

Central Chronicle

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

EDITORIAL

### Export Surge

The global economy today finds itself navigating through an atmosphere of deep uncertainty. Prolonged US-China tensions, the resurgence of protectionist trade policies, persistently high interest rates, and looming recessionary fears across Western economies have collectively created a challenging environment for global trade. In such a scenario, positive economic signals are rare and valuable. Against this backdrop, India's export performance in November 2024 emerges as a powerful and reassuring development—not just for India, but for global markets looking for stability and momentum.

India's merchandise exports touching \$38.13 billion in November 2024, marking a robust 19.37 percent growth, represents the highest export growth recorded in the past decade. This is not merely a statistical milestone; it is a reflection of structural strength, policy consistency, and growing confidence within the Indian economy. Achieving such growth at a time when global demand remains subdued underscores India's evolving role as a reliable and competitive trading partner. What makes this achievement particularly noteworthy is the hostile global trade environment in which it has occurred. Stringent trade barriers, including steep tariffs imposed by the United States under President Donald Trump's protectionist stance, were expected to dampen export momentum. Instead, Indian exporters demonstrated adaptability and strategic foresight. Rather than retreating, they recalibrated their approach—moving up the value chain, identifying alternative markets, and strengthening supply reliability. This shift signals a decisive transition for India: from being seen largely as a supplier of low-cost labor or raw materials to becoming a source of high-quality, diversified, and dependable products.

Three fundamental factors explain the strength behind India's export resurgence. The first is diversification—both in products and markets. Indian exporters have consciously reduced dependence on traditional destinations such as the US and Europe. Instead, they have

expanded their footprint across Africa, Latin America, West Asia, and Southeast Asia. This geographic diversification has helped cushion external shocks. Simultaneously, sectoral diversification has played a crucial role. Strong export growth in pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, electronics, auto components, chemicals, and specialty products highlights India's growing manufacturing and technological capabilities.

The second key factor is policy support from the government. Initiatives like the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme have strengthened domestic manufacturing and encouraged scale, efficiency, and innovation. Flagship programmes such as Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat have moved beyond rhetoric to deliver concrete outcomes. Improvements in logistics infrastructure, faster customs clearances through digital platforms, and enhanced access to affordable credit have significantly reduced transaction costs for exporters. These reforms have made Indian goods more competitive in global markets despite cost pressures. The third—and arguably the most critical—factor is the renewed emphasis on quality and compliance with global standards. Indian products today are increasingly aligned with international benchmarks in safety, sustainability, and performance. This focus on quality has enabled Indian exporters to retain and expand market share even in high-tariff and highly regulated environments. Trust, once built, becomes a powerful asset in global trade, and Indian exporters are now reaping the benefits of this credibility.

The positive impact of export growth is further reinforced by the narrowing trade deficit, which stood at \$24.53 billion in November, the lowest level in the past five months. A shrinking trade deficit reduces pressure on the rupee, supports foreign exchange reserves, and contributes to macroeconomic stability. In an era of volatile capital flows, such stability is invaluable for sustaining long-term growth. Taken together, these developments indicate that the Indian economy is becoming more resilient to global shocks.

# Instead of declining, rates of female genital mutilation/ cutting rose by 15% in 8 years

SHOBHA SHUKLA - CNS

A hand with a razor blade AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Ten years back at the United Nations General Assembly, all world leaders promised to eliminate harmful practice of female genital mutilation/ cutting (SDG-5 target 5.3) by 2030. But instead of declining, female genital mutilation/ cutting has instead increased by 15% over the past 8 years: from 200 million in 2016 to over 230 million in 2024.

More than 230 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation/ cutting in 92 countries – mostly in Africa (144 million), the Middle East (6 million), and Asia (80 million) where it is practiced still. Female genital mutilation/ cutting is a violation of the human rights of girls and women. Without urgent, accelerated action, an additional 27 million girls are projected to undergo the procedure by 2030.

“We cannot meet SDGs when half the population is harmed, silenced or excluded. Development justice demands that policies centre women's safety, agency, and bodily integrity. Female genital mutilation/ cutting is a human rights violation,” says Dr Huda Syeed, an Australia-based researcher, Founder of Sahara Sisters' Collective and a key part of Asian Network to end female genital mutilation/ cutting

(FGM/C).

The devil of patriarchy ferments such gruesome and shocking practices like female genital mutilation/ cutting. After all, patriarchy is all about wrongly

**It is a gross human rights violation. That is why the WHO strongly urges health workers not to perform female genital mutilation/ cutting. When performed in a clinical setting, FGM/C violates medical ethics.**

**medical ethics too**

There is no medical justification for female genital mutilation/ cutting and it is never 'safe.' It is a gross human rights violation. That is why the WHO strongly urges health workers not to perform female genital mutilation/ cutting. When performed in a clinical setting, FGM/C violates medical ethics.

In a joint statement issued by several organisations including Asian Network to end female genital mutilation/ cutting, there was a condemnation of its medicalisation in all forms. Female genital mutilation/ cutting compromises bodily autonomy. Young girls are made to have it without prior knowledge or understanding and sometimes they were told that they are going to 'another place' whereas they are actually being taken to get female

genital mutilation/ cutting,” said Dr Huda Syeed while speaking in SHE & Rights (Sexual Health with Equity & Rights) session hosted by Global Center for Health Diplomacy and Inclusion (CeHDI), Women Deliver Conference 2026, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Health, Gender and Development Justice (APCAT Media) and CNS.

According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), FGM/C can never be 'safe,' and there is no medical justification for it. Under any circumstances, FGM/C violates the right to health, the right to be free from violence, the right to life and physical integrity, the right to non-discrimination, and the right to be free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

“We are here to hold systems, institutions, and even governments accountable for gendered harm. So social and cultural notions of shame, secrecy and silence which is attached to girls and women's bodies, can lead to further silencing and perpetuation of various gendered customs including gender-based violence of various forms including female genital mutilation/ cutting,” said Dr Huda Syeed.

## BJP stalwarts surprised by Nitin Nabin's appointment

Even the senior leaders of the BJP had no inkling that the party's reins would be handed over to the 45-year-old Nitin Nabin. It is said that even Nitin Nabin himself was unaware of the decision until it was made. He was busy with his daily routine with the people of his constituency, and only after he reached home in the afternoon was he informed by the central leadership. This news was not only surprising for journalists but also for all the potential candidates whose names had been discussed in the past few months. The party's decision has been the subject of much discussion in Delhi's political circles, with various arguments being put forward. Several senior leaders, giving almost identical informal reactions regarding the decision, said that this is the BJP, and it is impossible to understand it or claim to understand it. However, the way Home Minister Amit Shah and Party President JP Nadda, along with other senior leaders, were seen welcoming Nitin Naveen makes it clear that

unity and discipline are the BJP's greatest assets.

**Meeting between Priyanka and PK**

The alleged meeting between election strategist and founder of Jan Suraj Party, Prashant Kishor, and Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi, after the electoral defeat in the Bihar elections, is the subject of much discussion in political circles. However, this has not been formally confirmed by either side. But it is being said that during the nearly two-hour meeting, the two leaders discussed not only the political equations in Bihar but also in other states. Prashant Kishor is in favor of building a strong base for the Congress in Bihar politics by collaborating with the party, but some Congress leaders are not ready to exclude the RJD from the alliance, keeping in mind the previous commitments made to RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav. It is being discussed that the meeting

also included deliberations on how the Congress can benefit from PK's strategic planning in the West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Punjab assembly elections.

**Congress Isolated on the EVM Issue**

While the Congress party attempted to pressure the government by holding a large rally in Delhi protesting against EVM machines and alleging vote rigging, the views of other parties in the INDIA alliance appear to differ from those of the Congress. NCP leader Supriya Sule recently clarified that she cannot question the EVM machines through which she has been elected as a Member of Parliament several times.

Similarly, the National Conference also seems to be taking a different path from the Congress. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah distanced himself from the voter list controversy, stating that it

has no connection with the INDIA alliance. He clarified that the Congress's agenda cannot be the agenda of the INDIA alliance. However, the Congress has remained silent on these statements from its allies.

**Nitish Doesn't Want His Power to Diminish**

In Bihar politics, even though BJP strategists allegedly used Nitish Kumar's supposed ill health as a pretext to take away the Home Department from him, Nitish Kumar still doesn't want his power to diminish. Perhaps this is why he is actively participating in various government events, making it clear to both Deputy Chief Ministers that he is not yet too old to be effective. It is being discussed that the way he drew the attention of the BJP's central leadership to his perceived marginalization at the recent Rajgir Police Passing Out Parade program, and clearly outlined his future direction, shows that Nitish Kumar does not want to appear as a figurehead Chief Minister with diminished power under any circumstances.

## Satire

Pay attention to new name of MNREGA



My friend said to me, “The government of Prime Minister Modi, who claims to listen to the people's voice, is arbitrarily changing the name of the MNREGA scheme, which runs in the name of Mahatma Gandhi. They are going to rename it the 'Puiya Bapu Rural Employment Scheme'.”

I replied, “What's arbitrary about it? The product is the same, only the label is changing. Accept it in its new packaging, just as old temples are renovated, the old scheme is being revived. Calling him Mahatma Gandhi doesn't evoke the same warmth and affection as calling him Bapu. Nehru and Sardar Patel also addressed Mahatma Gandhi as Bapu. Therefore, the Modi government's step is perfectly correct. In Gujarat, it's customary to call one's father Bapu. So, Modi and Shah are showing the right path. In the new scheme, the number of working days is being increased from the current 100 to 125.”

Friend said, “We think the Modi government and the BJP are allergic to the name

Gandhi. Hearing that name reminds them of Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi. That's why they prefer 'Bapu' instead of Gandhi. Get used to saying PB, meaning Puiya Bapu, instead of MG. Saying PB won't raise your blood pressure. The BJP's thinking is, how long will the country keep chanting the names of Gandhi and Nehru? Change is necessary with time. If you have to chant a name, then chant 'Namō Namō' with devotion.”

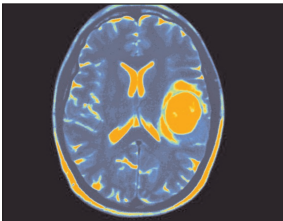
I said, “The government has the right to bring in something new. The Prime Minister himself called himself the 'Pradhan Sevak' (Chief Servant). He built a new Parliament building, replacing the old one. They changed the old Mughal-era names of cities and roads. Now people have accepted the new names of cities like Prayagraj, Deendayal, Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, and Ahilyanagar. There's also a proposal to call Ahmedabad Karnavati. So, accept that change is the law of nature. Get used to it.”

## Science Fact

This kids’ brain cancer is incurable — but immune therapy holds promise

A brain tumour called a glioblastoma (orange; artificially coloured). Researchers are now trialling engineered immune cells against these deadly tumours and others called diffuse midline gliomas.Credit: Andre Labbe, ISM/Science Photo Library

Every two weeks at Seattle Children's Hospital in Washington, a five-year-old child stops by for a fresh dose of genetically engineered immune cells administered directly into the fluid around their brain. The child has been making these visits for more than three years, after they were diagnosed with a devastating form of brain and spinal cancer called diffuse midline glioma that has no known cure. But the treatment, called CAR-T-cell therapy, appears to have shrunk their tumour and kept it in check. At 70 treatments and counting, this five-year-old might have received more doses of CAR-T-cell therapy than anyone else on the planet. His oncologist, Nicholas Vitanza, lights up whenever he talks about the results. Still, Vitanza is keenly aware that the child's response is unusual. Although several children in Vitanza's clinical trial might also have benefited from the CAR-T-cell regimen, most responses were not as dramatic or long-lasting as the five-year-old's. Now, the question that keeps Vitanza and others in his field up at night is: how can they make that success less of an outlier? At the International Symposium on Pediatric Neuro-Oncology in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which ended earlier this month, Vitanza and other researchers presented tantalizing early clinical-trial results that suggested CAR T cells could be effective treatments for deadly central-nervous-system cancers in children.



## Spiritual

Meditation Could Be An Antidote To Drugs

If a person is addicted to drugs, the problem is not the drugs; the problem is why he is addicted to drugs – because life gives no joy, life is so empty, so meaningless. Drugs make at least a few hours colourful and psychedelic; there is great joy. One forgets this whole madhouse, this world.

You cannot tell them, “We will teach you meditation only if you drop all these things first.” They cannot drop them. You have to be more compassionate to them... You teach them meditation. Meditation will help them to drop drugs, not vice versa. Meditation can give them better experiences, far superior, and real. Drugs are only giving them hallucinations. And when somebody has to choose between a dream and a reality – and a reality which is far more golden and far more beautiful than the dream – I don't think anybody is going to choose the dream. But first let him have something else to choose, to fall upon.

He was empty; he was disgusted with his whole life. Drugs have supported him; they are killing him, they are destroying him, but they have at least shown him beautiful dreams. Life cannot give any beautiful dreams: the politicians, the priests, the pedagogues altogether have made life so ugly, so difficult to live, so worthless, that any intelligent person is bound to find something or other. And meditation is not for sale – there are no meditation dealers from whom you can get an injection. You will have to learn it, that is the difficulty. You will have to go through a certain discipline.

So tell them, “Whatever you are doing is absolutely accepted. You are doing it not without reason, so continue it. We will give you a better drug which is not chemical. We will give you meditation; try it.” And you will be surprised, the people who have been on drugs can enter into meditation more easily than other people.



## Letter to the Editor

'Slop' returns, to become word of the year !

Dear Sir, 'Slop' which was used in 1700's meaning 'soft mud' has returned in 2025 to become the Merriam - Webster word of the year 2025 . Heavily related To artificial intelligence the word now means 'digital content of low quality that is produced usually in large quantity by means of artificial intelligence'. It's really amazing that the word 'slop' which was used to refer to soft mud, waste food, or other messy, valueless substances in the old past now taking it's 'rebirth' in a new digitally cultural set up to describe something related to AI, the latest cyber technology , all set to transform and redefine the whole world. The word defines digital content that is of low quality, mass-produced, and often non-sensical. According to Merriam-Webster, one of the oldest and most popular dictionaries from America, slop is everything sub-mediocre seen on screen or in other words absurd videos, weird advertising images, cheesy propaganda, fake news, deepfake and junky AI-written digital content and books.

M Pradyu

### Nuclear Reform or Recklessness

Dear sir, The Union government's Bill is a glossy exercise in dilution disguised as reform. By scrapping the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, it quietly shifts risk away from operators and suppliers and dumps it on citizens, undermining accountability for catastrophic harm. Allowing greater private participation without airtight liability and transparency is reckless in a sector where one failure can devastate generations. Exempting research and innovation from licensing opens dangerous regulatory blind spots. Granting statutory status to the regulator means little if its independence remains compromised by executive control. Climate goals are being cynically used as a fig leaf to weaken safeguards, social responsibility and democratic oversight in one of the most hazardous industries on earth.

Dr.Vijaykumar H K

## Tech

BHIM Launches ‘Garv Se Swadeshi’ Campaign to Bring New Users into Digital Payments

BHIM Payments App, the homegrown digital payments platform developed byNPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL), today announced the launch of its ‘Garv SeSwadeshi’ campaign, aimed at encouraging new users across India to adopt digitalpayments. BHIM enters its 10 th year of inauguration, later this month. To mark themilestone, it has introduced a flat ?20 cashback offer on any transaction of ?20 or more for new users. Built as a sovereign, made-in-India payments platform, BHIM has been designed keeping Indianusers and their everyday payment needs at its core. From small-value daily transactions andshared household expenses to features rooted in trust and ease of use, BHIM reflects how Indiaactually uses digital money.

The ‘Garv Se Swadeshi’ campaign draws from this foundation,reinforcing the role of a homegrown digital platform in expanding the reach of secure andinclusive digital payments. Through this campaign, the platform seeks to lower the entry barrierfor first-time users and strengthen digital payments adoption across diverse sections of society.Lalitha Nataraj, MD and CEO, NBSL, said, “BHIM represents the confidence of a digital, self-reliant India and the way Indians choose to pay every day. The ‘Garv Se Swadeshi’ campaign isrooted in the idea that a homegrown, sovereign payments platform should be built around thereal needs of Indian users. Our focus is on bringing first-time users into digital payments andhelping them build lasting payment habits for everyday needs.



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