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## PM Modi Hails Armed Forces on Flag Day, Urges Citizens to Contribute to Soldiers' Welfare

Vice-President Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan launches Silver Jubilee Year of Brahma Kumaris' Om Shanti Retreat Centre, Gurugram

The tapasya and meditation of India's sages, rishis, and munis form the spiritual backbone of the nation's timeless wisdom: Vice President

Vice-President expresses happiness that the spiritual enrichment of our citizens is being taken care by the women-led Brahma Kumaris Foundation

Meditation Key to Emotional Balance in a Fast-Paced World and Inner Peace Essential for Viksit Bharat@2047: Vice-President (Gns).

The Vice-President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan, today launched the Silver Jubilee Year celebrations of the Om Shanti Retreat Centre

## PM Modi Hails Armed Forces on Flag Day, Urges Citizens to Contribute to Soldiers' Welfare

(Gns). Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday led the nation in expressing profound gratitude to India's brave armed forces on the occasion of Armed Forces Flag Day, celebrated annually on December 7.

In a post shared on X, the Prime Minister lauded the personnel for their commitment, courage, and discipline.

"On Armed Forces Flag Day, we express our deepest gratitude to the brave men and women who protect our nation with unwavering courage," PM Modi wrote. He further emphasised the army's role as a

national beacon, stating, "Their discipline, resolve and spirit shield our people and strengthen our nation. Their commitment stands as a powerful example of duty, discipline and devotion to our nation."

Highlighting the spirit of the day, PM Modi urged all citizens to actively support the welfare of military families and veterans by contributing to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund. This essential fund is dedicated

(OSRC) of the Brahma Kumaris in Gurugram.

Addressing the gathering, the Vice-President expressed happiness at joining the celebrations of the Centre, which was founded 24 years ago with the spiritual vision of the Brahma Kumaris and has now entered its 25th year of service. He appreciated the diversity of professionals - scientists, doctors, administrators, politicians who are drawn to the Centre's message of peace and meditation. He commended the Brahma Kumaris for emerging as the world's largest women-led spiritual organisation.

The Vice-President emphasised Bharat's rich civilizational heritage rooted in spirituality, meditation, and inner awakening. He

recalled the profound contributions of sages, rishis and munis, whose tapasya and meditative practices have shaped India's timeless wisdom. Practices such as Rajyoga and Vipassana, he said, highlight that true strength and clarity emerge from within.

Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan lauded the Brahma Kumaris for carrying forward this spiritual legacy and guiding millions in India and abroad towards peace and purity of mind. He noted that in the Amrit Kaal, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has envisioned a Viksit Bharat@2047, where economic growth is complemented by inner stability, happiness, and peace. Meditation, he said, must be embraced as an essential life skill in today's fast-mental sustainability and LIFE - an initiative of the

Shri Narendra Modi, encouraging individuals to adopt pro-planet lifestyles. He praised the Centre's green initiatives, including a 1 MW hybrid solar power plant, rainwater harvesting systems, biogas and sewage treatment plants, green kitchens, free sapling nurseries, and large-scale tree plantation under the Kalp Taru project.

Referring to the recent inauguration of the Brahma Kumaris' annual campaign "Rajyoga Meditation for World Unity and Trust" by the President Smt. Droupadi Murmu in Lucknow, Shri C.P.Radhakrishnan expressed confidence that the Silver Jubilee year will open new avenues of service, deeper societal partnerships, and amplified spiritual outreach.

Shri Rao Narbir Singh, Minister of Environment & Forest and Industry & Commerce, Government of Haryana; and senior dignitaries of Brahma Kumaris were also present on the occasion.



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## Editorial

### Under Pressure

The rupee drifting beyond the 90-per-dollar mark is not merely another data point in the market's daily churn. It is a marker of a deeper unease that has been building beneath the surface for months, fuelled by global uncertainty and domestic vulnerabilities that now stand exposed. A currency is often the most honest reflection of economic sentiment. With the rupee peaking at 90.42 before strengthening a little, the message is unmistakable: confidence is eroding faster than policymakers would like to admit.

The immediate trigger is easy to identify. Steep US tariffs on Indian goods have impaired the country's export engine at a moment when global demand is already weak. When your largest market raises barriers, the spillover effects are swift. Exporters hedge more aggressively, importers scramble for dollar cover, and the currency market starts moving in one direction. But the deeper concern is that investors see this as more than a one-off disruption. Tariffs can be negotiated, but rebuilding credibility in trade relationships takes far longer. Foreign portfolio investors, who have traditionally provided depth to Indian markets, are now pulling back just when the economy needs patient capital. The prospect of reduced earnings for several export-facing sectors has made local equities less attractive, and the hesitation is visible in the sharp rise in hedging costs.

A currency sliding past a psychological barrier often emboldens speculative behaviour, and that dynamic is clearly in play. When traders sense that policymakers are reluctant to defend a level, they test how far the breach can extend. Forward premiums and implied yields surging to their highest levels in months reflect this shift in expectations. What is equally worrying is the weakness in long-term capital flows. Foreign direct investment has been subdued, and offshore borrowings have not compensated for the shortfall. At a time when India aims to position itself as a resilient, investment-friendly alternative in a fracturing global economy, the capital account looks distressingly thin. This lack of depth leaves the rupee more vulnerable to external shocks and amplifies even modest swings in sentiment. Yet, this moment also offers an opportunity.

A currency under pressure can serve as a forceful reminder of the reforms that remain unfinished. Export competitiveness still hinges too heavily on favourable global conditions rather than productivity-led strength. Capital flows continue to depend on periodic bursts of optimism instead of structural assurance. And external-sector policymaking often reacts to crises rather than anticipates them. Stability will return only when investors see a coherent roadmap ~ one that strengthens export capacity, rebuilds trust with trading partners, diversifies markets, and signals a long-term commitment to predictable economic policy. Until then, the rupee's slide past 90 should be read not as an aberration but as an early warning. The currency is telling us something important. It would be unwise to ignore it.

## Caring for the elderly in rural communities

(Gns).

A neglected aspect of health and development initiatives in rural areas is that the needs of elderly people, particularly those from weaker sections, do not get adequate attention. The problems of elderly people can be severer in areas where dependence on migrant work is high and younger members of a family must be away for considerable periods of time. Dr. Sharad Iyengar, who leads a programme called Prabal Yatra (PY) for improved health and wellness care for elderly people in about 100 villages of south Rajasthan says that their experiences so far have confirmed the urgent need for such interventions to specially help the elderly people from weaker sections in remote villages.



Gaya Prasad Gopal, an elderly and respected social activist from Chitrakut district of Uttar Pradesh has been closely observing the changes in rural poor households. He says that sometimes due to compulsion and sometimes due to neglect, increasingly there is a tendency on the part of younger members to not fulfill their responsibilities towards elders in their families satisfactorily. In such conditions, government policies need to give more attention to meeting the needs of older people in rural areas. For evolving the most appropriate policies it is important to collect information on priority needs and the wider social conditions in which these needs can be met based on constant interactions with the elderly as well as the wider rural community.

An initiative like Prabal Yatra thus helps at two levels. On the one hand it contributes directly to the well-being of older people in villages where it works. On the other hand, sensitive

## IndiGo fiasco: Who is accountable and why refund is not enough for passengers

(Gns).

IndiGo's meltdown this week is not a "technical glitch". It is the visible symptom of a system that chose growth and margins over resilience, and then pushed the cost of that choice onto passengers.

What exactly happened?

From the start of December, IndiGo began cancelling and delaying flights across its network. On a single day, over 1,000 flights were cancelled, leaving thousands of passengers stranded at airports in the middle of the peak travel season.

This wasn't weather. It wasn't ATC. It was a basic failure: not having enough rested, legal-to-fly pilots once the new Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) rules actually bit.

With IndiGo controlling over 60% of India's domestic market, its collapse instantly became a national problem, with fare spikes on other airlines, packed trains, and families missing weddings, exams and medical appointments. The government eventually capped fares on key routes and even spoke of adding trains to rescue stranded passengers – a surreal situation caused by the mis-planning of a private airline.

How rosters are supposed to work

Airline crew scheduling is a continuous, data-heavy process. In simple terms:

- Base roster: Planners build monthly/weekly rosters using published schedules, factoring in legal limits on duty hours, night duties, and minimum rest.

by 1 June 2024.

- Standby buffers: A percentage of pilots are kept on reserve or standby each day – their only job is to be available if someone goes sick, a flight runs late, an aircraft goes tech, or weather causes knock-on delays.

- Fatigue & legality checks: Modern crew-management software continuously checks every assigned duty against FDTL rules and internal policies. If a rostered duty would break a rule, the system flags it long before the day of operation.

- Recovery planning: Network control and crew control teams work 24x7, constantly re-optimising the plan – swapping crews, using standbys, and, if needed, trimming schedules in advance to avoid meltdown on the day.

- After industry push-back, implementation was phased and repeatedly delayed, with the final, stricter phase ultimately tied to 1 November 2025.

- IndiGo was among the first to oppose the new norms when they were notified, arguing for more time.

So by late 2025, IndiGo had had well over a year of lead time to:

- recruit and train more pilots;

- moderate capacity growth;

- increase reserve buffers; and

- clean up its roster practices.

Instead, pilots' bodies

allege prolonged under-hiring and aggressive scheduling, and even business media

are now asking whether IndiGo simply waited too long to staff up for known rules.

DGCA's half-step on

fatigue: CAR vs circular

On paper, DGCA did the

right thing in 2024 by

strengthening prescriptive

FDTL regulations through a

CAR. But by 2025, instead

of embedding a full Fatigue

Risk Management System

(FRMS) regime in regulation,

it floated draft FRMS

guidelines/framework

– essentially via circular-style

guidance – to "complement

duty time norms" and col-

lect feedback.

That softer, guidance-

based approach has two

problems:

- 1. It signals to operators

that fatigue management is

still negotiable.

Crew-planning is indeed

tedious and continuous. But

that is precisely why mass

cancellations over multiple

days point less to a sudden

shock and more to a long-

running planning failure.

Passengers as collateral

damage: refund is not com-

pensation

Passengers have borne

the full blunt:

- Many were called to

the airport, cleared security,

and even boarded, only to

be told there was no crew.

Others discovered cancel-

ations while standing in

check-in queues.

- Last-minute alterna-

tives on other airlines cost

several times the original

fare. One passenger quoted

in the press paid about

₹46,500 per person after an

₹8,000 IndiGo flight was

cancelled.

In such cases, a refund

is not compensation. It

does not cover:

- missed weddings,

funerals, exams, job inter-

views;

- non-refundable hotels,

taxis, visas;

- days of leave wasted

and emotional stress.

Despite this being, in

effect, a national mobility

crisis—with the country's

primary air corridor effec-

tively choked—there has

been no consistent public

outreach at the terminals

from political leaders, sen-

ior bureaucrats, or airline

top management comfort-

ing passengers on the

ground. Most communica-

tion has been via social

media and press releases.

Abuse of dominance?

Why the CCI must look into

this

Under Section 4 of the

Competition Act, a domi-

nant enterprise abuses its

position if it, among other

things:

- "limits or restricts" pro-

duction or services; or

- imposes unfair or dis-

criminatory conditions on

consumers.

IndiGo's ~60% share in

domestic aviation gives it a

position of extraordinary

strength in the market.

When such a player:

- continues aggressive

ticket sales during peak

season despite knowing

that pilot numbers under

new FDTL will not suffice;

- fails to trim schedules

2. It gives the regulator wiggle room to grant selec-

tion

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cancellations over multiple

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Passengers as collateral

damage: refund is not com-

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Passengers have borne

the full blunt:

- then cancels flights en

masse over several days,

effectively paralysing the

market, there is at least a

prima facie case for the

Competition Commission of

India (CCI) to investigate

whether this amounts to an

abuse of dominance through

restriction of services and

exploitation of consumers.

DGCA, as sector regulator,

should not stop at a

show-cause notice to

&lt;p

## WESTERN RAILWAY TO RUN A SUPERFAST SPECIAL TRAIN BETWEEN BANDRA TERMINUS - DURGAPURA - MADAR

For the convenience of passengers and with a view to meet the travel demand to clear extra rush of passenger traffic, Western Railway will run a Superfast Special Train on Special fare between Bandra Terminus - Durgapura - Madar station.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Shri Vineet Abhishek, the details of the train is as

## South Africa Coach Shukri Conrad Humbled After ODI Series Defeat to India, Regrets 'Grovel' Remark

(Gns). South Africa head coach Shukri Conrad has expressed regret over the wording he used during the Guwahati Test, acknowledging that the term "grovel" drew unnecessary controversy and overshadowed his team's remarkable Test series win against India.

South Africa's head coach, Shukri Conrad, regretted using the term "grovel" during the Guwahati Test, which overshadowed their Test series win against India; he also reflected on India's 2-1 ODI series win, highlighting Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma's performances and South Africa's missed opportunity for a double-format victory.

Conrad admitted that the comment unintentionally shifted attention away from the players and onto himself. He said the term, which in South Africa carries sensitive historical connotations, "took the sheen" off what should have been

## Gautam Gambhir's Big Statement On World Cup 2027 Team

(Gns). India's nine-wicket win over South Africa in the deciding ODI not only sealed the series but also highlighted the impact of non-regulars Ruturaj Gaikwad and Yashasvi Jaiswal, whose centuries backed Virat Kohli's Player of the Series show in the India vs South Africa ODI series.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir, however, refused to look too far ahead when asked whether Gaikwad and Jaiswal could be part of India's 2027 ODI World Cup plans after the India vs South Africa ODI series, stressing that long-term projections were not his focus at this stage.

India's nine-wicket victory over South Africa in the final ODI secured the series, thanks to centuries from Ruturaj Gaikwad and Yashasvi Jaiswal, with head coach Gautam Gambhir emphasizing the importance of present per-

under: Train No. 09604/09603 Bandra Terminus - Durgapura - Madar Superfast Special [02 Trips]

Train No. 09604 Bandra Terminus - Durgapura Superfast Special will depart from Bandra Terminus on Tuesday, 09th December, 2025 at 19:25 hrs and will reach Durgapura at 15:10 hrs, the next day. Similarly, Train No. 09603 Madar - Bandra Terminus Superfast Special

will depart from Madar on Monday, 08th December, 2025 at 18:45 hrs and will arrive Bandra Terminus at 16:30 hrs, the next day. Enroute, the train will halt at Borivali, Vapi, Valsad, Navsari, Surat, Vadodara, Ratlam, Bhawani Mandi, Ramganj Mandi, Kota and Sawai Madhopur stations in both directions. Train No. 09603 commencing from Madar will have additional halt at Kishangarh, Jaipur and

Durgapura stations.

The train comprises of AC - 2 Tier, AC - 3 Tier, AC - 3 Tier (Economy), Sleeper Class and General Second Class Coaches.

The booking for Train No. 09604 opens from 08.12.2025 at all PRS counters & on IRCTC website. For detailed information regarding timings of halts and composition, passengers may please visit [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in).

a celebratory moment after a significant red-ball victory. "On reflection, it was never my intention to cause

shouldn't even know who the coach is, it should always be about the players. Unfortunately, the

Loss in ODI Series and Takeaways

Reflecting on India's 2-1 ODI series win, after South Africa's own 2-0 sweep in the Tests, Conrad said his team had missed a chance to secure a rare double-format victory at home. He praised India's senior batters, particularly Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, whose performances defined the series.

"Our youngsters got to see firsthand what the best in the world look like," Conrad said. "Virat and Rohit showed the standards required, and that's an experience we have to take forward."

Conrad admitted that the ensuing noise conflicted with his core coaching values. "Being humble is a cornerstone of our Test team and all our teams, really. People

any malice or be anything other than humble," Conrad said. "Could I have been smarter with the word I used? Absolutely. It left space for people to attach their own context, when all I meant was that India should have to work really hard."

He added that the ensuing noise conflicted with his core coaching values. "Being humble is a cornerstone of our Test team and all our teams, really. People

noise became about me." Coach Vows More Careful Communication

Acknowledging how quickly context can be reshaped in the public space, Conrad said he would choose his words more cautiously going forward. "I'm going to be careful with what I say because any word can be pulled into a different frame. It's a pity it spiralled the way it did, but there was definitely no malice intended."

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## Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025: No office calls after work hours, penalty for employers in case of violations, and more

(Gns). NCP-SCP leader and Opposition INDIA Bloc's MP Supriya Sule has moved a private members' bill in the Lok Sabha that proposes granting employees the right to refuse to take work-related calls and emails once official working hours are completed. Although unlikely to clear the House since the Opposition doesn't have the majority, the Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025, seeks to create an Employees' Welfare Authority.

The bill says that employees should not be forced to take calls after working hours or on holidays. It seeks to grant them immunity from disciplinary action if they refuse calls and emails outside their official working hours.

Key provisions of the Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025

As per the provisions of the Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025, which Sule introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 1, employees are entitled to disconnect from office-related communication after working hours.

Employers, as per the bill, may be able to contact out to their employees in case of genuine emergencies.

Presenting the bill, Sule argued that today's digital culture has created an atmosphere of constant availability, severely affecting work-life balance. "The Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025, provides every employee the right to disconnect from work-related electronic communications. It fosters a better quality of life and a healthier work-life balance by reducing the burnout caused by today's digital culture," she said.

Citing various studies, the bill says that this culture of constant availability has led to sleep deprivation, stress, and emotional exhaustion. It has also contributed to telepressure, a kind of pressure to respond immediately, and info-obesity, a term associated with the habit of constant monitoring of work messages.

While the bill seeks to protect employees' rights and grants them better work-life balance opportunities, it also has a provision for employers to reach

employees during pre-negotiated timings. However, the timings must be agreed upon by both sides. In case an employee is working beyond official working hours, he/she would be entitled to overtime pay.

If employers violate the rules, the bill also proposes a penalty of 1 per cent of

employees during pre-negotiated timings. However, the timings must be agreed upon by both sides. In case an employee is working beyond official working hours, he/she would be entitled to overtime pay.

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## Benin Faces Uncertainty as "Military Committee" Claims Control, Ousts President Patrice Talon

(Gns). Political uncertainty gripped Benin on Sunday after a group of soldiers appeared on state television claiming they had removed President Patrice Talon from power, just months before the end of his second term.

The soldiers, operating under the name "Military Committee for Refoundation" (CMR), said they had taken the decision collectively and declared that Talon was no longer the country's head of state. Their announcement marked a dramatic escalation in tensions and raised fears of a military takeover.

On Sunday, a group of soldiers identifying as the Military Committee for Refoundation (CMR) claimed to have removed President Patrice Talon from power, just months before the end of his second term, creating political uncertainty in Benin; the president's



the end of his second term, creating political uncertainty in Benin; the president's

Meanwhile, questions remained over Talon's safety and location, as officials did not confirm where he was following the broadcast. Reports of gunfire near Camp Guezo - a military site close to the presidential residence - intensified concerns about security in the capital.

The French Embassy in Benin issued a warning to its citizens, urging them to remain indoors and avoid travel after hearing reports of gunshots in the area. Authorities have not yet issued a wider official statement, leaving the country and observers awaiting further clarity.

## IndiGo Gradually Returns to Normal as Government Monitors Recovery

(Gns). IndiGo is restoring operations after major disruption, with the government closely watching every step. The airline plans over 1,650 flights, compared with 1,500 on the previous day, and reported 137 of 138 destinations active.

On-time performance has risen to 75 per cent, a sharp jump from 30 per cent a day earlier.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has pushed IndiGo to speed up refunds, improve schedules and clear baggage backlogs. Officials said air travel across India is stabilising fast, as other carriers are running at full capacity with normal schedules. IndiGo is also waiving fees on cancellations and rescheduling for tickets booked up to 15 December.

IndiGo is restoring operations after disruptions, with the Ministry of Civil Aviation closely monitoring

the situation; the airline that trips changed due to plans over 1,650 flights, these disruptions must not



attract any extra rescheduling charges.

Officials said the aviation network is moving towards full normal operations, but strict supervision continues. A 24x7 control room at the Ministry of Civil Aviation tracks IndiGo operations, airport conditions and passenger support. Teams on the ground are monitoring crew plans and service standards so that all directions are followed.

## India-US Framework Agreement Likely Soon, Full Trade Pact to Take Longer

(Gns). India and the United States are pushing to lock in a framework trade deal before the year's end, with discussions in New Delhi on December 10 to accelerate work on the proposed agreement, focusing on easing tariff barriers that affect Indian exporters, and aiming to increase bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030 from the current USD 191 billion.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal recently stated that India expects this early framework to ease tariff barriers hurting Indian exporters, while a full Bilateral Trade Agreement will take longer because India and the US are running two parallel negotiation tracks, one near term on tariffs and another on a wider, long-term pact.

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The December 10 meetings in New Delhi are not labelled as a formal negotiating round, yet officials expect both sides to focus on the specific elements needed to move the India-US trade agreement towards closure, especially after Washington imposed a 25 per cent tariff on Indian exports linked to India's purchase of Russian crude.

The visiting US team will be led by Deputy United States Trade Representative Rick Switzer, marking the second visit by

senior US trade officials since these higher duties were announced, while the broader negotiation process is being steered by Assistant USTR for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch and Joint Secretary Darpan Jain from India's Commerce Department.

The latest engagement comes after months of regular contact, as US negotiators were last in India on September 16 and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal travelled to Washington twice this year, in May and again on September 22, while both governments have instructed officials to complete the first tranche of the India-US trade agreement by fall 2025 after already holding six negotiation rounds.

chaired by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla charted a packed agenda:

December 8: A 10-hour special debate on the 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram', with Prime Minister Narendra Modi opening and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh concluding the discussion. Congress MPs, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, will participate.

However, the IndiGo fiasco is likely to mar the proceedings of the two Houses on Monday, with Opposition members expected to rent their ire on the sudden massive flight disruptions.

Over 1,000 IndiGo flights were cancelled, leaving thousands of passengers stranded across India.

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