

286 Lions, 456 Leopards Died In 2 Years, Informs Forest Minister In Assembly

At least 286 lions, among them 143 cubs, died in Gujarat over the last two years, and 58 of these fatalities were due to unnatural causes, state Forest Minister Mulubhai Bera informed the legislative assembly on Tuesday. Responding to a query by senior Congress MLA Shailesh Parmar during Question Hour, Bera said 456 leopards, including 140 cubs, also died in two years -- 2023 and 2024 -- in the state. Of the 286 lion deaths, 121 were reported in 2023 and 165 in 2024, he said. Gujarat is the world's last abode of Asiatic lions. As per the last census conducted in June 2020, the state is home to 674 Asiatic lions, mainly the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary. In case of leopards, 225 died in 2023 and 231 in 2024, the minister said in a written reply in the assembly during the ongoing budget session. While 228 lions succumbed to natural causes, 58 fatalities were due to unnatural causes such as the big cats getting hit by vehicles or drowning in open wells, he said. Among leopards, 303 deaths were due to natural causes and 153 fatalities were attributed to unnatural reasons, Bera said. The state government has taken various steps to prevent unnatural deaths of big cats such as appointment of veterinary doctors and introduction of an ambulance service for timely intervention and treatment of lions and other wild animals, the minister told the House. Other measures include building speed-breakers and installing signboards on roads passing through sanctuary areas, regular foot patrolling in forests, building parapet walls for open wells near forests, putting up fences on both sides of the railway track near the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary and radio-collaring Asiatic lions to track their movement, he said.

Bengaluru Family Mysteriously Goes Missing from Bandipur Resort, Cops on Alert



....A Bengaluru-based family has mysteriously disappeared after staying at a resort near Bandipur in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district, triggering a large-scale search operation involving police forces from Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. According to The Indian Express, the missing family members have been identified as 40-year-old J Nishanth, his wife Chandana, and their 10-year-old son. The family had checked into the Country Club resort on March 2 but left under unexplained circumstances the following day, leaving behind their belongings. Their car was last traced to Mangala Road in the Bandipur forest region, but there has been no sign of them since. Superintendent of Police BT Kavitha visited the resort as part of the investigation. Authorities found that Nishanth had booked the stay using a fake Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) ID, raising suspicions about his motives. Investigators suspect financial distress may have contributed to their disappearance, as Nishanth was reportedly facing significant debt. Police are exploring multiple possibilities, including abduction by creditors or an attempt to evade them by going into hiding.

DMK Leader Touches Woman's Hand, Tries To Take Bangle During Pledge Against Hindi



A video of a DMK leader touching a woman's hand and trying to take her bangle while taking a pledge against Hindi imposition has gone viral. Tamil Nadu BJP state president K Annamalai posted the clip on social media and wrote, "Mr. Zakir Hussain, DMK councilor of Ward 25 of Coonoor Municipal Council, steals bangles under the guise of anti-Hindi. 'Thirutta' (thief) and DMK can never be separated!" Netizens Slams DMK Leader Many have criticised the DMK leader as well as the pledge against the Hindi language. A user said, "And this whole drama about pledg-

ing against Hindi? What a joke. Why not pledge against Urdu too while they're at it? Oh wait, that would upset their vote bank politics. They'll cry about Hindi 'imposition' but won't say a word when Islamist leaders push their own agenda. Hypocrisy is literally in DMK's DNA." The second user said, "This is

regular businesses of Dravidian model." The third user commented, "First learn to respect women and then take oath, all such leaders." Another netizen added, "It's holy month and Womens day. They have to do it. Women empowerment at full display. Forgot Hinthi." It comes at a time when the DMK has locked horns with the Centre over the Hindi imposition and delimitation.

DMK Targets Centre

Earlier in the day, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Wednesday targeted the BJP claiming that it does lip service to Tamil language and called it "enemy". In a social

media post, "If the BJP's claim that our Hon'ble PM has great love for Tamil is true, why is it never reflected in action? Rather than installing Sengol in Parliament, uninstall Hindi from Union Government offices in Tamil Nadu. Instead of hollow praise, make Tamil an official language on par with Hindi and allot more funds for Tamil than a dead language like Sanskrit. Stop the desperate attempts to saffronise Thiruvalluvar and declare his timeless classic, Thirukkural, as India's National Book. Quoting Kurals during the Union Budget will not cut it. Honour them by ensuring special schemes, a prompt disaster relief fund, and new railway projects for Tamil Nadu." Between 2014 and 2023, the Union government allocated Rs 2,435 crore to the Central Sanskrit University and the National Sanskrit University, according to data from the Union Education Ministry. In contrast, only Rs 167 crore was allotted to the Central Institute of Classical Tamil during the same period. The funding for the promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi has seen a significant increase during these years.

Over 90% In Hindi-Speaking States Are Monolingual, Remaining India Embraces Bilingualism: Data

The ongoing exchanges between Tamil Nadu and the Centre over Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) funds have once again reignited the longstanding language debate. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has reaffirmed the state's resistance to the imposition of Hindi and reiterated its commitment to the two-language policy. Meanwhile, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has dismissed claims of Hindi imposition, arguing that the policy encourages multilingualism. "Tamil is one of the oldest languages of our civilisation. But what is wrong if a student in Tamil Nadu learns multiple languages, including Tamil, English, and other Indian languages? There is no imposition of Hindi or any other language. Some friends in Tamil Nadu are merely playing politics," he stated in February. At its core, this dispute echoes a longstanding concern among non-Hindi-speaking states—particularly in the South—about whether the three-language formula indirectly imposes Hindi. Another critical question arises: regardless of whether the policy amounts to an imposition, does data on development indicators support the argument that English should be the preferred link language over Hindi? **Multilingualism Among States** Data indicates that non-Hindi speakers are generally more open to learning additional languages, whereas Hindi speakers exhibit lower levels of multilingualism,



reported The Hindu. Data from the 1991 and 2011 Language Census illustrates this contrast. For instance, in 1991, 84.5% of native Tamil speakers in Tamil Nadu were monolingual, a figure that declined to 78% by 2011. Similarly, the proportion of monolingual Odia speakers in Odisha dropped from 86% to 74.5% over the same period. Conversely, in states where Hindi is the predominant first language, the proportion of monolinguals has remained high or even increased. In undivided Bihar, for example, 90.2% of Hindi speakers were monolingual in 1991. By 2011, in the divided Bihar, this figure had risen to 95.2%. Similar trends were observed in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh.

English as Preferred Choice

Further analysis of language choices reveals that non-Hindi-speaking states have increasingly embraced English as a second language. In Tamil Nadu, for example, the share of native Tamil speakers who also spoke English rose from 13.5% in

1991 to 18.5% in 2011. In contrast, in Haryana, the proportion of native Hindi speakers who also spoke English declined from 17.5% to 14.6% over the same period. The adoption of Hindi as a second language has been more pronounced in states like Gujarat and Maharashtra, where a significant number of native speakers have

opted to learn Hindi. In Gujarat, the share of Gujarati speakers who also spoke Hindi increased from 21.6% in 1991 to 39% in 2011. The Case for English as the Link Language A comparison of Human Development Index (HDI) scores across states suggests a positive correlation between English proficiency and higher living standards. States with a greater prevalence of English speakers tend to have better development indicators, whereas states with a higher proportion of Hindi speakers generally exhibit lower HDI scores. Migration patterns further support this argument. Reports from the Economic Advisory Council to the PM indicate that large numbers of people from Hindi-speaking states are migrating to non-Hindi-speaking regions in search of better economic opportunities. This suggests that English, rather than Hindi, is more effective in providing greater access and mobility, making a stronger case for it to be the preferred link language in India.

BJP-Led Centre Pays Lip Service To Tamil For Votes, Alleges CM Stalin

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Wednesday alleged that the BJP-led union government paid mere lip service to Tamil language for the sake of votes and dubbed the ruling party at the Centre as Tamil's "enemy." Writing to party workers as part of his series on the theme of "all-time opposition to Hindi imposition," Stalin recalled DMK founder leader C N Annadurai's views on the issue. Decades ago, Anna had said that the party's objective is not to oppose Hindi, but to get equal recognition to Indian languages including Tamil. While the BJP claims that Prime Minister Narendra Modi held Tamil in high esteem and that the 3-language formula is for the growth of languages of the states, the difference in allocation of funds for Tamil and Sanskrit would make it pretty clear that they are "enemies" of Tamil, Stalin alleged. As per the Union Education Ministry's data, during the period between 2014 and 2023, the union government allotted Rs 2,435 crore to the Central Sanskrit University and the National Sanskrit University. During the same period, only Rs 167 crore was allotted to

Central Institute of Classical Tamil. Fund allocation and expenditure has increased manifold for the promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi. "The union government, out-and-out, is functioning with a feeling of linguistic hegemony and pays mere lip service to Tamil for the sake of votes," the chief minister alleged. The BJP-led Centre, which is betraying Tamil Nadu by not allotting funds due to the state, is also betraying by not allocating funds for Tamil language and it is trying to "destroy" Tamil and languages of other states through the "languages of dominance," Hindi and Sanskrit. Disapproving it, the DMK president said the consequences of imposing a language could be understood by perusing the history of world. In a social media post, Stalin said: "If the BJP's claim that our Hon'ble PM has great love for Tamil is true, why is it never reflected in action? Rather than installing Sengol in Parliament, uninstal Hindi from Union Government offices in Tamil Nadu. Instead of hollow praise, make Tamil an official language on par with Hindi and allot more funds for Tamil than a dead lan-



guage like Sanskrit. Stop the desperate attempts to saffronise Thiruvalluvar and declare his timeless classic, Thirukkural, as India's National Book. Quoting Kurals during the Union Budget will not cut it. Honour them by ensuring special schemes, a prompt disaster relief fund, and new railway projects for Tamil Nadu." Also, he said: "Stop wasting taxpayers' money on the nonsense of 'Hindi Pakhwadas' in Tamil Nadu. End the absurdity of imposing Sanskrit names like Antyodaya, Tejas, and Vande Bharat on Tamil Nadu's trains.

Revert to the practice of naming them in Tamil, like Chemmozhi, Muthunagar, Vaigai, Malaikottai, Thirukkural Express, etc. Love for Tamil is proven through deeds, not deception." In his letter to cadres, the chief minister, further, said: "All Indian languages including Tamil listed in the 8th schedule of the Constitution are India's national languages." However, if Hindi alone is claimed to be the national language, it is a manifestation of dominance. Claiming that Sanskrit is India's root language is an "attempt to consign us to servitude." If Sanskrit is taken as the root language, it meant that all other languages originated only from it. "That is, they are trying to establish that all the languages in India had their roots in Sanskrit. It was linguist Robert Caldwell who had, 175 years ago, by way of his studies had made it known to the world that Dravidian languages including Tamil had unique characteristics," Stalin said. On March 4, Stalin wondered why the union government has not facilitated setting up of an institution to teach Tamil or other south Indian languages to people of states in north India.

Trump Declares 'America Is Back' In First Congress Address, Says US Will No Longer Be 'Woke'

US President Donald Trump delivered a triumphant speech to Congress on Tuesday, celebrating a series of decisive policy changes that have reshaped America's foreign relations, sparked trade disputes with key allies, and significantly reduced the federal workforce—all within his first six weeks in office. "My fellow citizens, America is back," Trump declared, receiving a standing ovation from Republican supporters. "Our nation stands on the brink of a historic resurgence—one the world has never seen before and may never see again. We have achieved more in 43 days than what others did in the last four years," the US President stated. During his speech, Trump highlighted his administration's swift action to ban diversity and inclusion programmes within the federal government and to dismiss employees responsible for promoting such initiatives. In his first address to Congress since taking office on January 20, Trump outlined the economic challenges facing the United States, stressing his administration's urgent focus on relief measures for struggling Americans. "Among my very highest priorities is to rescue our economy and get dramatic and immediate relief to working families. As you know, we inherited, from the last administration, an economic catastrophe and an inflation nightmare," the President said. Speaking triumphantly about his legal battles, Trump claimed victory over what he described as politically motivated prosecutions. He also boasted about having survived four criminal prosecutions—only one of which has gone to trial—while reiterating his long-standing claim that the Justice Department had been used as a political weapon against him. "We've ended weaponised government where, as an example, a sitting president is allowed to viciously prosecute his political opponent like me. How did that work out," he remarked. Trump also defended his tariff campaign, despite concerns that it could lead to higher consumer prices and slow economic growth. "Whatever they tariff us, we tariff them. Whatever they tax us, we tax them," he stated. "If they do non-monetary tariffs to keep us out of their market, then we do non-monetary barriers to keep them out of our market." In a sharp critique of the Biden administration's economic policies, Trump blamed his predecessor for what he called an "economic catastrophe" characterised by soaring inflation and rising living costs. "We inherited from the last administration an economic catastrophe and an inflation nightmare. Their policies drove up energy prices... drove the necessities of life out of reach for millions of America... we suffered the worst inflation in 48 years... as President, I am fighting every day to reverse this damage and make America affordable again," he stated. In a sweeping declaration against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, Trump vowed to dismantle such policies across government, the private sector, and the military. "We have ended the tyranny of so-called diversity, equity and inclusion policies all across the entire Federal Government and indeed the private sector and our military. Our country will be woke no longer. We believe that whether you are a doctor, accountant, lawyer or an Air Traffic Controller - you should be hired and promoted based on skill and competence, not race or gender... The Supreme Court, in a brave and very powerful decision, has allowed us to do so," the President declared.

Trump Announces Reciprocal Tariffs On India, Other Nations Starting April 2



During his first address of his second term to a joint session of Congress, United States President Donald Trump strongly defended his stringent tariff policy, reiterating that the US has long faced high tariffs from multiple countries, including India. "If you don't make your product in America under the Trump administration, you will pay a tariff, and in some cases, a rather large one. Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades and now it's our

turn to start using them against those other countries," Trump declared during his speech. Listing nations that he claimed impose "tremendous" tariffs on the US, Trump specifically mentioned India. "On average, the European Union, China, Brazil, India, Mexico and Canada... have you heard of them? And countless other nations charge us tremendously high tariffs than we charge them," he stated. Highlighting India in particular, Trump said, "India charges us auto tariffs higher than 100 percent." He further compared tariff imbalances, saying, "China's average tariff on our products is twice what we charge them and South Korea's average tariff is four times higher."

April 2 Tariffs to Take Effect
Trump announced that the US would

introduce reciprocal tariffs on several nations starting from April 2, intentionally avoiding April 1 so as not to coincide with "April Fools' Day." "On April 2nd, I wanted to make it April 1st but didn't want it to be accused of April Fools' Day... it's a lot of money... April 2nd reciprocal tariffs kick in, whatever they tariff us, we will tariff them, a reciprocal back and forth... if they do non-monetary tariffs to keep us out of their market, we will do non-monetary barriers to keep them out of our market," Trump stated. His announcement on reciprocal tariffs was met with resounding applause and a standing ovation from his loyal supporters in Congress. The announcement follows the US government's decision on Tuesday to proceed with punitive 25 percent tariffs on its neighbouring trade partners, Canada and Mexico. Additionally, tariffs on Chinese goods were doubled from 10 percent to 20 percent, with the US citing Beijing's alleged inaction regarding fentanyl production as a key factor.

Actress Nabbed With Gold Belt At Airport!

Kannada actress Ranya Rao has landed in serious trouble after being arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. Ranya was caught smuggling 14.8 kg of gold, valued at approximately Rs 12.5 crore. The gold was cleverly hidden in a custom-made belt worn around her body, with an additional 800 grams concealed in her clothing. The arrest took place on Monday night, after DRI officials, acting on a tip-off, intercepted Ranya when she arrived from Dubai on an Emirates flight. Due to her frequent international travel, she had been under surveillance for a while. During interrogation, Ranya reportedly claimed she was forced into smuggling and even tried to use her influence, falsely claiming to be the



daughter of Karnataka's DGP to escape scrutiny at the airport. Following her arrest, Ranya was produced before the Special Court for Economic Offences on March 4 and has been remanded to judicial custody for 14 days. Officials are now investigating her possible

links to a larger smuggling network operating between Dubai and India. The probe is also looking into whether any local police officials were misled or involved in helping her movement through the airport. Ranya Rao, who made her debut in Maanikya alongside Sudeep and later acted in Pataki and Wagah, was considered a rising talent in South Indian cinema. However, this shocking smuggling scandal has put her career and reputation at stake. Meanwhile, DGP Ramachandra Rao has officially denied any connection with the actress, clarifying that she had not visited their home since her marriage four months ago.

