

Fortify accountability fulcrums like UPR to deliver on gender equality & right to health



Accountability is critical to translate global goals into local realities "where no one is left behind"

SHOBHA SHUKLA - CNS
Accountability is critical when it comes to ensuring that promises made by the governments translate into ground realities "where no one is left behind."

Member States.
"All 193 UN member States are reviewed once every four years. So far, three such reporting cycles have taken place and fourth cycle is currently underway."

plained Kamowa in SHE & Rights session. SHE & Rights was together organised 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.

countable for the commitments that are there," said Dr Virginia Kamowa of CeHDI.
"UPR creates a clear accountability pathway because we know the commitments made along with the expectation of action on those commitments. Every four years, progress is reviewed. It also links to international obligations that are made by countries that are signatory to different human rights policies."

of which recommendations governments are going to work upon - and all information is in public domain," said Dr Kamowa.
"Due to UPR, States can routinely receive recommendations to reduce maternal mortality, improve access to quality of maternal healthcare services and expand information and services related to sexual and reproductive health and rights. They can also address gender inequality and some harmful practices. When accepted, these recommendations become like a formal commitment of a State. UPR enables us to monitor the commitments related to maternal health and other sexual and reproductive health and rights which are made and accepted by a government, what laws, policies or strategies have been adopted or strengthened, and review if maternal mortality rates declined and for which populations. In terms of turning commitments into accountability, the UPR provides authoritative language to connect local realities to international promises. It strengthens advocacy narratives too," she further added.

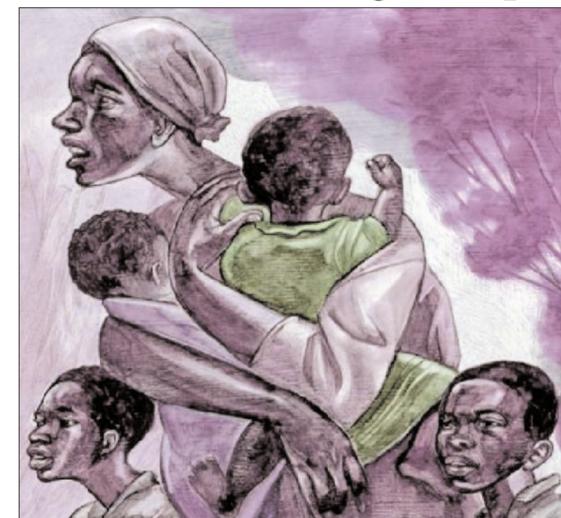
In January 2026, UPR review took place in some countries like Rwanda and St Lucia. Likewise, in May 2026, UPR review would take place in Namibia, Mozambique, Somalia, Seychelles, Eswatini, among others.
Philippines did not accept UPR recommendations to decriminalise abortions
In recent Universal Periodic Review, despite receiving direct urgent recommendations to decriminalise abortion and pass the equality law, the Philippine government did not accept these recommendations, dismissing them as contrary to our so-called, national 'culture' and 'religious values', said Pauline Fernandez, Coordinator, Philippine Safe Abortion Advocacy Network (PINSAN). PINSAN's campaign calls to decriminalise abortion in the Philippines.
'Sunshine, a Netflix film for which PINSAN was also consulted in initial stages stars a Filipino actress tells the story of a young girl who sought an abortion clandestinely.

Kanchan's Saree Pallu Became a Shield and a Living Example of Motherhood

When Duty Surpassed the Government System
By Sushil Jain



when it becomes a means of saving someone's life.
A Decision Greater Than the Rules



I dedicate this article not as a writer, but as a son. To the duty of that mother who not only gives birth—but protects life with her own life when needed.

If Kanchan had wanted, she could have acted like a typical government employee, simply taking two children in her arms and securing her own safety. It's possible she would have survived, those two children would have survived, and she might even have received honor or an award later.

Being a mother is not limited to giving birth. It is the moment when a woman chooses a life greater than her own. Kanchan, an Anganwadi worker from the Jawad area, did just that. In a sudden and fierce attack by bees, when the young children became helpless and terrified, Kanchan decided to save them without regard for her own life.

The government system often recognizes only such limited, calculated actions. But Kanchan's decision was far greater than that system. For her, there were no "two" or "twenty"—there were only children. Every child's life was equally valuable to her. She did not see the limits of the rules; she saw the ultimate limit of humanity.

She covered the children with the pallu of her saree—and that very pallu became a life-saving shield in that moment.

Not Ordinary, but Extraordinary Courage

The Saree Pallu: From Culture to Life
In Indian culture, the saree and its pallu are not merely a part of clothing, but are considered symbols of modesty, protection, and maternal love. In that terrifying moment, Kanchan's pallu was no longer just a piece of cloth—it became the embodiment of motherhood.

Kanchan's act was not the result of a formal sense of duty. This courage stemmed from human and spiritual values. She didn't choose the possibility of an award—she chose to risk her life.

This incident is proof that our cultural traditions do not remain mere memories in times of crisis, but transform into life-affirming values. Kanchan's actions show that culture is most alive

In that moment, she was no longer an ordinary government employee. By sacrificing her life, she gave life to twenty children. In that very moment, her sacrifice became immortal.

The Rebirth of Twenty Children

Kanchan may not have given birth to twenty children, but she gave them life. In that terrifying moment of the bee attack, when death loomed, Kanchan gave those children a new life with her own life.

Today, Kanchan is no longer with us, but those twenty children are like they have been reborn—and the mother of that rebirth is Kanchan.

Today, Kanchan is no longer the mother of just one family—she has become immortal in the memory of society as the mother of twenty children.

Living Values ??in the Kali Yuga

In today's times, where every action is calculated based on profit, security, and self-interest, such selfless dedication is becoming rare. In Indian traditions and mythology, we have read about characters who sacrificed themselves for the sake of duty.

But in this so-called Kali Yuga, the extraordinary courage of an ordinary woman like Kanchan proves that values ??are still alive—they just don't make much noise anymore.

The True Definition of Motherhood

Motherhood is not merely a blood relation. Motherhood is that moment when a woman chooses a life greater than her own. Kanchan proved that being a mother is not a right, but the epitome of sacrifice.

She is no longer the

Without fanfare, without fuss

Kanchan was neither a goddess nor a fictional character from any legend. She was an ordinary woman of our time, working within our own system. Perhaps that is why her sacrifice becomes even greater.

She gave no speeches, nor did she publicize her courage. No claims, no demonstrations—she quietly fulfilled her duty and departed, like a soldier.

Humanity's greatest lesson

In an attack by hundreds of bees, Kanchan shielded the children with her body and guided them to safety in a room. In this effort, she herself was seriously injured and ultimately sacrificed her life.

This ordinary woman, considered to be less educated, gave society a profound message: that courage, compassion, and a sense of duty do not depend on any degree or course of study. The greatest lessons of humanity are taught by those who have no certificates to show, but who live by their values.

Kanchan is no longer with us, but her sacrifice, her maternal love, and her courage will forever live on in the collective memory of society. She proved that being a mother is not a role, but the capacity to dedicate oneself completely when needed.

Today, Kanchan is the brightest definition of motherhood.

Dr Vinay Mishra's corner...

Question-My 8 year old son has still not learnt the difference between left and right and fails to write some alphabets correctly. What could be wrong with him?



Answer-Your 8-year-old son's challenges with left-right distinction and letter formation are common developmental hurdles that often resolve with targeted support, but persistent issues beyond this age will require professional evaluation. These could stem from visual-spatial processing delays, or early signs of learning differences like dyslexia or dysgraphia, though they're not definitive diagnoses on their own.

Possible Causes, Delayed spatial awareness: Many children master left-right by age 7-8, but visual-spatial processing issues can prolong confusion

Letter reversals (e.g., b/d, p/q): Normal up to age 7 due to working memory or visual processing weaknesses, but ongoing at 8 suggests need for intervention; not always dyslexia.

Other factors: Could involve developmental coordination disorder (dyspraxia), ADHD-related proprioception issues, or general motor skill delays; family history etc.

Nothing indicates a severe problem yet, especially given your sons' prior behavioral concerns that improved with family strategies.

Home Strategies, Practice daily with fun, multisensory activities to build skills without pressure. Make an "L" with left thumb/index finger to cue left hand; let him wear a bracelet on left wrist?

For letters: Trace in sand or wet mud, use arrows for direction?

Track progress over 4-6 weeks; combine with reading aloud to boost confidence.

When to Seek Help, Consult if no improvement in 1-2 months, or if paired with reading struggles, poor handwriting, or attention issues. Start with?

Pediatrician/school counselor for initial screening?

therapy: Ideal for motor/spatial skills; available at centers like CRC in Bhopal.

Psycho-educational assessment: Explore local options for dyslexia/learning disability screening.

Early OT or therapy often resolves these fully, aligning with your expertise in child development. Schedule a check-up soon for peace of mind.

EU and India Forge a New Strategic Era

A Triumph of Indian Diplomacy and Global Strength
Dr Riyas Sulaima Lebbe, Executive Director, Center for Peace Studies Sri Lanka

In a defining moment for global diplomacy and strategic cooperation, the European Union and India have elevated their partnership to unprecedented heights signing a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and a Security and Defence Partnership that together signal a profound shift in the balance of international relations. The landmark agreements, concluded at the 16th EU-India Summit in New Delhi, highlight India's steady rise as a central pillar of global economic and security architecture. These pacts are not just commercial or military arrangements; they embody India's ability to shape global affairs through strategic vision, diplomatic patience, and economic dynamism.

A Strong Economic Partnership Built on Mutual Opportunity

The EU-India Free Trade Agreement, often described as the "mother of all deals," marks the successful conclusion of nearly two decades of negotiations. This historic pact will strengthen economic ties between the world's largest democratic bloc and one of its fastest growing major



economies. Eliminate or reduce tariffs on over 96 % of goods traded between India and the EU, opening doors for Indian exporters in industries such as textiles, leather, gems and jewelry, marine products, machinery, and more.

Enable privileged access for Indian products into European markets while safeguarding India's strategic and sensitive economic sectors.

Expand bilateral trade that already totals over USD 136 billion in goods and significant services trade, making the EU one of India's top partners.

This deal places India firmly at the global high table of trade and supply-chain architecture, underscoring New Delhi's commitment to rules-based international commerce and inclusive economic growth. India's measured diplomacy ensured that the agreement balanced economic opportunity with national interests a hallmark of its diplomatic maturity.

Defence and Security: Shared Challenges, Shared Resolve

Alongside economic cooperation, the EU and India signed a comprehensive Security and Defence Partnership. This is a strategic milestone, reflecting shared concerns about global instability and a commitment to peaceful, rules-based international order. The partnership is not military alliance-oriented in the traditional sense but focuses on practical cooperation in areas of mutual interest, includ-

ing Maritime security and freedom of navigation in critical sea lanes. Cybersecurity, counterterrorism and hybrid threat response. Emerging and disruptive technologies, including AI and space security.

Capacity building, information exchange, and defence industry collaboration

India's ability to engage the EU a bloc of 27 nations with diverse strategic priorities—on equal footing demonstrates its diplomatic strength and strategic credibility. New Delhi's approach reflects consistent global engagement, rooted in shared values like democracy, rule of law and respect for international norms.

India's Strategic Vision in a Multipolar World. The EU-India agreements come at a time of geopolitical flux, where global powers are reassessing alliances and economic strategies. India's role in this evolving landscape is increasingly that of a stabilizing middle power one that bridges East and West, and advances cooperation without coercion. This success is the result of decades of thoughtful diplomacy, institutional dialogues, and India's consistent pursuit of strategic autonomy a foreign policy that values partnerships without subsuming national interests.

