

Central Chronicle

Founder: Late Shri Ramgopal Maheshwari
Inspiration: Late Shri Prafulla Kumar Maheshwari

EDITORIAL

Pride in Achievements

India gained independence on August 15, 1947, and adopted its Constitution on January 26, 1950, declaring itself a democratic, sovereign, and republican nation. Our Constitution grants citizens the democratic right to elect their government. In fact, India is one of the world's oldest civilizations, with vibrant diversity and a rich cultural heritage. Since gaining independence, India has made remarkable social and economic progress. It has become self-reliant in agriculture and is now counted among the most industrialized nations. Along with being the seventh-largest country in the world, India has also become the fifth-largest economy globally. It is often referred to as the world's largest democracy. India's global reputation rests primarily on its glorious culture. Apart from the provisions of the Constitution, the illustrations included in it also represent India's rich heritage. The Constitution contains 22 such illustrations that narrate India's cultural and historical journey. These include depictions of ancient Vedic Gurukuls, Bhagirath's penance, Lord Rama's victory over Lanka, Nataraja, Hanuman, Lord Krishna giving the message of the Gita, Mohenjo-Daro, Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira, the grandeur of the Maurya and Gupta periods, Vikramaditya's court, Nalanda University, Odisha's sculpture, Akbar's court during the Mughal period, Shivaji, Guru Gobind Singh, Tipu Sultan, Rani Laxmibai, and Gandhi's Dandi March. These illustrations highlight that the framers of the Constitution envisioned India's development journey rooted in its heritage. When we look at India's development since 1950, we see many glorious achievements. India has made

remarkable progress in literacy, self-reliance in agriculture, defense manufacturing, space science, medical research, and other fields. India holds a strong presence on the global stage, evident in the fact that all major nations seek good relations with us. Even China now wishes to resolve various disputes with India.

However, despite these achievements, many challenges remain. Social inequality, economic disparity, unemployment, fair pricing for farmers, and universal access to quality healthcare and education require significant attention. Incidents of violence and scuffles in Parliament and state assemblies reflect a departure from India's legacy of tolerance and magnanimity. The administrative system often appears helpless against organized crime, and wealthy individuals seem to exert undue influence over governance.

Self-serving interests have led to the erosion of democratic and constitutional institutions, as well as democratic values. In some cases, there are blatant attempts to manipulate the system for personal gains. While India is the world's fifth-largest economy, it is also burdened by a debt running into trillions of rupees. This stark reality stems from the fact that while our GDP is large, we are far from being a debt-free economy.

Another major challenge facing the Indian economy is the growing culture of distributing freebies, which economists view with great concern due to its long-term negative implications. Unfortunately, political parties often ignore these consequences.

In conclusion, while India has achieved unprecedented milestones, much work remains to be done in several critical areas.

WHERE'S THE AMRITO (NECTAR) ANY MORE!

KAJAL CHATTERJEE

This forms the season of Kumbh! And I get reminded of "Amrito Kumbher Sandhane" (In search of Amrita Kumbha) --- a real-life experience of renowned Bangla author Samaresh Basu converted into an epic novel. The novel was pictured as a film by director Dilip Roy in 1982.

As the name suggests, the novel was based on the experience of Basu in the Kumbh Mela of Prayag.

The protagonist or the observer in the film i.e. the character of the writer is roaming around the "unending" canvas of the fair, Ganga bank, the fort beside the Sangam, the Akharas of the Sadhus observing the mass of people as well as meeting and talking with them. He has got introduced to many families or singletons, ladies gents, young old, rich poor, Sadhus as well as pilgrims from different corners of India. Even to the blind Maulvi of the Masjid within the fort beside the Sangam.

He was introduced to a Hindi-speaking family from rural Uttar Pradesh. A talkative smiling lady from that family was inquisitive about the author as he is paying no interest in having the "holy dip" in the Sangam! Then why has he come to Kumbh at all! On persistent quizzing, the author gave out the actual reason for him appearing in Prayag -- "To see people, To understand people!"

This film remains one of my

favorites for awarding us many such touching anecdotes of life amidst the huge canvas of Prayag encompassing the confluence of the rivers, fort, Mela and most importantly the people.

In the meantime, as soon as I heard that 2 of my colleagues are set to visit "Prayagraj" in February, immediately I experienced a bout of repulsion in my heart! And I wondered how could I receive such repulsion despite being such an ardent admirer of the 1982 film revolving around Prayag, Kumbh and the ocean of the masses!

whole city has been unilaterally "converted" to "Prayagraj" with no prizes for giving the actual reason behind the renaming - - "JUST WIPE OUT ALL ISLAMIC TRACES FROM "HINDU" "NEW INDIA" OR "BHARAT"! So "Prayagraj", just like renaming of "Mughal Sarai" or "Faizabad" to cite a few, bears direct proof of the crude conspiracy to distort the history of multicultural India.

And by taking the route of "Prayagraj", the holy stage of Kumbh has been denigrated to a brutal show of

any political leader makes a holy dip in the confluence with media in tow, another party is portraying their deceased "father figure" as "Great Patron" of Kumbh when he was at the helm of Uttar Pradesh! As if tacit promotion of rabid Hindutva amidst the Mela was not enough; the circle of communalism and hatred gets complete with a "seminar" (scheduled for January 24) to be hosted by a prominent wing of saffron camp (right at the Kumbh venue) demanding the "peaceful handover" of the Gyanvapi and "Krishna Jannabhoomi"!

Oh what a far cry from my "Amrita Kumbha" experience (film) where the humanity-worshipping protagonist was respectfully enriching himself by listening to the deep philosophy of the blind Maulvi of the Masjid! Just like the far distance traversed by "modernity" from the early decades of Independence! Whereas the film depicted pilgrims and spectators staying in simple camps, sharing common toilets and lying on make-shift "beds" on floor; now enthusiastic reports getting emanated with much "pride" how luxurious cottages, VIP complex with 3/5 star facilities are "gracing" the holy site and how scandalously more money you splash, more close you will be allotted living space near the Sangam!

What a vulgar commercialisation of the pathway to attain the Divine or God also!

Yet the whole city has been unilaterally "converted" to "Prayagraj" with no prizes for giving the actual reason behind the renaming - - "JUST WIPE OUT ALL ISLAMIC TRACES FROM "HINDU" "NEW INDIA" OR "BHARAT"! So "Prayagraj", just like renaming of "Mughal Sarai" or "Faizabad" to cite a few, bears direct proof of the crude conspiracy to distort the history of multicultural India.

An introspection of the subconscious mind ultimately brought me to the realisation of the exact reasons!

Previously I had no problem with "Prayag" as it was the original name of the area around the holy complex! But the city of Allahabad was distinct from the site of holy confluence and much larger in dimension with special character and history of its own. Yet the

muscle-flexing in the name of "religion", that too mixed with politics! So the photographs and banners "worshipping" certain powerful political honchos of Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi are dominating the landscape, indirectly projecting themselves as "guardians/protectors of Hindus/Hinduism"! As if to "prove" that they are also not "lesser Hindus"; if

Girl Child Day Inspires Collective Action across India, Bal Raksha Bharat, observing the day in MP & many other states

National Girl Child Day 2025 marked a pivotal moment in the movement toward gender equality, with organizations, policymakers, and communities across the country uniting to advocate for the rights of girls. This year's theme, "Empowering the Girl Child: Creating Equal Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow," served as a call to action to address barriers faced by girls and foster an environment where they can thrive.

In the event held at Govt. Navin Higher Secondary School, Bagevania Bhopal, Bal Raksha Bharat (BRB) observed this day in close collaboration with various state governments, CSOs and children especially girls. It brought together voices of girl champions from across to focus on the key pillars of education, health, protection and equal opportunities for girls.

Urgent Challenges: NFHS-5 Data on Girls in India

The 2019-21 National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) reveals a mixed picture of progress and persis-

tent challenges for girls in India:

Child Marriage: 23.3% of women aged 20-24 were married before the legal age of 18.

Teenage Pregnancy: 6.8% of women aged 15-19 have begun child-bearing, with higher prevalence in rural areas.

Education: While female literacy has reached 71.5%, dropout rates remain concerning, particularly in rural and tribal regions.

Gender-Based Violence: Reports of violence against women and girls remain alarmingly high, with many cases going unreported.

These statistics underscore the critical need for comprehensive interventions to address gender-based inequities and empower girls to fulfill their potential.

A Call to Action: Collaborative Efforts for Change

The 2025 observance of National Girl Child Day highlighted ongoing efforts by the Government of India through initiatives such as:

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP): A flagship program promoting sur-



vival, protection, and education for girls.

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan: Addressing barriers to education by providing free and accessible learning opportunities for girls.

Kishori Shakti Yojana: Focused on improving adolescent girls' health, nutrition, and awareness.

POSHAN Abhiyaan: Tackling malnutrition among children and adolescent girls.

Bal Raksha Bharat (BRB), in collaboration with various government departments across 22 states has intensified efforts to bridge gaps in education, healthcare and protection for girls. Through community-based programs, youth-led initiatives and capacity-building efforts, BRB works

closely with families, local leaders and government bodies to challenge societal norms that hinder girls' development.

Spotlight on Girls' Voices and Resilience

Adolescent girls from diverse regions shared personal stories of overcoming obstacles, shedding light on the urgent need for intervention in areas like child marriage, access to secondary education, and menstrual health management. Their stories underscored the power of resilience and the transformative impact of timely support and opportunities.

A Collective Commitment

The event concluded with a resounding commitment from stakeholders across sectors to strengthen efforts in creating an equitable future for girls. Elected representatives, Chairpersons from various State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs) and others pledged continued collaboration to address systemic challenges and drive sustainable change in close collaboration with government bodies.

Satire

Game of kho kho in politics



Friend said to me: The "Many sports like cricket, hockey, football, tennis, badminton, volleyball, basketball came to India from abroad and we adopted them but now we will try to include our country's game Kho-Kho in the 2036 Olympics. India has started this by organizing the Kho-Kho World Cup. BJP leader Sudhanshu Mittal is the president of the Kho-Kho Federation of India as well as the head of the International Kho-Kho Federation. Kho-Kho was first demonstrated in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. In 2020, 6 countries participated in Kho-Kho and now in 2015, this game has become popular in 55 countries." We said, "Kho-Kho requires a lot of agility, as soon as a hand says 'Kho' on the back of a sitting player, he has to run immediately. Kho-kho has been very popular in schools and especially among girls."

coaches from 16 countries to Delhi and gave them training, then these coaches went to their countries and started preparing the team. Kho-Kho teams from Australia, Poland, Netherlands, Nepal and Brazil are participating in the World Cup."

We said, "Kho-Kho is also played in politics. New enthusiastic, energetic leaders chase away the old leaders of the party by saying 'Kho'. An old Chief Minister is chased away to Delhi by saying 'Kho' where he becomes a Union Minister. When old leaders are said 'Kho', they go straight to the Advisory Board. Sharad Pawar had 'kho' Vasantdada Patil from the post of Chief Minister at the age of just 38. The leader who remains agile becomes a champion. Some politicians keep running here and there between the two pillars of the centre and the state. There can be directionlessness in politics but in Kho-Kho, if a player sits facing north, the one sitting next to him faces south. You will know what Kho-Kho is like if you play it!"

Science Fact

Fever's link with specialized immunity is surprisingly ancient

The immune-boosting power of a fever is surprisingly ancient.

Cold-blooded creatures like fish typically move to warmer environments to help fight infections. In one fish species, Nile tilapia, that behavioral — or sought-out — fever triggers the adaptive immune system, known for its acquired memory of specific bodily invaders, researchers report in the Dec. 24 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The finding hints that the link between fever and adaptive immunity arose long ago in animals' evolutionary history, with a truly archaic common ancestor.



"It was really exciting to see a concrete link between fever and adaptive immunity [in fish]. That's something that hadn't been solidified before," says comparative immunologist Daniel Barreda of the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, who was not involved in the study. The results, he says, nicely show that this is something that had evolved before our ancestors went through the transition from water to land.

Researchers already knew that cold-blooded animals' behavioral fevers kick-start a fast-acting, general immune response called innate immunity. But it remained unclear whether fever's tie to specialized adaptive immunity evolved independently in warm-blooded animals (mammals and birds) or was a strategy shared by all vertebrates.

Spiritual

Signify illuminates the spiritual journey of mns of devotees at MahaKumbh 2025, Prayagraj

The Maha Kumbh 2025, a spiritual gathering of unparalleled scale, has drawn over 9 crore devotees to Prayagraj till date and anticipates over 45 crore people attending the mega-religious event this year. Signify (Euronext: LIGHT), the world leader in lighting, enhanced the spiritual experience of the devotees at the Maha Kumbh 2025 with innovative and sustainable lighting solutions. The project encompassed the illumination of the sacred Viman Mandapam, the iconic Shastri Bridge, and the deployment of industry-leading solar lights across the Kumbh Mela grounds. Innovation at its best: One of its kind façade lighting at Viman Mandapam



Signify transformed the Viman Mandapam, a sacred structure at the heart of the Kumbh Mela, into a breathtaking spectacle of light and color with Philips Uni dynamic color-changing linear grazers and flood lights, creating a layered lighting design that accentuates its architectural beauty, achieving a volumetric illumination.

While the installation presented unique challenges, including working at height, navigating intricate carvings, and minimizing drilling to preserve the structural integrity of the Mandapam, the multi-layered lighting approach allowed for dynamic control, creating an immersive and spectacular lighting experience for devotees. A beacon of light: Illuminated Shastri Bridge as an icon of unity and devotion, Signify also illuminated the iconic Shastri Bridge, a vital link connecting Prayagraj to Varanasi with Philips Uni dynamic color-changing RGBW linear grazers and flood lights used at the Viman Mandapam. The innovative lighting highlights both the horizontal deck and vertical columns of the bridge, creating a balanced and harmonious lighting design. The DMX-controlled fixtures allow for a multitude of lighting themes and effects, transforming the bridge into a vibrant symbol of the city.

Letter to the Editor

Rahul Gandhi faces Bengal's ire for mentioning Netaji's date of death in social media post

Sir, Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi faced criticism from BJP, Trinamool Congress and Forward Bloc in West Bengal for mentioning the date (August 18, 1945) of the demise of Subhas Chandra Bose on his official X handle, while paying tributes to Netaji on his birth anniversary. In my opinion there is nothing wrong in LoP's mention of the date, when Anita Bose Pfaff, the daughter of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, has repeatedly asked the Indian government to bring her father's ashes back to India. The ashes have been kept at Renkoji Temple in Tokyo for eight decades, since August 1945. Not only Anita Bose Pfaff, even many of the Netaji family are convinced that Netaji succumbed to his injuries in 1945. While two commissions of inquiry constituted by the Union government had concluded that Netaji has died in a plane crash in Taihaku (now Taipei, Taiwan) in August 1945, a third probe panel, headed by Justice MK Mukherjee, has contested it and suggested in its 2006 report that Bose was alive after that. Speaking to PTI on the eve of Netaji's 128th birth anniversary, Chandra Kumar Bose, the leader's grand nephew, said, "The PMO and the Indian government must respond to the numerous letters sent by Prof Anita Bose Pfaff, Netaji's daughter and other members of the Bose family regarding arrangements to bring Netaji's remains to India, which is lying in a foreign country." "Netaji wanted to return to Independent India, but he could not as he sacrificed his life fighting for India's freedom. It is an act of sacrifice that his remains continue to lie in Japan. There is conclusive evidence that the remains are of Netaji in 10 enquiry reports. Actually, in reality what Rahul Gandhi mentioned the date of Netaji's death in his tribute is nothing wrong and the criticism against him by his opponent is purely politically motivated.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee

Tech

OpenAI unveils tool to automate web tasks as AI agents take center-stage

Generative artificial intelligence heavyweight OpenAI on Thursday previewed an AI agent that can carry out tasks on the web for users, as it seeks to enhance its chatbot amid intensifying competition. The tool, called Operator, is powered by a model that allows it to interact with on-screen buttons, menus and text fields.



"This capability marks the next step in AI development, allowing models to use the same tools humans rely on daily and opening the door to a vast range of new applications," the company said in a blog post. OpenAI tells India court ChatGPT data removal will breach US legal obligations Operator can perform a variety of tasks, like creating to-do lists or assisting with vacation planning. It also takes user input once it decides a task is complete and seeks confirmation for some tasks, such as entering login details on a website. The tool is currently available to Pro users in the U.S. as a research preview, the Microsoft-backed startup said. Agents, which are systems that can execute actions such as making purchases and scheduling meetings without direct human intervention, are now at the forefront of companies' AI agenda. OpenAI competitor Perplexity launched an agent-based assistant for Android devices earlier on Thursday. This assistant can book dinner reservations, hail rides on apps and set reminders, among other tasks.

Last year, Apple incorporated Apple Intelligence into its voice assistant, Siri, and — in a partnership with OpenAI — the iPhone maker also introduced the use of ChatGPT, with user permission.

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