitated by the Defence Secretary as an honour for his immense

enhancing operational readiness. ATAGS, renowned for its exceptional lethality, will play a crucial role in bolstering the Army's firepower by enabling precise and long-range strikes.

Being the first major procurement of towed guns from the private sector by the Indian Army, the project will provide a boost to the Indian gun manu-



signed by MoD for capital procurement till date in the current Financial Year 2024-25. During the contract signing, the Project Director of ATAGS from DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment, Pune who played a pivotal role in the

contribution.

The 155 mm/52 Calibre ATAGS will replace the vintage and smaller calibre guns and enhance the artillery capabilities of the Indian Army. The procurement of this gun system marks a significant milestone in the modernisation of the Artillery Regiments,

facturing industry in particular and the indigenous defence manufacturing eco-system as a whole. This project is a proud flag-bearers of Aatmanirbhar Bharat by significantly contributing to employment generation and economic growth in consonance with the Make-in-India initiative.

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HMoJS Shri C. R. Paatil Launches DDWS-UNICEF's 'Ripples of Change' Publication Showcasing Gender-Transformative WASH Stories

10 stories on rural WASH highlighting Community Leadership, Women's Empowerment and Local Innovation

Revamped website of Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation) Website Unveiled – Aligned with DBIM and GIGW 3.0 guidelines

Upgraded portal to Enable Enhanced Accessibility, Trust and Operational Efficiency (Gns).

The Hon'ble Union Minister of Jal Shakti, CR Paatil, today launched the book, "Ripples of Change: Gender-transformative rural WASH programmes in India" in New Delhi.

A joint publication of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, and UNICEF India, Ripples of Change captures ten powerful stories from rural India.

Documented by UNICEF, the stories reflect the transformational impact of

Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) and Jal Jeevan Mission through the lens of gender empowerment, community leadership, and grassroots innovation.

During the event, the

Prime Minister's vision of a harmonized and unified digital identity for Government of India, the revamped Ministry website ensures:

Enhanced Citizen Trust through consistent govern-



Minister also launched the upgraded Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation) website portal. The upgraded website is among the first few government platforms to be successfully onboarded and revamped in full compliance with the latest Digital Brand Identity Manual (DBIM) and Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW) 3.0.

A screen with red curtains AI-generated content may be incorrect.

DBIM acts as a comprehensive style guide and outlines the visual, textual, and experiential elements necessary to harmonize India's digital footprint. Aligned with the Hon'ble

ment branding and recognizable interface

Improved Accessibility with inclusive design, multi-lingual support, and better navigation for all users

Higher Security and Compliance with standardized tech protocols and updated security practices

Wider Inclusivity and Efficiency allowing seamless interaction with domestic users and global stakeholders

The upgraded portal now features a unified interface, consistent branding, and technology standardization, making Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation) an exemplar of digital excellence and accessibility.

## Indian Railways to Implement Access Control System with Permanent Holding Areas at 60 Stations

Indian Railways enhances crowd management with wider foot-over-bridges, CCTV surveillance and war rooms (Gns).

With a view to handle heavy rush of passengers at stations during festival/Mela periods, limited Access Control System has been experimented by the Railways where during such periods, holding areas were created outside stations and passengers were allowed only when the train came to the platform.

Further, to handle heavy rush of passengers at stations, following decisions have been taken by railways –

1. Permanent holding areas at 60 stations:

During the festival season of 2024, holding areas were created outside stations. These waiting areas were able to hold large crowds at Surat, Udhna, Patna and New Delhi. Passengers were allowed only when the train came to the platform.

Similar arrangements were made during Mahakumbh at nine stations of Prayag area.

Based on the experience of these stations, it has been decided to create permanent waiting areas outside stations at 60 sta-

tions across the country, which periodically face heavy crowds.

Pilot projects have start-

waiting area.

All unauthorised entry points will be sealed.

3. Wider foot-over-



ed at New Delhi, Anand Vihar, Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Ghaziabad stations.

With this concept, the sudden crowd will be contained within the waiting area. Passengers will be allowed to go to platforms only when the trains arrive at the platform. This will decongest the stations.

2. Access control: Complete access control will be initiated at the 60 stations.

Passengers with confirmed reserve tickets will be given direct access to the platforms.

Passengers without a ticket or with a waiting list ticket will wait in the outside

bridges (FOB):

Two new designs of 12 metre wide (40 feet) and 6 metre wide (20 feet) standard FOB have been developed. These wide FOBs with ramps were very effective in crowd management during Mahakumbh. These new standard wide FOBs will be installed in all the stations.

4. Cameras: Cameras helped crowd management in a big way during Mahakumbh. A large number of cameras will be installed in all stations and adjoining areas for close monitoring.

5. War rooms: War rooms at large sta-

tions will be developed. Officers of all departments will work in the war room during crowd situations.

6. New generation communication equipment: Latest design digital communication equipment like walkie-talkies, announcement systems, calling systems will be installed on all heavy crowd stations.

7. New design ID card:

All staff and service persons will be given a new design ID card so that only authorised persons can enter the station.

8. New design uniform for staff:

All staff members will be given new design uniforms so that they can be easily identified during a crisis situation.

9. Upgradation of station director post:

All major stations will have a senior officer as station director. All other departments will report to the station director.

Station director will get financial empowerment so that he can take on-the-spot decisions for improving the station.

10. Sale of tickets as per capacity:

Station Director will be empowered to control the sale of tickets as per capacity of the station and