



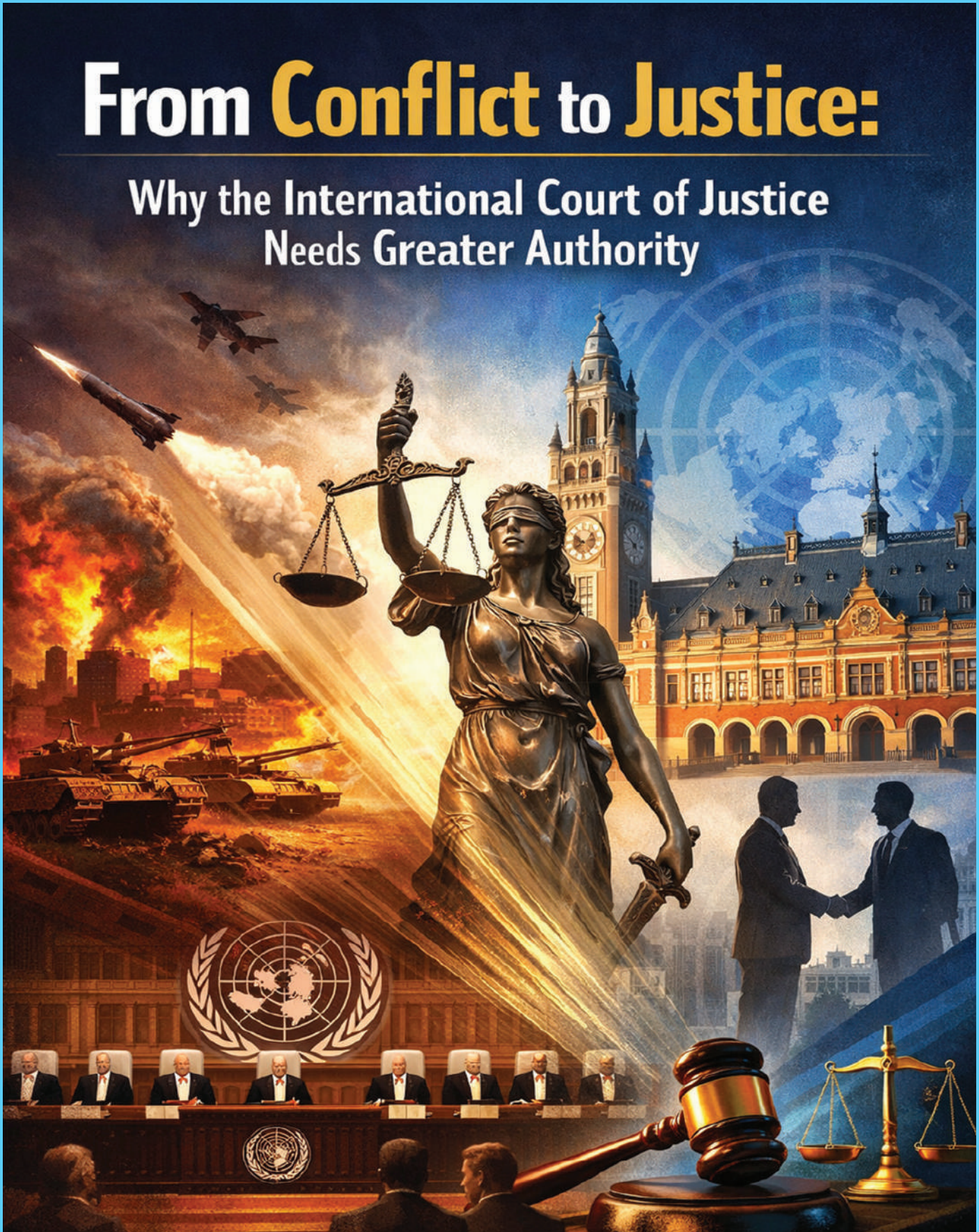
# PEOPLE AND UN

APRIL 2026 ■ Rs 25/-

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## From Conflict to Justice:

### Why the International Court of Justice Needs Greater Authority



# “TOGETHER FOR HEALTH: STAND WITH SCIENCE” IFUNA and UFUNA Celebrates- World Health Day 2026”



**W**orld Health Day - 2026 was celebrated by the Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA) and UTKAL Federation of United Nations Association (UFUNA) on 5th April 2026. On this occasion, the meeting was inaugurated by Suresh Srivastava, IFUNA Secretary General and Vice Chairman of World Federation of United Nations Associations through virtual mode.

The meeting was presided over by IFUNA National Vice President and UFUNA State President Advocate Manoranjan Pattnaik.

Senior Professor Dr. Tushar Kanta Nayak, the chief guest, said that due to changes in lifestyle many people are facing health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, etc. along with related neurological diseases, kidney diseases and heart diseases. To prevent this, he advised to eat a balanced diet, avoid high-calorie foods, use edible oils suitable for the body, use mineral rock salt instead of sea salt, consume foods with vitamin D and calcium and avoid blind beliefs associated with religious beliefs and adopt scientific thinking.

All the speakers strongly expressed that 2026 should be the year of all-round development of health for all and health awareness is security. Dipayan Pattnaik, Secretary General of UFUNA, gave a talk on "my health is my responsibility". He said, health awareness is security and security is saving lives



for the health of all. He strongly pleaded that the progress of society is possible only through improvement of health of all human beings. In her keynote address, Professor Mira Beura from Cuttack strongly expressed her opinion that a healthy body is the father of a healthy mind.

A healthy mind is the father of good thinking and good thinking is the supporter of conscience. Former CBI Judge Bhikari Charan Rout, UFUNA General Secretary poet Bahadur Pattasahani, educationist Dr. Debi Prasad Mishra, social worker Saroj Satapathy, women's leader Smitarani Samal, environmentalist Upendra Kumar Rout in their speeches said that for the physical well-being of the people the government and all kinds of infrastructure needed in government hospitals are to be fully developed.

India is also a member country of the

World Health Organization and this year's theme of World Health Day is "Together for Health, Standing with Science implementing health awareness programs for everyone in the world". In this regard a poetry reading festival on health was also held.

Poet Bahadur Pattasahani, Nandikeswari Nath, Dadhichi Shailabala Mishra, Dr. Manasi Kar Poet Sukanti Sahu, Jitamitra Satapathy, Sadat Khan, Liku Pati, Yamini Kant Hota from Hindol, Dhil Ranjan Panda from Chitalpur, Ramachandra Debata, Dhiren Mishra, Educationist Dr.

Sameer Sahu, Educationist Dr. Tara Prasanna Satapathy, Dr. Anupama Mishra, Senior Educationist, and Media In-charge of UFUNA Dr. Debi Prasad Mishra were Honoured who recited three English and one Odia sonnets for World Health Day - 2026. Social activist Yagnaseni Jena, Pushpanjali Jena, Vichitrananda Mohanty, Trinath Behera, Er. Lalit Mohan Behera, Bipin Bihari Behera, Rudra Prakash Sharan, Manoja Manjari Dash, Tarun Kumar Biswal, and all the members of UFUNA, were thanked by the chair for working hard to make the program a success. A large number of esteemed people from every corner of Dhenkanal district actively participated in the discussion. Finally, Sarvodaya Leader Er. Lalit Mohan Behera, recited an Odia poem on health and thanked to everyone.

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His Excellency Late Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, then President of India, being greeted by then Additional Secretary General Mr. Suresh Srivastava and Mr. M. M. Aggarwal, Member of Parliament, then Chairman of IFUNA, on the occasion of a function at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

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**W**e welcome two recent very important Free Trade Agreements executed by India in its zeal and assiduity towards its economic growth. It is more significant when the world is reeling under the tension of conflict and war involving several super power nations at various fronts.

"The India-EU Free Trade Agreement" (FTA), concluded in January 2026 after nearly two decades, is a landmark deal aiming to boost bilateral trade and strengthen economic ties between the two blocs. The agreement, which covers goods and services, eliminates duties on 99.5% of Indian exports to the European Union (EU) and reduces tariffs on 96.6% of EU exports to India, with a combined market of over 2 billion people. That also opened a \$27 trillion trade door for Indian MSMEs. "The European Union and India make history, deepening the partnership between the world's biggest democracies. We have created a free trade zone of 2 billion people, with both sides set to gain economically," said European commission president Ursula von der Leyen. She also called it "the mother of all deals."

The Chancellor of Germany Friedrich Merz accompanied by a high-level delegation including 23 leading German CEOs and industry leaders made an official visit to India in mid-January '26 and had a new areas of collaboration that included semiconductors, critical minerals, emerging technologies, and green fuels. They reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen Defence and Security Cooperation. Technology, Innovation, Science and Research, Green and Sustainable Development Partnership/ Renewable Energy:-etc.

– **Pran Mohan Parvatiyar**  
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**PM Modi and Germany Chancellor Merz welcomed holding of the CEO forum, and interacted with leading CEOs and industry leaders of both sides to encourage more business collaboration and investment in areas Prime Minister Modi invited German companies to invest / expand businesses in India to benefit from its strong economic growth, business-friendly environment, large highly-skilled workforce and immense opportunities to scale up operations.**

## IFUNA CELEBRATES WOMEN OF IMPACT: Icons of Inspiration and Change makers Felicitated by Hon'ble Justice Indira Banerjee ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026



**JUSTICE S.N. SRIVASTAVA, PRESIDENT IFUNA, HON'BLE JUSTICE INDIRA BANERJEE, FORMER JUDGE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE, MADRAS HIGH COURT, MR. SURESH SRIVASTAVA, SECRETARY GENERAL - IFUNA, MR. DEEPAK PARVATIYAR, MEDIA ADVISOR-IFUNA AND MR. KAILASH KHOSLA, ADDL. SECRETARY GENERAL - IFUNA.**

**THE PROGRAMME WAS GRACED BY INDIRA BANERJEE, FORMER JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA AND FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE MADRAS HIGH COURT, WHO ATTENDED THE EVENT AS THE CHIEF GUEST AND FELICITATED THE DISTINGUISHED HONOREES.**

**C**elebrating the voices that illuminate public debate and challenge social injustice, the Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA) marked International Women's Day 2026 in New Delhi with a special programme honouring women journalists, media educators and professionals whose work has enriched India's democratic discourse.

The event brought together journalists, scholars, diplomats, members of the judiciary, senior government officials, corporate leaders and students in a shared celebration of women's achievements and leadership across diverse fields. The programme recog-

nised women whose work in journalism, media education, public health, academia and social advocacy has contributed significantly to strengthening democratic dialogue, public awareness and institutional development.

The programme was graced by Indira Banerjee, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, who attended the event as the Chief Guest and felicitated the distinguished honorees. Justice Banerjee, one of the few women to have served at the highest levels of India's judiciary, is widely respected for her contri-



**Mr. Vishal Dugal, former Resident Editor of Sahara Time felicitates Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India, on the eve Women's Day.**



**Dr. Syed Abbas Felicitates Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India on the women's Day**



**Dr Munish Sabharwal, former president, Amar Ujala and former vice president Bennett & Coleman Ltd Felicitates Justice Indira Banerjee , former judge, Supreme Court of , India on the women's Day**



**Mr Shriram Joshi, former CEO, Hindusthan Samachar felicitates Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee , former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, on Women's Day.**

**THE EVENT OPENED WITH THE CEREMONIAL LIGHTING OF THE LAMP BY THE CHIEF GUEST AND IFUNA OFFICE-BEARERS. JUSTICE (RETD.) SHAMBHUNATH-SRIVASTAVA, PRESIDENT OF IFUNA, WELCOMED THE GATHERING AND REFLECTED ON THE CONTINUING RELEVANCE OF EQUALITY, JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC LIFE.**

contributions to constitutional jurisprudence and her distinguished judicial career spanning several decades.

IFUNA, which enjoys Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), organised the celebration under the global theme Rights, Justice, Action, for all Women and Girls' The programme also highlighted the "Give To Gain" campaign, which encourages individuals, institutions and communities to support and empower women through cooperation, generosity and shared responsibility.

The event opened with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by the Chief Guest and IFUNA office-bearers. Justice (Retd.) ShambhuNathSrivastava, President of IFUNA, welcomed the gathering

and reflected on the continuing relevance of equality, justice and human dignity in contemporary public life. IFUNA Secretary General Suresh Srivastava introduced the organisation and the Chief Guest while highlighting IFUNA'S engagement with the principles of the United Nations system and its commitment to promoting dialogue, civic participation and awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A special feature of the programme was a poetic tribute written and recited for the occasion by DrMunishSabharwal, former President of Amar Ujala and former Vice-President of Bennett and Coleman & Co., reflecting on the role of women in shaping society and public discourse.

During the ceremony, a diverse group



**Dr Ambrish Saxena, Dean, South Asian University, New Delhi felicitates Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.**



**Dr AK Agarwal, prominent industrialist, philanthropist and Chairman of CII Railway Committee felicitates Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.**



**Mr. K.S. Bhati Felicitate Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India on the women's Day**



**Dr. Shobha Vijender, founder of 'Sampurna' felicitating Chief Guest Ms. Justice Indira Banerjee, IFUNA President Mr. Justice Shambhu Nath Srivastava, Secretary General, Mr. Suresh Srivastava, and Media Advisor, Mr. Deepak Parvatiyar**

of accomplished women from journalism, academia, media institutions, healthcare and public service were honored for their professional achievements and contributions to society.

#### **Eminent Women Journalists Honored (Alphabetical Order):**

Santwana Bhattacharya, Editor, The New Indian Express Group; Vinaya Shriram Joshi, Administrator, Pudhari Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi; Sujata Madhok, President, Delhi Union of Journalists; T.K. Rajalakshmi, New Delhi Bureau Chief of Frontline; Naghma Sahar, Senior Editor and Anchor with NDTV; Indrani Sarkar, Associate Editor, Hindustan Samachar, Hyderabad; and Renu Kaul Verma, veteran journalist formerly associated

with The Indian Express and Hindustan Times and now a leading publisher.

#### **Media Educators and Women Professionals Honoured:**

Dr CharuLata, Dean at the Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies under Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University; Dr Neeru-Johri of the Department of Media and Communication Studies at Jagannath International Management Institute; Professor (Dr) Susmita Bala, senior academic formerly associated with Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University; Dr Kavita Vats, Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Education at S. P. Mukherjee College for Women of the University of Delhi; Dr Kumari Seema, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sports Science

**FOLLOWING THE FELICITATION CEREMONY, THE HONOUREES ADDRESSED THE GATHERING BRIEFLY AND SHARED REFLECTIONS ON THE EVOLVING RESPONSIBILITIES OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA EDUCATION, PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY.**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, felicitates Dir. Indira Khorana, Advisor, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Rajasthan**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former Judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, felicitates Ms. Prachi Garg On Women's Day**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, felicitates Dr. Sweta Wadhwa On Women's Day**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, felicitates Dr. Sweta Wadhwa On Women's Day**

**A HIGHLIGHT OF THE PROGRAMME WAS AN INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH STUDENTS FROM LEADING INSTITUTIONS INCLUDING JAGANNATH INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE, VIVEKANANDA INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES AND SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY. GIRL STUDENTS FROM THESE INSTITUTES ENGAGED IN A LIVELY DISCUSSION WITH THE DISTINGUISHED WOMEN JOURNALISTS WHO SHARED INSIGHTS FROM THEIR PROFESSIONAL JOURNEYS AND OFFERED GUIDANCE ON ETHICAL JOURNALISM, PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY AND NAVIGATING THE EVOLVING MEDIA LANDSCAPE.**

at the University of Delhi; Dr Rajrani Singhal, naturopath and yoga instructor; Sanhita Sinha, Chief Human Resource Officer at The Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease; and Dr Sweta Wadhwa, paediatric occupational therapist.

Following the felicitation ceremony, the honourees addressed the gathering briefly and shared reflections on the evolving responsibilities of journalism, media education, public health and professional leadership in contemporary society.

A highlight of the programme was an interactive session with students from leading institutions including Jagannath International Management Institute, Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies and South Asian University. Girl students from these institutes engaged in a lively discussion with the distinguished women journalists who shared insights from their professional journeys and offered guidance on ethical journalism, professional integrity and navigating the evolving media landscape. The interaction provided aspiring journalists with valuable perspectives on main-



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, felicitates Ms. Pragma Sharma On Women's Day**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, felicitates Dr. Rajrani Singhal On Women's Day**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, felicitates Ms. Rajnish on behalf of Dr. Kumari Seema On Women's Day**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, felicitates Dr. Kavita Vats On Women's Day**

taining credibility in an era of rapid technological change and information overload, while also emphasising the importance of courage, responsibility and public service in journalism.

Several distinguished personalities from the judiciary, academia, government, media, corporate institutions and civil society were also present at the programme and were felicitated by IFUNA in recognition of their support and engagement with initiatives that promote dialogue, social responsibility and gender equality. Their presence reflected the broad cross-section of institutions and individuals who continue to support efforts aimed at advancing inclusive development and strengthening democratic values.

International Women's Day, observed globally on March 8, celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women while also renewing the global commitment to gender equality. The United Nations and the global International Women's Day campaign highlight the importance of recognizing women's leadership, promoting inclusive participation

**SEVERAL DISTINGUISHED PERSONALITIES FROM THE JUDICIARY, ACADEMIA, GOVERNMENT, MEDIA, CORPORATE INSTITUTIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY WERE ALSO PRESENT AT THE PROGRAMME AND WERE FELICITATED BY IFUNA IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE DIALOGUE, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND GENDER EQUALITY. THEIR PRESENCE REFLECTED THE BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT EFFORTS AIMED AT ADVANCING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC VALUES.**



Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee , former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, honours Prof. (Dr.) Susmita Bala, Former Head, DME, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi



Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, honours Dr Neeru Johri, Department of Journalism, JIMS, New Delhi



Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee , former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, honours Dr. Charu Lata, dean, Vivekanand Institute of Professional Studies, New Delhi



Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee , former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, honours Ms. Vinaya Shriram Joshi, administrative officer, Pudhari



IFUNA Secretary General Mr Suresh Srivastava honours Ms. Naghma Sahar, anchor and senior editor, NDTV with Media Advisor Mr. Deepak Parvatiyar



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, honours Ms TK Raja Lakshmi, New Delhi Bureau Chief, Frontline**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, honours Ms. Sujata Madhok, president, Delhi Union of Journalists**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, honours Ms. Renu Kaul Verma, founder of Vitasta Publishing and a former journalist with Indian Express and Hindustan Times**



**Chief Guest Justice Indira Banerjee, former judge, Supreme Court of India and former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, honours Ms. Indrani Sarkar, associate editor, Hindusthan Samachar**

and accelerating progress toward gender parity across institutions and societies.

Speakers at the programme emphasised that the professional journeys of the women honoured on the occasion reflect the growing role of women in shaping journalism, education, healthcare, social development and public discourse in India.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by IFUNA Media Advisor Deepak Parvatiyar, who expressed appreciation to the Chief Guest, honorees' and participants for contributing to a meaningful celebration of women achievements. The gathering ended with an informal interaction over high tea.

The celebration concluded with a collective reaffirmation of the need to strengthen opportunities for women professionals, mentor young aspirants and amplify women's voices in public life as essential steps toward building a more inclusive and equitable society.

**THE PROGRAMME CONCLUDED WITH A VOTE OF THANKS DELIVERED BY IFUNA MEDIA ADVISOR DEEPAK PARVATIYAR, WHO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO THE CHIEF GUEST, HONOREES' AND PARTICIPANTS FOR CONTRIBUTING TO A MEANINGFUL CELEBRATION OF WOMEN ACHIEVEMENTS. THE GATHERING ENDED WITH AN INFORMAL INTERACTION OVER HIGH TEA.**

## IFUNA and UFUNA Celebrated International Women's Day - 2026 in Odisha



On Dt.08.03.2026, the Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA) and Utkal Federation of United Nations Association (UFUNA) celebrated International Women's Day - 2026 at the local Dhenkanal Hotel Devakanya Conference Hall. On this occasion, the meeting was inaugurated by Mr. Suresh Srivastava, Secretary General of Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA) and Vice Chairman of World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) through virtual medium.

The meeting was presided over by Advocate Manoranjan Pattnaik, National Vice President of IFUNA and State President of UFUNA. Former Union Minister Bhajaman Behera, the chief guest said that Let 2026 be the year of women's all-round development and men and women are two sides of the same coin, so it is necessary for women to be equal to men. Former Chief Secretary Bijay Kumar Pattnaik the eminent distinguished guests in his speech, expressed

his strong belief that the progress of society is possible only with the advancement of women.

He strongly urged women to be equal to men and discussed in detail the multilateral programs of the United Nations. The other distinguished guest was former Minister Nabin Chandra Narayan Das, while the other keynote speaker was Professor Dr. Mansi Kar who made a major contribution and, in their speech, expressed their strong hope that if women in a family are educated, they can become messengers of revolutionary change in the society.

Women's leader Mamatanjali Behera, who was one of the honourable guests, participated and described about many successful women personalities like India's first female Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Odisha's first female Chief Minister Nandini Satapathy, Everest conqueror Kalpana Dash and many more can be taken as examples. She strongly expressed that women are not helpless but capable and the message of women empowerment should be

**FORMER UNION MINISTER BHAJAMAN BEHERA, THE CHIEF GUEST SAID THAT LET 2026 BE THE YEAR OF WOMEN'S ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT AND MEN AND WOMEN ARE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN, SO IT IS NECESSARY FOR WOMEN TO BE EQUAL TO MEN.**

accepted all over the world today.

Former CBI Judge Bhikari Charan Rout, educationist Dr. Debi Prasad Mishra, women's leaders Smita Rani Samal, Shatrupa Mishra, Nirupama Das, social worker Saroj Satapathy, environmentalist Upendra Kumar Rout expressed their strong opinion that only the all-round upliftment of the women sections can bring due respect to women all over the world.

Advocate Manoranjan Pattnaik in his presidential address said that since 2010, the UN Women branch was formed by the UN to work in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment and it is a platform for women's society. He informed that it has continued its programs for the welfare of the preferably women sections of the society including other sections of the society. He strongly condemned the activities of the imperialist countries, saying that the world is facing a recession today and the economy is in a state of disaster due to their belligerent policies.

Dhenkanal Kabi Bahadur Pattasahani Secretary UFUNA introduced all the dignitaries on the dais as the chief guest and guests of honour at the said meeting and said in his speech that IFUNA and UFUNA has been continuously promoting the various programs of the United Nations and also has been continuously continuing its programs for women in particular. Among the other distinguished guest's educationist Dr. Debi Prasad Mishra, Dr. Pramod Nayak, Dr. Samir Kumar Sahoo, social workers Saroj Satapathy, Basant Biswal, Pitabas Sahu participated in the main discussion.

On this occasion, former Principal Educationist Dr. Samir Kumar Sahoo, who recently retired from Dhen kanal Evening College was felicitated by the distinguished guests on the Dias with a bouquet, Uttariya, certificate of honour and a memento. On this occasion, poet Bahadur Pattasahani, Dr. Debi Prasad Mishra, Dr. Anupama Mishra, Dr. Mansi Kar, Manoj Manjari Dash, Anita Rath, Dr. Kabita Mohanty, Mamta Mishra, Advocate Nibedita Rath, Sukanti Sahu, Professor Kshirod Chandra Nayak, Dr. Pramod Kumar Nayak, Linku Pati, Kanhu Charan Barik, Professor Biswanath Mohapatra recited selected poems on multifarious aspects of women from various angles. Environmentalist Upendra Rout, Sarvodaya Leader Er. Lalit Behera, Bipin Behera, Premananda Satapathy, Dhiren Mishra, Advocate Ashok Kumar Nanda, Laxmidhar Satpathy, Binay



**FELICITATING THE WOMEN IN THE AUDIENCE**



**THE DISTINGUISHED GUESTS**

Sahu, Tarun Kumar Bishwal along with hundreds of associate members of IFUNA and UFUNA successfully coordinated the program with the help of all the members.

A large number of distinguished persons from every corner of Dhenkanal district made special contributions to this meeting and actively participated in the discussion. Dr. Debi Prasad Mishra recited one English and one Odia sonnet for women and while delivering the welcome speech, in his speech, the official theme of this year's UN is "Rights, Justice and Work for All Women and Girls". With the information provided, he gave a strong call to everyone to make it a reality. Sarvodaya leader Er. Lalit Behera conducted the program very well. Environmentalist Upendra Kumar Rout proposed the vote of thanks.

**ON THIS OCCASION, FORMER PRINCIPAL EDUCATIONIST DR. SAMIR KUMAR SAHOO, WHO RECENTLY RETIRED FROM DHENKANAL EVENING COLLEGE WAS FELICITATED BY THE DISTINGUISHED GUESTS ON THE DIAS WITH A BOUQUET, UTTARIYA, CERTIFICATE OF HONOUR AND A MEMENTO.**

# “From conflict to justice: Why the International Court of Justice Needs Greater Authority”



**SURESH SRIVASTAVA**  
*Vice Chair: World  
Federation of United  
Nations Associations  
and Secretary General:  
IFUNA*

**THE CURRENT POWERS OF THE ICJ CONTINUE TO REMAIN LIMITED IN THE SIMILAR MANNER AS THE POWER OF UNITED NATIONS ARE ALSO LIMITED. THE JURISDICTION OF ICJ DEPENDS LARGELY ON THE CONSENT OF STATES, MEANING THAT THE COURT CANNOT INTERVENE IN MANY CONFLICTS UNLESS THE PARTIES VOLUNTARILY SUBMIT THEIR DISPUTES.**

Indian Federation of United Nations Associations is not only closely associated with United Nations by having consultative status with ECOSOC (Category-1) but also in various manners with Institutions of United Nations. The international system today faces one of its most serious challenges since the end of the Second World War. Rising geopolitical tensions, increasing militarization, and the weakening of international legal norms threaten global peace and stability. The ongoing conflict involving Israel, Iran, and the United States illustrates how rapidly regional disputes can escalate into wider international crises. In such a fragile global environment, the importance of strong international legal institutions becomes increasingly evident. Among these institutions, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, plays a critical role in resolving disputes between states through law rather than force. This also reminds us that one of the important functionary of IFUNA was Justice Dr. Nagendra Singh who was elevated to be the Judge of the International Court of Justice in the year 1973. Later he served as the President of the ICJ from 1985 to 1988. As President, he worked to promote peaceful settlement of disputes between nations through international law. He was also instrumental in establishing Institute of United Nations Studies under the aegis of IFUNA.

The current powers of the ICJ continue to remain limited in the similar manner as the power of United Nations are also limited. The jurisdiction of ICJ depends largely on the consent of states, meaning that the Court cannot intervene in many conflicts unless the parties voluntarily submit their disputes. The recent escalation of hostilities in the Middle East highlights the urgent need to strengthen the ICJ and grant it broader authority-possibly including the power to take *suomotu* cognizance of

disputes that threaten international peace.

The present conflict between Israel, Iran, and the United States demonstrates how fragile international peace can be. In February 2026, coordinated airstrikes were carried out by Israel and the United States against targets in Iran, leading to a major regional escalation.

The attacks triggered retaliatory missile and drone strikes by Iran against Israeli territory and



other regional targets of the Gulf region such as UAE, Oman, Iraq, Dubai, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait marking one of the most serious direct confrontations between these states in decades. Thousands of attacks have taken place causing unfortunate loss of civilian life and military casualties raising fears of a wider regional war.

This situation demonstrates a serious gap in the international legal system. When major powers or regional actors engage in military actions without clear legal authorization, there is often no immediate judicial mechanism capable of intervening to prevent escalation.

To address these limitations, many scholars and policymakers have suggested that the ICJ should be strengthened by granting it *suomotu* powers. The term *suomotu* refers to the authority of a court to initiate legal proceedings on its own initiative without a formal complaint from any

party.

The current Middle Eastern conflict, the Court could independently examine whether the use of force complies with international law. It could issue urgent legal findings, provisional measures, or advisory rulings aimed at preventing further escalation. Such authority would significantly enhance the preventive role of international law. One of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations is the peaceful settlement of disputes. However, diplomacy and political negotiations often fail when national interests clash.

Strengthening the ICJ is not merely a legal reform; it is a step toward strengthening the rule of law in international relations. When disputes are settled through military action rather than legal mechanisms, global stability becomes increasingly fragile. A more powerful ICJ could serve as a deterrent against unlawful uses of force. States would be aware that their actions could be examined by an independent international court capable of issuing authoritative legal judgments. This would reinforce the idea that international law applies equally to all states, regardless of their political or military power. The Israel-Iran-United States conflict serves as a stark reminder that unchecked military escalation can threaten not only regional stability but also the broader international order.

The International Court of Justice remains one of the most important institutions in the global legal system. Yet its current powers are insufficient to address the rapidly evolving nature of modern international conflicts. The ongoing confrontation involving Israel, Iran, and the United States demonstrates the urgent need for stronger international legal mechanisms capable of preventing war and ensuring accountability.

In a world increasingly shaped by geopolitical rivalry and military power, strengthening the International Court of Justice may be one of the most important steps toward safeguarding international peace and justice.

However, it is also necessary to see that there is no active Judicialism as the judges comes from different background and different countries having their own political agenda, therefore their accountability is of paramount importance and such mechanism should also be in place to correct any erred ruling which is not in the interest of peace and stability in the world.



**STRENGTHENING THE ICJ IS NOT MERELY A LEGAL REFORM; IT IS A STEP TOWARD STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. WHEN DISPUTES ARE SETTLED THROUGH MILITARY ACTION RATHER THAN LEGAL MECHANISMS, GLOBAL STABILITY BECOMES INCREASINGLY FRAGILE. A MORE POWERFUL ICJ COULD SERVE AS A DETERRENT AGAINST UNLAWFUL USES OF FORCE. STATES WOULD BE AWARE THAT THEIR ACTIONS COULD BE EXAMINED BY AN INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COURT CAPABLE OF ISSUING AUTHORITATIVE LEGAL JUDGMENTS.**

US, Intel Chief  
Tulsi Gabbard



## **“Pakistan major nuclear threat to USA besides China, Russia and North Korea,” US Intel Chief Tulsi Gabbard tells Senate:**

**U**S Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard said that Pakistan is among the countries that pose the most significant nuclear threats to the United States, while placing it alongside Russia, China and North Korea. "Russia,

China, North Korea, Pakistan pose biggest nuclear threats to US," Gabbard said while speaking before a Senate panel. She also said that the recent military operations have "severely degraded" Iran's nuclear capabilities, but pointed out the growing

## Pakistan emerging as direct nuclear threat to US:

*United States intelligence chief Tulsi Gabbard has warned lawmakers that Pakistan's evolving long-range ballistic missile programme may eventually include systems capable of striking the American homeland. Her remarks came during testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee .*

concerns over missile capabilities being developed by several countries, including Iran.

US, Intel chief Tulsi Gabbard said to law makers that the U.S. intelligence community assesses a sharp rise in the number of missiles capable of striking the United States. According to estimates, the figure is expected to grow to over 6,000 by 2035, a significant increase from the current assessed number of around 3,000.

Tulsi Gabbard, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) of the United States, has issued a stark warning on rising glob-

al security threats, naming Russia, China, North Korea, and Pakistan as the most significant nuclear threats faced by the United States, News agency Reuters reported.

The statement comes even after Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif praised Donald Trump as a man of peace and saviour of South Asia, reviving disputed ceasefire claims involving India at the Board of Peace summit in Washington earlier in February.

In her assessment, Gabbard told US lawmakers that the U.S. intelligence community expects a sharp increase in the number of missiles capable of striking the United States, projecting the figure to exceed 16,000 by 2035, up from the current estimate of around 3,000.

Highlighting evolving geopolitical alignments, she noted that North Korea is strengthening its partnerships with Russia and China, raising concerns over coordinated military capabilities among U.S. adversaries.

The remarks, delivered in prepared testimony to a Senate panel, underscore mounting concerns within the U.S. intelligence establishment about both the rapid expansion of global missile arsenals and the persistence of regional threats, even after major military strikes

*"The intelligence community assesses that Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan have been researching and developing an array of novel, advanced, or traditional missile delivery systems, with nuclear and conventional payloads, that put our homeland within range," Gabbard said.*

In prepared testimony to a Senate panel, Gabbard told the Senate that North Korea was strengthening its ties with Russia and China that indicates a deeper strategic coordination among countries viewed as adversaries by Washington, and claimed that the development could complicate global security dynamics.

In a broader threat assessment, Gabbard named Al-Qaeda and ISIS as the most significant threats to US interests overseas, particularly in parts of Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

**IN PREPARED TESTIMONY TO A SENATE PANEL, GABBARD TOLD THE SENATE THAT NORTH KOREA WAS STRENGTHENING ITS TIES WITH RUSSIA AND CHINA THAT INDICATES A DEEPER STRATEGIC COORDINATION AMONG COUNTRIES VIEWED AS ADVERSARIES BY WASHINGTON, AND CLAIMED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT COULD COMPLICATE GLOBAL SECURITY DYNAMICS. IN A BROADER THREAT ASSESSMENT, GABBARD NAMED AL-QAEDA AND ISIS AS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THREATS TO US INTERESTS OVERSEAS, PARTICULARLY IN PARTS OF AFRICA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA.**



**Taija Kontinen-Sharp**  
United Nations  
Resident Coordinator  
 Lesotho

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres appointed Taija Kontinen-Sharp of Finland as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Lesotho, with the host Government's approval. She took up her post on 21 February.

Ms. Kontinen Sharp brings over 20 years of experience in Sustainable Development, peace-building, and Humanitarian Affairs across headquarters and field settings in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Most recently, she served as Senior Adviser to the Secretary General's Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, where she supported high level efforts to advance solutions for internally displaced persons. Prior to this, she was Chief of the Integrated Office of the Deputy Special Representative, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, leading United Nations wide strategy, planning and partnerships. She has also held

*Before joining the United Nations, Ms. Kontinen Sharp worked with the Aga Khan Foundation in Afghanistan and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.*

senior roles within the United Nations Secretariat, including Chief of Staff in the United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO) and Strategic Planning Adviser in the Executive Office of the Secretary General. Earlier, she served as Development Adviser in the World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat, where she guided the Summit's resilience and climate outcomes. She spent ten years with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), supporting peace, development, and resilience programming in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Nepal.

Before joining the United Nations, Ms. Kontinen Sharp worked with the Aga Khan Foundation in Afghanistan and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

*She holds a Master of Science in State, Society and Development from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS University of London).*



## António Guterres

*Secretary-General of the United Nations*

“

**Human rights  
are not  
a slogan for  
good times.  
They are  
a duty at all  
times.**



**W**e are living in a world where mass suffering is excused away, humans are used as bargaining chips and international law is treated as an inconvenience.

Human rights are under full-scale attack. It's happening in plain sight and often led by those with the greatest power.

But human rights are not a slogan for good times. They are a duty at all times.

We must stand up for them even when it is difficult, inconvenient or costly. Especially then.

We cannot let power write a new rulebook in which the vulnerable have no rights and the powerful have no limits.

We must change course and let human dignity set the direction. Because a world that protects human rights protects itself.

## A \$27 TRILLION TRADE DOOR OPENED FOR INDIAN MSMEs

**Modi has a shot at history making with EU's India visit Von der Leyen- what she called "the mother of all deals." 'Not just because India needs it, or Europe wants it '**



The India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), concluded in January 2026 after nearly two decades, is a landmark deal aiming to boost bilateral trade and strengthen economic ties between the two blocs, expected to come into force by 2027. The agreement, which covers goods and services, eliminates duties on 99.5% of Indian exports to the EU and reduces tariffs on 96.6% of EU exports to India, with a combined market of over 2 billion people.

"The EU and India make history today, deepening the partnership between the world's biggest democracies. We have created a free trade zone of 2 billion people, with both sides set to gain economically," said European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen.

"We have sent a signal to the world that rules-based cooperation still delivers great outcomes."

### EU-INDIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT:

#### Trade in Goods:-

Bilateral trade in goods between the EU and India equalled €120 billion in 2024. EU goods imports from India stood at €71 billion in 2024, while EU goods exports to India reached nearly €49 billion during the same year.

The EU will eliminate tariffs on over 90% of tariff lines, and 91% in terms of value. India will eliminate tariffs on 86% of tariff lines, and 93% in terms of value. Moreover, both sides will partially liberalise a significant additional number of lines, thereby bringing the overall coverage of trade liberalisation to 96.6% for India and 99.3% for the EU.

**There are strong benefits for key economic sectors on each side, such as:**

**For the EU:** the agri-food, chemical, pharmaceutical, machinery, medical devices, avionics and automotive industries.

**For India:** fisheries, chemicals, textiles, footwear and pharmaceuticals.

**India will remove high duties on industrial products (which, on average, are above 16%), such as:**

- Chemicals (current tariffs of up to 22%, to be removed mostly at the entry into force of the agreement);
- Cosmetics (current tariffs of up to 22%, to be removed mostly after 5 or 7 years);
- Plastics (some at entry into force, many after 7 years);
- Car parts (most tariffs to be removed after 5 to 10 years);
- Textiles and apparel (most tariffs removed at entry into force);
- Ceramics (most tariffs removed at entry into force);
- Machinery (half of the tariffs liberalised at entry into force and the rest in periods of up to 10 years), and;
- Boats (mainly at entry into force).

These duty reductions and eliminations will facilitate EU exports of these products, which could not access the Indian market so far given the high tariff barriers.

In the agri-food sector, considering the very high level of protection and the sensitivities of India, the agreement is balanced because it opens market access in key export interests while preserving sensitivities.

**The agreement will eliminate duties on several key EU agri-food exports, such as:**

- Olive oil (current tariff of up to 45%, to be eliminated at entry into force or after a 5-year staging period);
- Non-alcoholic beer and several fruit juices (current tariff of up to 55%, to be eliminated after 5 years);
- Processed food such as confectionery, breads, pastry, pasta, chocolates, pet food (current tariff 33%, to be eliminated at entry into force or after staging), and;
- Sheep meat (current tariff 33%, to be eliminated over staging).

**The agreement also offers a significant market access improvement for wine, spirits, and beer, as well as fruits, such as:**

- EU exports of alcoholic beverages currently subject to very high tariffs (reaching 150% in some cases) will be reduced over time to 30% for most wines, 40% for all spirits, and 50% for beer;
- EU exports of fruits (e.g. kiwis and pears) will benefit from sizeable Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs), allowing the EU to expand its market shares in India, and;

■ The agreement will establish a working group on wines and spirits, which will serve as a platform for the exchange of information and cooperation between the parties, including on oenological practices.

At the same time, the EU will protect its agricultural sensitivities, which means that no concession will be granted for sugar and ethanol, rice and soft wheat, beef and poultry, milk powders, bananas, and honey; and well-calibrated quotas will limit imports of table grapes and cucumbers.

In addition, as per the SPS chapter, the EU will protect its very high sanitary and phytosanitary standards and the EU's stringent rules on animal

and plant health. Food safety will be maintained with no exception.

#### **Rules of Origin :-**

The EU and India have agreed rules of origin that are closely aligned with those included in recent EU FTAs. They ensure that only products that have been significantly processed in one of the parties can benefit from the tariff preferences of the agreement.

The documentation on origin follows the latest standards based on self-certification by businesses to make it as easy as possible to benefit from tariff reductions, especially for small and medium-sized companies. The proof of origin will be in the form of a statement on origin as a separate document that exporters will need to upload on a portal allowing the importing party's customs authorities to verify the authenticity of the statements on origin.

The verification of origin is based on contacts by local customs authorities with the importer and will be followed by administrative cooperation between the customs authorities of the EU and India before the preference may be refused.

#### **Customs and Trade Facilitation:-**

##### **The EU and India have agreed to:**

- further facilitate legitimate trade between the EU and India, so that companies legitimately trading goods between the EU and partner countries get their goods through customs more easily and more quickly, and;

- ensure effective customs control, so that imported goods meet all the rules of the importing country, including requirements related to safety, security and respect of intellectual property rights.

The chapter on Customs and Trade Facilitation includes provisions on transparency, advance rulings, simplified procedures and expedited release of goods, which reduces red tape for EU exporters.

To ensure that the customs part of this agreement is future-proof, the EU and India have also created the necessary legal basis to broaden and deepen customs cooperation where appropriate, including on supply chain security and exchange of customs data, to strengthen risk management and checks at the EU border.

##### **Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures:-**

The provisions on animal and plant health (sanitary and phytosanitary - SPS) are comprehensive and balanced, covering both the EU's offensive and defensive interests. They will be subject to the agreement's bilateral dispute settlement system. This provides for higher transparency and predictability for trade of plant and animal products, including fisheries/aquaculture products. It will notably do so by introducing clear timelines and mechanisms for important procedures, such as import conditions and approvals, audits, adaptation to regional conditions for animal and plant health, listing of establishments for products of animal origin, exchange of information, and certification.

All imports from India to the EU will continue to adhere to the EU's strict SPS rules, with no exception. The EU retains its full right, where relevant scientific evidence is insufficient, to provisionally adopt sanitary or phytosanitary measures based on available pertinent information.

##### **Technical Barriers to Trade:-**

The Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) chapter sets out provisions on technical measures with an impact on trade in goods, such as standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures.

This chapter incorporates commitments under the WTO Agreement on TBT and makes them subject to bilateral dispute settlement under the FTA.

In particular, it upholds key principles such as the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) and national treatment principles, and enhanced information exchange and bilateral consultations. It promotes the use of international standards. It also provides meaningful transparency provisions, such as the requirement for 60 days of public consultation on new technical regulations, and 6 months between their publication and their entry into force.

Finally, the chapter creates a dedicated Working Group on Conformity Assessment, tasked with addressing issues related to the conformity assessment procedures of each party, including the Indian system of Quality Control Orders.

##### **Trade Remedies:-**

The Trade Remedies chapter strikes a careful balance between advancing market openness and ensuring effective protection against unfair trade practices and import surges.

It confirms the possibility of using trade defence instruments (anti-dumping, anti-subsidy, or global safeguards) to tackle unfair trade between the parties.

The agreement also includes a bilateral safeguard mechanism, which allows the EU and India to impose temporary measures in the event that a significant increase of preferential imports due to the FTA causes, or threatens to cause, serious injury to their domestic industry.

##### **Services:-**

Trade in services amounted to €59.8 billion in 2024, with EU exports amounting to €26 billion and imports amounting to €33.8 billion.

The agreement will expand opportunities for EU and Indian services suppliers and ensure a more stable and predictable trade environment. It introduces services rules grounded on the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), but containing numerous improvements that are found in other modern FTAs of the EU. The agreement will in particular:

- Incorporate and implement most of the rules agreed under the WTO Domestic Regulation Joint Initiative, of which India is not a member;

- Provide a framework like the Understanding on Commitments in Financial Services, which India did not follow in GATS;

- Include clear commitments related to senior management and boards of directors, as well as local presence, which are new for India;

- Ensure greater clarity and enforceability of India's commitments, and;

- Include provisions on mobility of professionals, which are among most ambitious to which each party has committed in the past.

##### **Digital Trade:-**

The Digital Trade chapter contributes to a predictable, secure, and fair digital trade environment. It provides for rules that build consumer trust and ensure legal certainty for business. It supports innovation while maintaining the right to regulate for public policy, privacy, and security. It deepens EU-India cooperation on the digital economy.

It integrates the majority of the rules agreed under the WTO's Electronic Commerce Joint Initiative, of which India is not a member. Importantly, it includes rules on the protection of software source code, which protect businesses from the mandatory disclosure of source code, and supports innovation in the EU technology sector. In addition, it contains rules on online consumer protection and the prevention of spam. This guarantees consumer protection in electronic commerce transactions and protects users from unsolicited direct marketing communications (spam).

##### **Intellectual Property:-**

The EU and India have agreed on the effective protection and enforcement of intellectual property (IP) rights. The IP chapter aims to:

- promote innovation and creativity in India and the EU;
- facilitate trade of innovative and creative goods and services between India and the EU, and;
- reduce barriers to trade and incentivise investments in a manner conducive to a more sustainable and inclusive economy.

The agreement provides a high level of protection and enforcement of IP rights, in line with Indian and EU intellectual property laws. It covers a wide array of categories of IP rights, namely:

- copyright and related rights;
- trademarks;
- designs;
- protection of trade secrets and undisclosed information, and;
- plant varieties.

The comprehensive section on IP rights enforcement includes measures, procedures and remedies to be provided by each Party to ensure the enforcement of intellectual property rights.

The IP Chapter also specifies relevant international agreements on IP that the Parties are required to comply with.

#### **Anticompetitive Conduct, Merger Control and Subsidies:-**

The competition chapter provisions will ensure that each Party has competition law that applies to all enterprises, private and public, and that is enforced by an independent authority. In case subsidies covered by the scope of the agreement raise concerns, the EU will have the possibility to obtain further information from India in order to better assess their effects. The agreement will also allow for cooperation between competition authorities, which will benefit the effective enforcement of competition law.

#### **Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises:-**

The agreement has a chapter dedicated to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and a number of other provisions which will benefit small companies.

Notably, it requires the publication of information on how to access and do business in each other's markets. Such information is to be provided on one publicly accessible digital platform.

In addition, both sides will set up SME contact points, which will cooperate in identifying ways for SMEs to benefit from the opportunities offered by the agreement. This will ensure that SMEs can easily access all relevant and up-to-date information on doing and setting up business in the other Party, enhancing their ability to benefit from the FTA.

Tariff reductions, the removal of regulatory barriers, and additional transparency will help companies to reduce costs, streamline procedures, improve efficiencies, and provide business certainty and a stable regulatory environment. This is particularly beneficial for SMEs, which have less resources to deal with these issues.



**ANTÓNIO COSTA, NARENDRA MODI, AND URSULA VON DER LEYEN DURING THE INDIA-EU SUMMIT.**

**The European Union and India have concluded negotiations for an agreement to create a free trade area of some 2 billion people. The deal - the largest ever concluded by either side**

#### **Transparency:-**

The Parties commit to ensuring a predictable and transparent regulatory environment that facilitates trade and investment, particularly benefiting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The provisions clarify how laws and regulations of general application should be published, administered, and reviewed, reinforcing commitments under the WTO Agreement.

The transparency chapter includes ambitious provisions on the publication, administration, and review and appeal of measures of general application related to trade matters. The agreement guarantees that measures of general application relevant to the agreement will be published via an official channel and include an explanation. In addition, it provides that such measures can be reviewed and appealed through adequate and non-discriminatory procedures.

#### **Good Regulatory Practices:-**

The objective of this chapter is to establish a set of Good Regulatory Practices (GRP) for the development and implementation of regulations for goods and services. These practices help to make such regulations efficient, effective and of a high quality.

The GRP chapter will help make the public aware in advance of major regulatory activities and allow it to contribute to the regulatory process at an early stage. It specifies that these opportunities are available to a wide set of interested persons and does not discriminate foreign stakeholders. Stakeholders should be given sufficient information about the regulatory initiative for them to be able to ascertain if and how their interests could be affected by the planned regulations.

The chapter also contains provisions regarding the use of Regulatory Impact Assessments for the development of regulatory initiatives, where the Parties commit to considering the need for regulatory acts, to examining all possible regulatory alternatives, and to assessing potential impacts of future regulations before issuing them in accordance to their rules and procedures.

#### **Sustainable Food Systems:-**

The Sustainable Food Systems chapter creates a framework to cooperate on strengthening policies and defining programmes that contribute to the development of sustainable, inclusive, healthy and resilient food systems, and to jointly engage in the transition towards sustainable food systems.

#### **Trade and Sustainable Development:-**

The Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapter sets out a comprehensive framework on trade and sustainable development, which:

- enhances environmental protection and addresses climate change;
- protects workers' rights;
- supports women's empowerment;
- provides for a platform for dialogue and cooperation on trade related environmental and climate issues, and;
- ensures an effective implementation mechanism.

It protects both parties' right to regulate and makes sure that the parties

will not weaken, waive, or fail to enforce their laws in order to encourage trade or investment.

The agreement also offers civil society organisations an active role in monitoring the implementation of the agreement.

Trade, environment and climate - supporting global governance and the green transition

**Both parties commit to work towards the implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) that each party has ratified, such as:**

- the Paris Agreement;
- the Convention on Biological Diversity, and;
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

The agreement commits the EU and India to work together on climate change issues, such as renewable energies or reducing emissions in the maritime sector, as well as on the sustainable management of natural resources, including marine natural resources and forests. It also promotes cooperation to encourage the shift to a circular and resource-efficient economy.

The EU-India FTA includes dedicated provisions on the protection and management of natural resources, setting commitments with respect to:

- Forest conservation
- Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
- Combatting illegal wildlife trade
- Combatting illegal logging and related trade
- Combatting Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

Through its market access commitments, the deal will make trade and investment in low-carbon goods, services, and technology easier. This includes reducing tariffs on green goods and liberalising services sectors of relevance for the green transition.

These goods and services contribute to achieving environmental and climate goals by preventing, limiting, minimising or remediating environmental damage to water, air and soil, and by contributing to the dissemination of technologies that serve to mitigate climate change.

#### **Trade and workers' rights**

The deal requires the respect of core International Labour Organization (ILO) principles covering subjects such as:

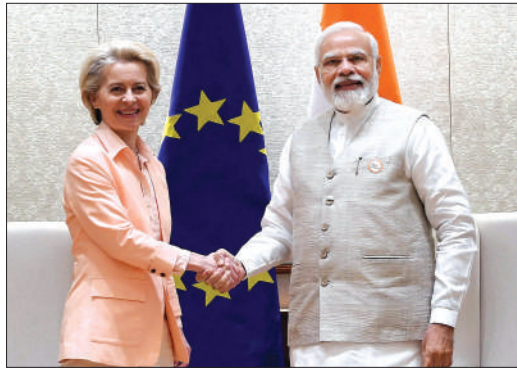
- freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining;
- the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- the abolition of child labour;
- non-discrimination at work, and;
- a safe and healthy working environment.

The TSD chapter has a broad range of commitments and cooperation provisions on issues such as decent working conditions, labour inspection, social dialogue, and the promotion of responsible business conduct.

#### **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

The EU-India FTA contains provisions regarding relevant UN and ILO conventions on advancing women's economic empowerment and gender equality, including promoting cooperation in international fora to advance these objectives.

#### **Dialogue and cooperation**



**URSULA VON DER LEYEN WITH NARENDRA MODI IN DELHI**

The chapter also includes a complementary set of provisions focused on dialogue and cooperation, on regulatory and other sustainability issues.

#### **Enforceable commitments**

Commitments on trade and sustainable development are legally binding and enforceable through a dedicated consultation mechanism.

A time-bound and transparent mechanism has been set up, which will involve technical experts and political decision-makers. This will provide an avenue to address labour, environmental and gender equality issues in a sustainable and inclusive matter, so that improvement is achieved on the ground, and not

just on paper.

#### **Dispute Settlement:-**

The Dispute Settlement (DS) chapter sets up an efficient and effective mechanism for avoiding and settling any dispute concerning the agreement.

**It includes all the elements that are important for the EU, in particular:**

- independent panels agreed by both Parties, with the use of pre-established rosters if the Parties do not agree on panel composition;
- binding panel reports which can be enforced through the suspension of concessions in case of non-compliance;
- full transparency of procedures and open hearings, and;
- the option of mediation.

#### **Initial Provisions and General Definitions :-**

The chapter on initial provisions and general definitions contains the usual provisions for every FTA, in particular on the objective of the FTA, the establishment of a free trade area and its territorial application, general definitions, and the relationship with other agreements.

#### **Institutional Provisions:-**

The chapter on institutional provisions sets up the institutional structure of the agreement, namely the Joint Committee, the Specialized Committees, and their functions and decision-making. These are dedicated government-to-government bodies overseeing the implementation of the agreement. It also includes provisions on the participation of stakeholders and domestic consultative mechanisms, giving civil society dedicated avenues to participate in the implementation of the agreement.

A special Rapid Reaction Mechanism will allow concerns that may hamper bilateral trade to be quickly addressed, if necessary, escalating the matter to the highest level with a view to finding a mutually agreed solution.

#### **Final Provisions:-**

The chapter on final provisions includes a General Review clause after five years in addition to standard provisions (e.g. on entry into force, amendments, termination, and authentic languages). It also recognises that human rights and democratic principles constitute essential elements of the agreement.

#### **Exceptions and General Provisions:-**

The chapter includes General Exceptions and Security Exceptions, similar to what exists under WTO rules. Furthermore, it contains provisions on disclosure of information and treatment of confidential information.

## Spiritual Heritage of South India: A Journey through Sacred Traditions

Spiritual heritage especially in southern part of India is a vibrant mosaic of ancient traditions, architectural marvels, and profound philosophies that have shaped the Indian subconscious for millennia. Unlike many regions where history is found in ruins, the spirituality of the South is a living, breathing legacy centered on the "Temple Culture."

### Architectural Splendour:-

The landscape is defined by the towering Gopurams of Dravidian architecture. From the monolithic rock-cut temples of Mahabalipuram to the sprawling complexes of Madurai and Thanjavur, these structures are not just places of worship but repositories of art, music, and dance. The Brihadisvara Temple, a thousand-year-old marvel, stands as a testament to the Chola dynasty's devotion and engineering genius.

### Philosophical Roots:-

South India is the cradle of the Bhakti Movement. Between the 6th and 9th centuries, the Alvars (devotees of Vishnu) and Nayanars (devotees of Shiva) democratized spirituality through soul-stirring Tamil poetry, emphasizing a personal, emotional bond with the divine over rigid rituals. This era also birthed the intellectual giants of Vedanta:

- AdiShankara (Advaita)
- Ramanuja (Vishishtadvaita)
- Madhvacharya (Dvaita)

### Cultural Continuity:-

This heritage extends beyond stone and philosophy into the performing arts. Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music originated as offerings to the gods, maintaining a sacred vocabulary that survives in modern concert halls. Festivals like Pongal, Thrissur Pooram, and the Mysore Dasara further illustrate a seamless blend of agricultural cycles and deep-rooted cosmic beliefs. In essence, South India's spiritual identity is a rare confluence of grandeur and intimacy, where the ancient past continues to guide the daily rhythm of the present.

### Tirupati Balaji Temple

TirupatiBalaji Temple also known as the TirumalaVenkateswara Temple, is one of the most revered and visited pilgrimage sites in India. Situated in the Seshachalam Hills near Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, the temple is dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who is believed to have appeared to save mankind from the trials of Kali Yuga. The temple stands at an elevation of about 853 meters and is a magnificent example of Dravidian architecture, with its towering gopurams, intricate carvings, and the golden AnandilayamVimanam above the sanctum.

The origins of the temple date back centuries, with contributions from various dynasties, including the Pallavas, Cholas, and Vijayanagara rulers. King Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara Empire was particularly known for his devotion and generous donations, which enriched the temple's



wealth and grandeur. Today, it is managed by the TirumalaTirupatiDevasthanams (TTD), which oversees its rituals, administration, and charitable activities.

The temple is renowned for its spiritual significance, with millions of devotees visiting annually to seek blessings. Offerings by devotees, including the famous practice of donating hair, symbolize humility and surrender to the deity. The temple is also one of the wealthiest in the world, receiving vast donations from pilgrims. Major festivals such as Brahmotsavam, VaikuntaEkadashi, and RathaSaptami are celebrated with grandeur, drawing enormous crowds and showcasing the temple's vibrant traditions.

At the heart of the temple lies the idol of Lord Venkateswara, richly adorned with jewels and believed to radiate divine energy. For devotees, a visit to TirupatiBalaji is not just a pilgrimage but a deeply spiritual experience, blending faith, history, and culture. It continues to stand as a timeless beacon of devotion and tradition in India.

### Srisailem Mallikarjuna Temple

SrisailemMallikarjuna Temple, is one of the most sacred shrines in India, revered both as a Jyotirlinga of Lord Shiva and a Shakti Peetha of Goddess Parvati, making it a unique pilgrimage site for devotees of Shaivism and Shaktism.



Located in the Nallamala Hills of Andhra Pradesh, the temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, worshipped as Mallikarjuna, and Goddess Parvati, worshipped as Bhramaramba. Its dual significance as one of the twelve Jyotirlingas and one of the eighteen Maha Shakti Peethas elevates its spiritual importance, drawing millions of pilgrims each year. The temple's origins trace back to ancient times, with references found in scriptures as early as the 3rd century CE. The Satavahana dynasty, particularly King Satakarni, is known to have patronized the temple, and later dynasties such as the Chalukyas and Vijayanagara rulers contributed to its expansion and grandeur.

Architecturally, the temple is a fine example of Dravidian style, with its towering gopurams, intricately carved pillars, and the gold-plated Vimana above the sanctum. The Garbhagriha houses the Shiva lingam, while the shrine of Goddess Bhramaramba stands nearby, symbolizing the union of divine masculine and feminine energies. The temple complex also includes several smaller shrines, mandapas, and sacred tanks, adding to its spiritual aura.

The temple is renowned for its vibrant festivals, especially MahaShivratri, which is celebrated with grandeur and devotion. Pilgrims undertake the ritual of visiting both Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba shrines, believing it grants liberation and divine blessings. The serene setting of the Nallamala forest and the Krishna River flowing nearby enhances the temple's spiritu-

al atmosphere, making it not only a place of worship but also a retreat for meditation and inner peace.

For devotees, a visit to SrisailemMallikarjuna Temple is a profound spiritual journey, blending myth, history, and devotion, and reaffirming its timeless place in India's religious heritage.

### **Kanaka Durga Temple in Vijayawada,**

Kanaka Durga Temple in Vijayawada, is one of the most prominent and revered temples in Andhra Pradesh, dedicated to Goddess Kanaka Durga, a powerful form of Goddess Durga. Situated on the Indrakeeladri Hill overlooking the Krishna River, the temple is not only a spiritual center but also a cultural landmark that attracts thousands of devotees throughout the year. According to legend, the hill was once inhabited by the demon king Mahishasura, and it was here that Goddess Durga manifested to destroy him, establishing her abode on the hill. The temple thus symbolizes the triumph of good over evil and the eternal power of the divine feminine.



The temple's architecture reflects traditional Dravidian style, with its towering gopuram, intricately carved pillars, and sanctum housing the idol of Goddess Kanaka Durga adorned with ornaments and flowers. The deity is worshipped as the presiding goddess of Vijayawada, and her blessings are believed to grant strength, prosperity, and protection. The temple is particularly famous for the annual festival of Dasara, celebrated with grandeur and devotion. During this time, the goddess is worshipped in various forms of Shakti, and lakhs of devotees gather to witness the rituals and festivities.

Apart from its religious significance, the temple offers a panoramic view of Vijayawada city and the Krishna River, making it a serene and spiritually uplifting destination. The temple is also associated with Adishankaracharya, who is believed to have installed the Sri Chakra in the sanctum, enhancing its spiritual energy. Managed by the Endowments Department of Andhra Pradesh, the temple continues to be a center of devotion, tradition, and cultural heritage. For devotees, a visit to Kanaka Durga Temple is both a spiritual journey and a celebration of divine power, reaffirming its timeless importance in the religious landscape of India.

### **Yadadri Lakshmi Narasimha Temple,**

Yadadri Lakshmi Narasimha Temple, located in YadadriBhuvanagiri district of Telangana, is one of the most revered temples dedicated to Lord Narasimha, the fourth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Perched on a hillock, the temple has been a center of devotion for centuries and holds immense spiritual significance. According to legend, Sage Yadava performed penance here, and Lord Narasimha appeared to bless him, giving the place its name, Yadadri. The deity is worshipped as Lakshmi Narasimha, symbolizing both divine strength and compassion, with Goddess Lakshmi seated alongside him.



The temple has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent

years, with extensive renovations initiated by the Telangana government. The complex now reflects the grandeur of traditional Dravidian architecture, featuring intricately carved stone pillars, majestic gopurams, and spacious mandapas. The sanctum sanctorum houses the idol of Lord Narasimha in a fierce yet benevolent form, radiating spiritual energy. The use of stone carvings and gold plating in the temple's design adds to its magnificence, making it a blend of ancient tradition and modern craftsmanship.

Yadadri is also known for its vibrant festivals, particularly Brahmotsavam and NarasimhaJayanti, which draw thousands of devotees. Special rituals such as abhishekams, homams, and daily sevas are performed with great devotion, reinforcing the temple's role as a living center of faith. The serene surroundings of the temple, nestled amidst hills and greenery, further enhance its spiritual atmosphere, offering pilgrims a sense of peace and divine connection.

For devotees, visiting Yadadri Lakshmi Narasimha Temple is not just an act of worship but a profound spiritual journey. It stands as a symbol of devotion, tradition, and divine protection, reaffirming its timeless place in the religious and cultural heritage of Telangana.

### **Bhadrachalam Sri Rama Temple,**

Bhadrachalam Sri Rama Temple, located on the banks of the Godavari River in Telangana, is one of the most famous temples dedicated to Lord Rama in India. The temple holds immense religious and cultural significance,



attracting thousands of devotees throughout the year. According to legend, the temple was built by BhaktaRamadasu, a devout follower of Lord Rama, during the 17th century. Ramadasu, also known as KancharlaGopanna, was imprisoned for using state funds to construct the temple, but his devotion and sacrifice made the shrine a symbol of unwavering faith. It is believed that Lord Rama himself appeared before the ruler to release Ramadasu, further enhancing the temple's sanctity.

The temple's architecture is a fine example of South Indian style, with beautifully carved gopurams, spacious mandapas, and a sanctum housing the idol of Lord Rama along with Goddess Sita and Lord Lakshmana. The serene surroundings of the temple, with the Godavari River flowing nearby, add to its spiritual charm. The temple complex also includes shrines dedicated to other deities, making it a vibrant center of worship.

Bhadrachalam is particularly renowned for its grand celebration of Sri Rama Navami, the festival marking the divine marriage of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita. The celestial wedding, known as SitaramaKalyanam, is performed with great devotion and witnessed by thousands of devotees. The temple also celebrates VaikunthaEkadashi and other important festivals with equal grandeur. Managed by the Endowments Department of Telangana, the temple continues to be a hub of devotion, tradition, and cultural heritage.

For devotees, visiting Bhadrachalam Sri Rama Temple is not just a pilgrimage but a deeply spiritual journey, offering peace, blessings, and a connection to the timeless devotion of BhaktaRamadasu and the divine presence of Lord Rama.

## Keesaragutta Temple,

Keesaragutta Temple, located near Hyderabad in Telangana, is a renowned shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. Perched on a hill, the temple is steeped in mythology and history, making it a significant pilgrimage destination. According to legend, Lord Rama installed the Shiva lingam here after his victory over Ravana, seeking penance for the sin of killing a Brahmin. It is believed that Lord Hanuman brought several Shiva lingams from Varanasi to be installed, but Lord Rama chose only one, leaving the rest scattered around the hill. Even today, hundreds of lingams can be found across the temple premises, adding to its spiritual aura.



The temple is known for its serene setting, surrounded by rocky hills and lush greenery, offering devotees a peaceful environment for worship and meditation. The sanctum houses the main lingam of Lord Shiva, worshipped as Ramalingeshwara, symbolizing the divine connection between Lord Rama and Lord Shiva. The temple also has shrines dedicated to Goddess Parvati and Lord Subrahmanya, making it a vibrant center of devotion.

Keesaragutta Temple is particularly famous during MahaShivaratri, when thousands of devotees gather to perform special rituals and seek blessings. The temple also witnesses large crowds during KarthikaMasam, a month considered highly auspicious for Shiva worship. Its historical significance is further highlighted by inscriptions and remnants of ancient structures found in the area, indicating its importance during the Satavahana and Kakatiya periods.

Managed by the Endowments Department of Telangana, the temple continues to be a spiritual and cultural landmark. For devotees, visiting Keesaragutta Temple is not just an act of worship but a journey into mythology, history, and devotion, reaffirming its timeless place in the religious heritage of South India.

## Bhutanatha Temple in Badami,

Bhutanatha Temple in Badami, Karnataka, is one of the most iconic examples of early Chalukyan architecture and devotion. Situated on the banks of the serene Agastya Lake, the temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, worshipped here as Bhutanatha, the lord of the elements. Its picturesque setting, with rugged sandstone cliffs and calm waters surrounding it, makes the temple not only a spiritual center but also a remarkable heritage site. Built during the 7th to 11th centuries by the BadamiChalukyas, the temple reflects a blend of North Indian Nagara style and South Indian Dravidian style, showcasing the artistic brilliance of its time.



The temple complex consists of two main structures: the Bhutanatha temple on the eastern side of the lake and another shrine on the northern side. The sanctum houses a Shiva lingam, and the temple's mandapas are adorned with intricately carved pillars and sculptures depicting deities, mythological scenes, and motifs. The use of local sandstone gives the temple its distinctive reddish hue, harmonizing beautifully with the surrounding landscape. The architectural design emphasizes simplicity and elegance, reflecting the spiritual essence of early medieval temple construction.

Bhutanatha Temple is not only significant for its religious importance

but also for its historical and cultural value. It stands as a testimony to the Chalukyan dynasty's patronage of art, architecture, and religion. The temple is particularly vibrant during MahaShivaratri, when devotees gather to offer prayers and perform rituals. Its location by the Agastya Lake adds to its charm, with the water body believed to have sacred qualities.

For visitors, Bhutanatha Temple offers a unique blend of spirituality, history, and natural beauty. It remains a timeless monument, symbolizing the devotion of the Chalukyas and the enduring cultural heritage of Karnataka, making it a must-visit destination for pilgrims and history enthusiasts alike.

## Veera Narayana Temple

VeeraNarayana Temple in Belavadi, Karnataka, is a magnificent example of Hoysala architecture and devotion. Built in the 13th century during the reign of King VeeraBallala II, the temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, worshipped here as VeeraNarayana. It stands as one of the largest and most intricate temples constructed by the Hoysalas, showcasing their mastery in stone carving and temple design. The temple is particularly renowned for its triple sanctum, housing idols of VeeraNarayana, Lord Krishna as Venu-gopala, and Lord Vishnu in the form of Yoga Narasimha, making it a rare and unique structure among Hoysala temples.

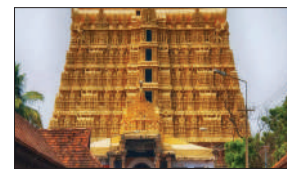


The temple's architecture is a blend of elegance and precision, with beautifully carved pillars, ornate ceilings, and detailed sculptures depicting scenes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas. The outer walls are adorned with intricate carvings of deities, dancers, and mythological figures, reflecting the artistic brilliance of the Hoysala craftsmen. The spacious mandapas and the symmetrical layout of the temple highlight the architectural sophistication of the period. The temple's serene surroundings, with lush greenery and a tranquil atmosphere, further enhance its spiritual charm.

VeeraNarayana Temple is not only a place of worship but also a cultural treasure, representing the rich heritage of Karnataka. It continues to attract devotees, historians, and tourists alike, who come to admire its beauty and experience its spiritual aura. Festivals and rituals are celebrated with devotion, keeping alive the traditions that have flourished here for centuries. For visitors, the temple offers a profound blend of spirituality, history, and art, standing as a timeless monument to the glory of the Hoysalas and their enduring contribution to India's cultural and religious landscape.

## Padmanabha Swamy Temple

Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, is one of the most revered and architecturally stunning temples in India, dedicated to Lord Vishnu.



The deity is worshipped here in the reclining posture, known as AnanthaShayana, resting on the serpent Adishesha. The temple is renowned for its spiritual significance, historical legacy, and immense wealth, making it a unique blend of devotion and grandeur. It is considered one of the 108 DivyaDesams, the holiest abodes of Vishnu mentioned in Tamil literature.

The temple's origins trace back to antiquity, with references found in Sangam literature, and it gained prominence under the rule of the Travancore kings. Maharaja MarthandaVarma, in the 18th century, dedicated his

kingdom to Lord Padmanabha, ruling thereafter as the deity's servant, a tradition that continues to this day. The temple's architecture is a fine example of Dravidian and Kerala styles, with towering gopurams, intricate carvings, and long corridors adorned with stone sculptures. The sanctum houses the massive idol of Lord Vishnu, measuring about 18 feet, which can be viewed through three separate doors.

Padmanabhaswamy Temple is also famous for the treasures discovered in its underground vaults, which revealed immense wealth in the form of gold, jewels, and artifacts, making it one of the richest temples in the world. Festivals such as Alpashy and Painkuni are celebrated with grandeur, featuring processions, rituals, and traditional performances. The temple continues to be managed by the Travancore royal family, preserving its traditions and sanctity.

For devotees and visitors alike, Padmanabhaswamy Temple is not just a place of worship but a symbol of Kerala's cultural and spiritual heritage. Its blend of devotion, history, and architectural brilliance makes it a timeless beacon of faith and tradition in India.

### Guruvayur Sri Krishna Temple

Guruvayur Sri Krishna Temple, located in Kerala, is one of the most famous and revered temples dedicated to Lord Krishna in India. Known as the "Dwarka of the South," it holds immense spiritual significance and attracts millions of devotees every year. The presiding deity is Lord Krishna in the form of Guruvayurappan, depicted as a four-armed figure carrying the conch, discus, mace, and lotus. According to legend, the idol was originally worshipped by Lord Krishna himself in Dwarka and later brought to Guruvayur by Guru (the preceptor of the gods) and Vayu (the wind god), giving the temple its name.



The temple's architecture is simple yet elegant, reflecting traditional Kerala style with its sloping roofs, wooden carvings, and mural paintings. The sanctum sanctorum houses the idol of Guruvayurappan, adorned with jewels and flowers, radiating divine grace. The temple is also known for its strict adherence to rituals and traditions, which have been preserved for centuries. Devotees believe that worshipping here grants blessings of prosperity, health, and spiritual fulfillment.

Guruvayur is particularly famous for its grand festivals, especially the annual GuruvayurEkadasi, celebrated with great devotion and rituals. The temple also hosts weddings and annaprasanam (first feeding ceremonies), making it a cherished place for important life events. Another unique feature is the GuruvayurDevaswom's elephant sanctuary, which houses temple elephants donated by devotees, adding to the temple's cultural richness.

For devotees, visiting Guruvayur Sri Krishna Temple is not just a pilgrimage but a deeply spiritual experience, blending devotion, tradition, and cultural heritage. Its timeless aura, legendary origins, and vibrant rituals make it one of the most important centers of Krishna worship in India, continuing to inspire faith and devotion across generations.

### Meenakshi Amman Temple

Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, is one of the most celebrated temples in India, renowned for its architectural grandeur and spiritual significance. Dedicated to Goddess Meenakshi, a form of Parvati, and her consort Lord Sundareswarar, a form of Shiva, the temple stands as a symbol of devotion and



cultural heritage. The temple complex, sprawling across 14 acres, is a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture, with towering gopurams adorned with thousands of colorful sculptures depicting gods, goddesses, mythical creatures, and scenes from Hindu epics.

The origins of the temple date back to ancient times, with significant contributions made during the reign of the Nayak dynasty in the 16th and 17th centuries. King TirumalaiNayak played a pivotal role in expanding and beautifying the temple, making it one of the largest and most impressive temple complexes in South India. The temple's sanctum houses the idol of Goddess Meenakshi, depicted with a parrot and fish-shaped eyes, alongside Lord Sundareswarar, symbolizing divine union and balance.

Meenakshi Amman Temple is not only a place of worship but also a vibrant cultural hub. The annual MeenakshiTirukalyanam, the celestial wedding of Meenakshi and Sundareswarar, is celebrated with grandeur, attracting thousands of devotees and tourists. The temple also hosts daily rituals, music, and dance performances, keeping alive the traditions of Tamil culture. Its corridors, mandapas, and sacred tanks add to the spiritual atmosphere, offering devotees a serene space for prayer and reflection.

For visitors, the temple is a blend of spirituality, history, and art. It continues to inspire awe with its intricate carvings, colorful sculptures, and timeless devotion, standing as a testament to the rich cultural and religious heritage of Madurai and Tamil Nadu.

### Brihadeeswarar Temple

Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, is one of the greatest architectural marvels of India and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built in the 11th century by the Chola king Rajaraja I, the temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and stands as a symbol of the Chola dynasty's power, devotion, and artistic brilliance. Known as the "Big Temple," it is celebrated for its grandeur, scale, and intricate craftsmanship, making it a timeless monument of South Indian heritage.



The temple's most striking feature is its towering vimana, which rises to about 66 meters, making it one of the tallest of its kind in the world. The massive granite structure is crowned by a single stone weighing nearly 80 tons, an engineering feat that continues to amaze historians and architects. The sanctum houses a huge Shiva lingam, while the temple walls and corridors are adorned with exquisite frescoes and sculptures depicting deities, dancers, and mythological scenes. The temple also features inscriptions that provide valuable insights into the Chola administration, culture, and devotion.

Brihadeeswarar Temple is not only a place of worship but also a cultural hub. It hosts vibrant festivals, particularly MahaShivaratri, when thousands of devotees gather to offer prayers and participate in rituals. The temple's spacious courtyards, pillared halls, and sacred shrines create a serene atmosphere, blending spirituality with architectural magnificence. Its construction using granite, a material not locally available, further highlights the extraordinary vision and resources of the Chola rulers.

For devotees and visitors alike, Brihadeeswarar Temple is a profound experience, offering a glimpse into the grandeur of medieval South India. It continues to inspire awe with its scale, artistry, and devotion, standing as a timeless testament to the genius of the Cholas and the enduring spiritual heritage of Tamil Nadu.

**CURTISY:-SURESH SRIVASTAVA, SECRETARY GENERAL, IFUNA**

## On the eve of Women's Day Dedicates to Women Around Globe

# THE TINKLING OF BANGLES



**CHANDER P MAHAJAN**

*Was a former student of  
Electrical Engineering at  
Regional Engineering College,  
Naseem Bagh, Srinagar,  
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**B**ua Rani likes bangles. Each piece in her collection is one-of-a-kind, a symbol of love for us both.

A bangle striking each other to produce a tone is a part of an Indian dance form. Music of 'love and happiness' may emanate from the clinking of the bangles.

Tinkling, jingling, ringing, and rattling; all could give a feel of a clink to a simpleton. Rattling can, however, be a noise and music both. It is also a rhythmic sound out of a musical instrument.

Well, I like that all; and even the ringing sound of the clinking of the glasses during a toast - that sets in motion a wave of positivity.

■ The vibrant colours and intricate designs reflect the wonderful art; & the special skills of the artisans behind them. There are varied bangles, broadly categorised by the materials

and designs.

These circular artifacts, often crafted from an array of materials, have been worn for centuries, serving as symbols of traditions, social status and beauty.

Glass bangles, moulded through the heat treatment, are known for their fragile beauty, not being as flexible as other bracelets.

I have the nostalgia of having watched the crafting of the Ivory and the Lac bangles by the skilled artisans, to make a Chooda in the Khalonyan wali gali of Jammu. They meticulously moulded and shaped the lac, a natural resin from the lac insect. It is a traditional craft that has been passed down through the generations, preserving the 'art and the craftsmanship'. The red ones are often associated with fidelity.

The choice of materials in bangle crafting is as diverse as the cultures. From gold, silver, platinum, glass, wood, and ferrous metals to even silk thread, all are in the fray.

Distinctions may come out as diamonds, gemstones or alike. Agate, chalcedony and other rocky stuff may stand in the queue. Recent additions are rubber and plastic; worn more like wristbands, they lend a fashionable look.

Bangles could be adorned with various motifs, patterns and emblems. The designs range from simple to handmade intricacies, often studded with precious and semi-precious stones.

Traditional colours, red or green, often indicate prosperity and fertility. The significance relates to personal dogmas and lifestyles.

■ How bangles are worn and perceived varies widely over beliefs and customs. Across the Indian subcontinent, in many regions, the wearing of bangles holds a symbol of auspiciousness for many people. They are more than just traditions; they are believed to bring blessings, harmony, and prosperity to the



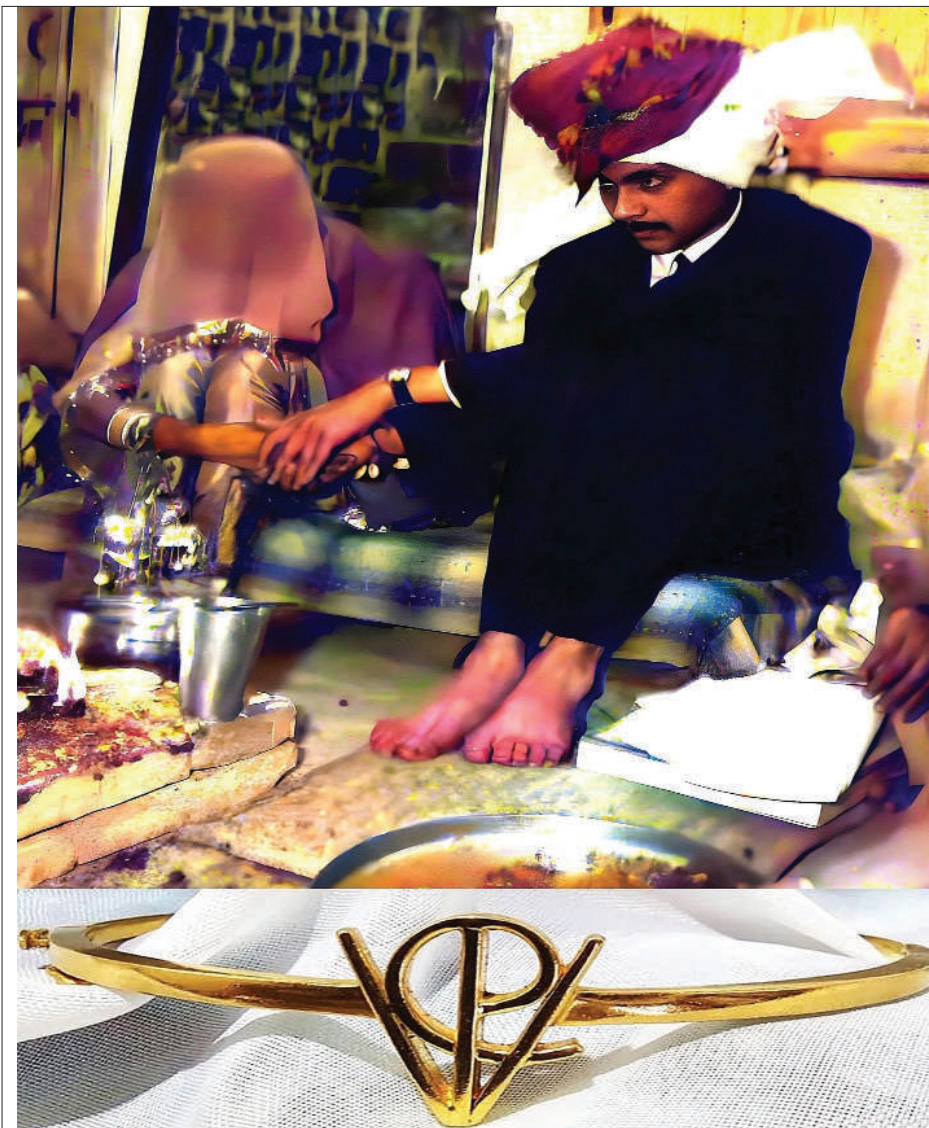
The hanging bangles of Bua Rani - Lovely and Pretty



The fashion accessories of Bua Rani - Light and Heavy



The studded bracelets of Bua Rani - Magnificent and expensive



Above: Chooda and Kalire - the bridal ties

Below: the band of union Courtesy - Bua Rani

newlyweds.

Choodais a sacred bridal ornament. Red bangles symbolise good fortune and happiness, while white ones represent purity. These ivory bangles are associated with protective beliefs, even though plastic sets are in vogue. The 'kalire', with the tinkling bells against the plopping sound of the ivory, adds an element of celebration to the ceremony.

■ Bangles in India have a deep history. A figurine of a dancing girl wearing bangles on her left arm has been excavated from the Mohenjo-Daro archaeological site.

Popular amongst bangle enthusiasts is the 'vendor women' in the streets; the variety of colours and designs is the essence. Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, is the largest producer of bangles.

Being a part of traditional jewellery in the Indian subcontinent, these are not just ornaments. They are carriers of tradition, yet they adapt to current trends with startling grace.

Rather than marital status, the younger generation is taking over bangles for a display of personal styles and fashion trends. The focus is on aesthetics and appeal through an infinite blend of colours and materials, merging tradition into modernity. Bangles play a pivotal role in festive and religious occasions as well.

Bangles add colour and flair to the turnout of a lady. An appeal lies in the dash of sheen and a splash of glimmer. More so, young girls feel fresh and vibrant. Glass bangles, once considered fragile, are now a popular choice.

The gold and silver bangles make a typical jingling sound, whereas the imitation jewellery may vibrate as a tinny noise.

## Hon'ble Dr. S. Jaishankar Gives A Clarion Call **FOR UN REFORMS** **Global Conflict and Institutional Limits:** Why the United Nations Needs Urgent Revitalization



**EAM S JAISHANKAR AT THE G7 FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN FRANCE**

**E**xternal Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar highlighted the urgency of UNSC reforms, streamlining peacekeeping operations, and strengthening humanitarian supply chains at the G7 Foreign Ministers'. The G7 foreign minister meet held at Abbaye des-Vaux-de-Cernay in France. Dr Jaishankar said in a social media post that he spoke about reform of global governance. He specifically raised the Global South's concerns about energy challenges, fertiliser supplies and food security. The External Affairs Minister was on a two-day visit to France to attend the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

France holds the 2026 G7 Presidency, culminating in the 52nd G7 Summit on June 15-17, 2026, in Évian-les-Bains. The presidency focuses on reducing global economic imbalances, supporting Ukraine, and addressing geopolitical crises. A preparatory Foreign Ministers' meeting took place near Paris in late March 2026, focusing on Iran, Ukraine, and security.

"Spoke at the @G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting session with invited partners on reform of global governance. Highlighted the urgency of UNSC reforms, streamlining peacekeeping operations, and strengthening humanitarian supply chains," (Jaishankar posted on X).

### **Canada Minister Anand meets with Indian counterpart at G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting**

**T**he Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, met with Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India, while attending the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Vaux-de-Cernay, France.

Minister Anand expressed appreciation for the warm hospitality extended to Prime Minister Mark Carney during his recent visit to India and the two ministers reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to implement the New Roadmap for Canada-India Relations. Minister Anand also reiterated



**EAM Jaishankar, Canadian FM Ms. Anand discuss West Asia crisis on G7 sidelines**

Canada's objective of concluding a comprehensive and commercially meaningful agreement this year, that will benefit both Canadian and Indian businesses.

The ministers welcomed upcoming high-level engagements between the two countries to further deepen bilateral ties, including the ongoing public safety dialogue.

The ministers exchanged views on global and regional developments, including the Middle East conflict and its impact on global energy markets, energy security and supply chains. They underscored the importance of diplomacy to advance peace.

The ministers agreed to remain in close contact as the two countries advance an ambitious agenda in support of bilateral, regional and global stability.

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I, SURESH KUMAR SRIVASTAVA hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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**Signature of Publisher**



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