



National Herald case: ED chargesheets Sonia, Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate has filed a charge sheet against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and others vis-a-vis alleged money laundering in the National Herald case. Sonia is arrayed as first accused in the charge sheet, followed by Rahul and Young India company's Directors Sam Pitroda and Suman Dubey. Special Judge Vishal Gogne perused the charge sheet on Tuesday, which was filed on April 9, and posted the matter for further proceedings to April 25. "The present prosecution complaint shall next be taken up for consideration on the aspect of cognisance before this court on April 25 when the Special Counsel for the ED and IO shall also ensure the production of the case diaries for court perusal," the judge ordered. The charge sheet was filed under Sections 3 (money laundering) and 4 (punishment for money laundering) of

Prevention of Money Laundering Act by ED's Special Public Prosecutor NK Matta. "Let the complaint be checked and registered. The Ahlmad (court staff) shall ensure that the entire file/documents are properly paginated. The ED is directed to file a soft copy of the complaint and documents in readable/OCR format by the next date," the court said. The Special Judge dealing with the cases of lawmakers also took note of the ED submissions that it will move an application before the district judge for the transfer of a case related to predicate offence — under probe by the CBI for alleged cheating, criminal conspiracy and other offences, based on which the ED had started its investigation in the present matter — from another court to Judge Gogne's court. ED's case stems from a private complaint filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, in which the trial is on. After the trial court issued summons to Sonia and Rahul in June 2014, Swamy had filed complaints with the Income Tax Department and the



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi

ED to probe alleged tax evasion and money-laundering angle in the formation of a new company Young Indian and takeover of Associated Journal Limited, publisher of National Herald newspaper, which has buildings in many cities. On April 12, ED issued possession notice regarding National Herald's office buildings in Delhi, Mumbai and Lucknow. The predicate offence is required to be tried by the same court which takes cognisance of the offence under Section 3 of PMLA, the judge said. It is pertinent to mention here that Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi are members of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha respectively. "Essentially, the two offences viz the predicate offence and the PMLA offence are required to be tried by the same court," the judge noted. Since the allegations in the present complaint arise from the predicate offence, the file in the predicate offence is required to be called for perusal, the court added. "However, the power of assignment or transfer of a matter is not vested with

this court and is rather the prerogative of the Principal District and Sessions Judge, Rouse Avenue Courts Complex, New Delhi," the court remarked. The ED investigation began in 2021 after a Metropolitan Magistrate in Patiala House Courts in Delhi took cognisance of a private complaint filed by Swamy on June 26, 2014. The complaint, the ED said, highlighted a "criminal conspiracy" by prominent political figures, including Congress leaders Sonia and her son Rahul, late Congress leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes besides Dubey, Pitroda and private company Young Indian regarding money laundering with respect to a "fraudulent" takeover of properties valued over ₹2,000 crore belonging to the Associated Journals Limited (AJL). "The legal proceedings against the accused have faced challenges but have been upheld by both the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court of India, allowing the investigation to proceed," the ED said.

Why make such observations: SC asks Allahabad HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday took exception to the Allahabad High Court's recent remark in a rape case wherein it said that the complainant "herself invited trouble", and wondered why the court made such an observation while granting bail in the matter. The High Court had observed that the complainant "herself invited trouble" by agreeing to go to the accused applicant's house after getting drunk. The Apex Court's observations came when it was hearing a suo motu case over the Allahabad High Court's separate order of March 17 in which the high court said grabbing breasts and pulling the drawstring of a woman's "pyjama" or lowers did not amount to the offence of attempt to rape.

"There is another order passed by another judge of the same high court," a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih said. Justice Gavai went on, "If one wants to grant bail that is okay but why make such observations that she invited trouble and

The Apex Court's reaction came while hearing a suo motu case over HC's March 17 order that said pulling a woman's pyjama's drawstring did not amount to the offence of attempt to rape

all that. One has to be very careful on this side (bench) also." Solicitor General Tushar Mehta asked how a common man perceived such observations was required to be kept in mind.

The bench adjourned the hearing in the suo motu case for four weeks. On March 26, the apex court stayed the high court's March 17 order in the attempt to rape matter which meant the same couldn't be used in any judicial proceeding for seeking reliefs by the present set of accused or others. The top court had said some of the observations made in the order reflected total "insensitivity" and "inhuman approach". It had taken a suo motu cognisance of the matter after it was brought to the notice of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna. The high court's March 17 order held that the attempt to rape offence was not made out against the accused and they were liable to be summoned for the lesser offence of assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe her.

The High Court's order had come on a petition by the accused challenging the order of a special judge in Kasganj through which they were summoned for the alleged offence under section 376 (rape) of IPC among other sections. In another case, the high court passed an order granting bail to an accused and said, "Having heard counsel for the parties and examined the matter in its entirety, I find that it is not in dispute that victim and applicant both are major. Victim is student of MA, hence she was competent enough to understand the morality and significance of her act as disclosed by her in the FIR." The court added, "This court is of the view that even if the allegation of the victim is accepted as true, then it can also be concluded that she herself invited trouble and was also responsible for the same."

ED questions Robert Vadra in Haryana land deal case, again

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday again questioned Robert Vadra in a 2008 Haryana land deal-linked alleged money laundering case linked to real estate company DLF. Terming the agency's move to summon him as "political vendetta", Vadra said he has spent hours earlier to take questions from the ED (in separate money laundering cases) as well as share thousands of pages of documents but still the central agency was "raking" cases against him. "This is nothing but political vendetta. Whenever I speak for the minorities, they try to stop me, crush us... They tried to stop Rahul (Gandhi) in Parliament too. This is political vendetta and misuse of central agencies. I will cooperate

with them like in the past," the 56-year-old told the media as he walked two miles from his residence at Sujana Singh Park in central Delhi to the ED headquarters on the APJ Abdul Kalam Road here. Vadra entered the ED office at 11am along with his lawyer while his security team stayed out. Officials said the ED recorded his statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) for about two hours. The questioning session is expected to continue. Coming out of the ED office for lunch around 1.30pm, Vadra told reporters that while he was ready to cooperate with the investigation but there needed to be a closure. "How can you be talking about something that happened in 2007?" he said.

The Bystander

Delhi power subsidy to continue, decides Cabinet

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The Delhi Cabinet on Tuesday approved the continuation of the power subsidy scheme for the 2025-26 fiscal, wherein the State Government provides free electricity to households with consumption below 200 units, and a 50 per cent subsidy to households that use 201-400 units a month. The Cabinet also approved a proposal for the extension of its Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy by three months. The cabinet also discussed the draft of the proposed Electric Vehicles (EV) 2.0 Policy. The Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, also approved the continuation of existing power subsidy for four categories: Domestic consumers, farmers, lawyers with chambers, and victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Announcing at a press conference at Delhi Secretariat, Power Minister Ashish Sood said the Cabinet okayed the continuation of electricity subsidies for four specific categories. The Minister said the subsidy for the 1984 riot victims and lawyers represent particularly significant and sensitive decisions of the BJP government. Alleging misinformation by the Opposition, Sood asserted that false narratives were in circulation to claim that the Delhi Government planned to discontinue power subsidies. He asserted that today's Cabinet decision to continue with power subsidies for all four categories puts an end to such 'baseless propaganda'. The Cabinet decided to continue with the old EV Policy instead of approving draft of the new policy as the new EV Policy 2.0 is yet to be finalised.

Stalin announces committee to suggest ways to strengthen State autonomy

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ Chennai

In a sudden move amid ongoing political struggle between Tamil Nadu and the Union Government, Chief Minister MK Stalin announced on Tuesday the constitution of a high-powered committee to suggest ways and means to "strengthen State autonomy" vis-à-vis the Centre. Former Supreme Court Judge Kurien Joseph, will head the three-member panel, Stalin announced in the Legislative Assembly. Former IAS officer Ashok Vardhan Shetty and State Planning Commission former vice-chairman and DMK leader Prof M Naganathan will be members of the committee. Interestingly, Kurian Joseph was a senior leader of the Kerala Congress (Mani) before his elevation to the Bench from the

Bar. At one time, he also led the Kerala Student Congress, a student wing of the Catholic Church-sponsored Kerala Congress (Mani). Shetty had worked as Stalin's secretary during his tenure as Deputy CM in a government headed by his father and DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi. The announcement on the panel was made under Rule 110 of the State Assembly after main Opposition party AIADMK staged a walkout in protest against the Speaker's refusal to allow them to raise an issue in the House. After Stalin's announcement, newly appointed BJP State chief Nainar Nagendran asserted that there was no need to discuss the issue of more autonomy for the States. Stalin said in the Assembly that the move to 'strengthen autonomy' of Tamil Nadu

comes in the backdrop of the tug of war between the State and the Union Government over National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET), which is out of the State purview. "Both NEET and National Education Policy (NEP) are beyond the jurisdiction of the State Government. We are totally against the NEET and NEP. The only option to save Tamil Nadu is to take it out of the jurisdiction of NEET and NEP," the Chief Minister remarked. The Tamil Nadu Government scored a big win this month when the Supreme Court gave a favourable ruling on its petition to challenge the alleged refusal of Governor RN Ravi to accord assent to 10 Bills passed by the Assembly, including the one on appointment of Stalin as Chancellor of the Universities in the southern State.

Sexually assaulted while on ventilator in ICU: Air hostess

PARVESH SHARMA ■ Gurugram

A 46-year-old air hostess alleged that she was sexually assaulted while she was on ventilator support in the ICU of a noted private hospital in Gurugram on April 6, a police officer said on Tuesday. The police said the alleged crime came to light on April 13 when the woman told her husband about the sexual assault, who alerted the police by dialing 112 police control room. In her police complaint, she said she had arrived in Gurugram for training on her employer company's behalf and staying put in a hotel. Her health deteriorated due to reason, after which she was admitted to a private city hospital for treatment. On April 5, her husband got her admitted to another hospital in Gurugram, from where she was discharged on April 13. "During treatment, while I was on ventilator support, someone sexually assaulted me on April 6. Since I was unconscious, I could not react to the assault and was scared afterwards. Two nurses were however on duty around my bed at the time," the victim alleged in her complaint. After her discharge from hospital, she revealed the alleged crime to her husband, who complained to police. "A case has been registered at the Sadar Police Station on the basis of the woman's complaint. A police team was rushed to the hospital to scan the duty chart and analyse CCTV footage to identify the culprit," Sandeep Kumar, spokesperson of Gurugram Police, said.

Above-normal rainfall this monsoon season, predicts IMD

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

In good news for Indian farmers and the Union Government on the agricultural front and, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday predicted an above-normal rainfall for India during the coming June-September monsoon season, which quantitatively could be around 105 per cent of the long period average (LPA). This prediction is vital for India's agriculture, which supports a significant portion of the population and contributes substantially to the Gross Domestic Product of the country. Ruling out the possibility of El Nino conditions — typically linked to reduced rainfall — during the entire season, IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra told a press conference: "India is likely to see above-normal rainfall in the four-month monsoon season (June to September), with cumulative rainfall estimated at 105 per cent

of the long-period average of 87cm." El Nino conditions in the subcontinent are unlikely to develop this time," he added. This mirrors a consensus that most weathermen have on the Indian monsoon this year. Last week, private weather forecasting agency Skymet also said that cumulative all-India southwest monsoon this year could be 'normal' at 103 per cent of the LPA. Rainfall between 96-104 per cent of the LPA is considered normal. The IMD prediction



found. "The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) gives us broad authority to revoke a visa. This authority is fundamental to safeguarding our national security," he said, adding that US laws are clear about who can and cannot come to the United States. Each visa application is vetted through those rules and people who "endorse or espouse terrorist activity or persuade others to endorse or espouse terrorist activity" are ineligible for US visas, The Secretary of State said. Rubio pointed to some incidents of unrest on American college campuses last year. The United States is home to over 1.1 million foreign students, many of whom attend prestigious universities.

channel came amid a nationwide crackdown on Palestine protests, particularly on college campuses, where foreign students have come under scrutiny for alleged "antisemitic behaviour" and participation in disruptive demonstrations following the October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel. "US visas are a privilege, rather than a right, reserved for those who make the United States better, not seek to destroy it from the inside," Rubio said in the interview. Furthermore, Rubio asserted that visa holders must continually meet eligibility standards, and that the State Department, working alongside DHS and other security agencies, actively reviews and revokes visas if violations are

been handed over to police. We remain committed to supporting the entire process of investigation," Dr Sanjay Durani, Medical Superintendent, Medanta Hospital, Gurugram, said in a statement. This incident is not the first in Gurugram's private hospitals. In July last year, a 51-year-old Kazakhistan woman was allegedly raped by an attendant of a private hospital. The accused was later arrested. Similarly, in October 2020, a 21-year-old tuberculosis patient was allegedly raped by a staff member of a hospital while she was on a ventilator in the ICU.

US visas a privilege, not right: US Secretary Rubio

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Sounding a note of caution to immigrants, including H-1B and Green Card holders, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said that US visas are a privilege and not a right, while pledging strict enforcement of visa laws under the Donald Trump administration. Rubio reaffirmed a tough stance on America's visa policy and asserted that entry into the United States is reserved for those who demonstrate respect for American laws and values, reinforcing Washington's commitment to stricter immigration standards. His statement in an interview to a US private television

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MP to launch unified Krishak Kalyan Mission for farmers

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The State Cabinet here on Tuesday gave in-principle approval to launch the Madhya Pradesh Krishak Kalyan Mission by integrating the ongoing schemes under various departments — namely, the Farmers' Welfare and Agriculture Development Department, Horticulture and Food Processing Department, Fisheries Department, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Department, Cooperative Department, and the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department. Madhya Pradesh has made unprecedented progress in the agriculture sector. Agricultural productivity (kg/hectare) increased from 1,195 in 2002-03 to 2,393 in 2024 — a 200% rise. Crop production (in lakh metric tons) rose from 224 in 2002-03

to 723 in 2024 — a 323% increase. The agricultural growth rate (in percentage) grew from 3% in 2002-03 to 9.8% in 2024 — a 327% rise. The agriculture sector's budget (in core rupees) increased from ₹600 crore in 2002-03 to ₹27,050 crore in 2024, marking a growth of 4,508%. Agriculture now contributes 39% to the state's GDP. The Madhya Pradesh Krishak Kalyan Mission aims to increase farmers' income, promote climate-resilient agriculture, adopt sustainable farming practices, preserve biodiversity and traditional agricultural knowledge, ensure nutritional and food security, and ensure fair prices for farm produce. Key Areas of Focus in mission are Increased productivity of crops under agriculture and horticulture, Promotion of high-value crops, Access to quality inputs like seeds, planting material, fer-

tilizers, pesticides, Agricultural extension and skill development, Easy access to low-interest credit, Promotion of food processing and agro-based industries, Value-chain development and strengthening existing chains, and R&D for region-specific agricultural challenges. To accomplish Sustainable Agricultural Practices in Agriculture & Horticulture mission encompasses Adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Expansion of organic/natural farming, Development of market linkages and certification systems for organic/natural produce, Ensuring fair prices for produce, Modernization of mandis (agricultural markets), Use of technology for mandi management, Transparent and fair auction processes, Developing mechanisms for selling produce outside mandis, and Preparing plans for

under futures contracts. To increase farmers' income, they would have cooperative support for Expansion of milk collection coverage through cooperatives to 26,000 villages, Increase milk collection and processing capacity to 50 lakh liters/day, Reduce stray cattle population via stall feeding and mineral mixture use, Promote self-employment in fisheries through technologies like cage farming and biofloc, and Provide zero-interest loans through Fishers/Farmers Credit Card scheme. Other Mission Components Include Climate adaptation and risk mitigation in agriculture, Development of climate-resilient varieties, Integration of animal husbandry and fisheries with crop farming, and Documentation, preservation, and use of traditional agricultural knowledge and practices.

Expected Outcomes of the Mission Include Gross value addition from horticulture to surpass that of field crops, Increase area under horticulture to match national averages, Raise agricultural mechanization by 1.5 times, Increase capital investment by 75% in agriculture, Make the state stubble-burning free, Bring 10% of total sown area under organic/natural/GAP agriculture, Expand micro-irrigation to 20% of cultivated land, Cover 50% of farmland under crop insurance, Use hybrid and improved seeds on 50% of the area, Provide subsidized solar pumps to make farmers 'Urja Daatas' (energy providers), Establish new processing zones and expand marketing networks, Make the state self-reliant in fish seed production, Increase value realization for fish produce by 1.5 times through cold chain.



Hindu devotees wait in a long queue to seek the registration forms ahead of the annual Amarnath Yatra, outside the Jammu and Kashmir Bank in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

Katju Hospital to undergo major upgrade under Mission 2030

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

In a bid to enhance women and childcare services, Katju Hospital in the state capital is being accorded a major upgrade. The transformation is part of the government's Mission 2030 initiative to strengthen public health infrastructure. The move aligns with the NITI Aayog's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Report 2024, which calls for urgent reforms. Madhya Pradesh currently records 173 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births and 51 child deaths per 1,000 — both above national targets. To steer the upgrade, Dr Rachna Dubey, Director of IEC, has been appointed nodal officer, while Dr Balram Upadhyay has taken charge as the hospital's new

MP currently records 173 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births and 51 child deaths per 1,000

superintendent. Dr Dubey began with an inspection of the women's and children's wards, kitchen, storage unit and other areas. She also met nursing in-charges to assess operations, identify gaps and issue directives for improvements. Under the Public Health and Medical Education Department, the hospital will soon offer diagnosis and treatment for over 100 gynaecological and neonatal conditions using modern

technology. The Preventive Gynaecologist and Care Clinic, coming up on the fourth floor, will be the first in the state focused on early detection and preventive care for women. New equipment includes the Kegel Chair — a non-surgical tool that strengthens pelvic muscles and treats uterine laxity through targeted exercises. Also being installed is a colposcope — a diagnostic device for detailed cervical and genital examination, aiding early cancer detection and improved screening. The hospital will also acquire a multi-functional laser machine to treat menopausal symptoms, cysts and urinary leakage, and to destroy precancerous uterine cells.

WCR earns Rs 1.31 Cr with UTS App

PNS ■ Jabalpur

The Indian Railways is witnessing a steady rise in the adoption of its UTS mobile application for booking unreserved tickets, reflecting a positive response to its ongoing efforts to enhance passenger convenience. Under the guidance of the Principal Chief Commercial Manager, awareness campaigns have been actively conducted by the Commercial Departments across all three divisions of West Central Railway (WCR), encouraging passengers to shift towards digital ticketing. As a result of these initiatives, the month of March 2025 recorded a significant increase in UTS app usage. A total of 1,22,685 tickets were booked through the mobile platform, enabling 6,56,515 passengers to travel across the WCR network. This digital shift con-

tributed to a revenue generation of Rs 1,31,03,575 for the Railways during the month. The online general (unreserved) ticket booking facility via the UTS app is available at all stations under the West Central Railway. With the growing popularity of this service among passengers, both the number of bookings and revenue figures have shown consistent upward trends. Across the divisions, Jabalpur reported 35,170 tickets booked for 2,93,702 passengers, earning Rs 43,37,690 in revenue. Bhopal recorded 40,033 bookings facilitating travel for 2,06,607 passengers, generating Rs 46,27,255. Kota registered 47,400 tickets for 1,55,852 passengers, contributing Rs 41,32,630 to the revenue pool. Passengers seeking more information on mobile ticketing services can visit the official website www.utsonmobile.indianrail.gov.in.

Heat wave to grip Madhya Pradesh from today

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

A heat wave is expected to sweep across several parts of Madhya Pradesh beginning April 16, with Indore, Gwalior, Ujjain, and the Chambal divisions likely to be most affected. Prior to this, light rain is forecast in some eastern districts, according to the Meteorological Department. The department has predicted soaring temperatures across Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain, Gwalior, Chambal, and Narmadapuram divisions, with mercury levels expected to cross 40°C. Simultaneously, a reduction in rainfall and storm activity is anticipated, signaling the onset of dry and intense summer conditions. On Tuesday, Ratlam emerged as the hottest location in the state, recording a maximum temperature of 42°C. A distinct weath-

er divide was noted across Madhya Pradesh, with cloudy skies and light drizzles in some areas, while others continued to endure rising heat. Meteorologists have indicated that this mixed weather pattern will continue on April 16, with light showers likely in a few districts. However, a heat wave alert has been issued for 11 districts, and the heat wave is expected to persist on April 17 and 18 as well. Over the past 24 hours, scattered rainfall was recorded in the Narmadapuram and Jabalpur divisions, while the rest of the state remained dry. Ujjain experienced a particularly warm night, further adding to the region's rising heat concerns. Daytime temperatures across divisions showed varied trends—Rewa and Shahdol divisions recorded temperatures 1.7°C to 2.9°C below normal,

while Ujjain division was 1.9°C above normal. Other divisions remained within the normal range. Night temperatures also deviated from the norm in a few regions, standing 1.9°C to 2.2°C above normal in Bhopal, Indore, Narmadapuram, and Ujjain divisions, while remaining steady in other parts of the state. Among notable readings, Khandwa registered 41.1°C, and Narmadapuram followed closely with 41.2°C. Among major cities, Ujjain topped the chart at 40.8°C, followed by Indore (40.1°C), Bhopal (39.5°C), Jabalpur (38.6°C), and Gwalior (37.7°C). Looking ahead, the Meteorological Department forecasts a gradual temperature rise of 2°C to 4°C over the next four days, followed by a slight drop of 2°C to 3°C thereafter.



Madhya Pradesh State Election Commissioner Manoj Shrivastav and other guests release a book 'Kalki Tu Kaha Hai' written by Major General GD Bakshi on the life of Swami Pranavanand Saraswati, at Ravindra Bhawan in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

Accelerate efforts to increase milk production in the State: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has announced that on April 16, the funds under the Ladli Behna Yojana will be transferred from the village Tikarwara in the Mandla district. He stated that to bring consistency in the date of fund transfers, the state government has decided to transfer the amount around the 15th of every month. He informed that on Wednesday, April 16, a total of Rs. 1552.38 crore would be transferred to the accounts of 1.27 crore Ladli Behna beneficiaries across the state from the Mandla district. The Chief Minister was addressing ministers ahead of the cabinet meeting on Tuesday at Mantralaya. Yadav shared that for the first time in the state's history, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Madhya Pradesh government and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) on April 13 in the presence of Union Home

and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah. This agreement will directly benefit the livestock farmers of the state, as milk and related products produced by them will now be procured directly through NDDB. This is expected to significantly improve the financial condition of farmers and make them self-reliant. The Chief Minister said that Amit Shah has directed an increase in milk production in the state. Alongside increasing the overall output, milk collection should also be scaled up significantly. He emphasized speeding up milk collection from the remaining half of the state's villages. To encourage milk production, the state will provide an incentive of Rs 5 per liter as a bonus, promote the Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Kamdhenu Yojana, and undertake extensive marketing and branding of Madhya Pradesh's milk at both the state and national levels. Yadav stated that a compre-

hensive plan for progressive dairy development in the state is being prepared in collaboration with NDDB. He directed Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development, Lakhman Patel, to incorporate new targets based on Union Minister Shah's directives and make necessary amendments in the agreement with NDDB. The Chief Minister has set a target of achieving 2 crore liters of daily milk production in the next five years and instructed officials to seek guidance from NDDB in this regard. Currently, cooperative milk unions in the state collect only 10 lakh liters per day. He emphasized the need to accelerate both production and collection efforts. Yadav expressed gratitude to Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari for dedicating and laying foundation stones for 10 national highway projects in the state on April 10. The projects include foundation stones

worth ₹2330 crore and inaugurations worth ₹3502 crore. He congratulated cabinet members on this development. He shared that Gadkari has announced a plan to expand the national highway network across Madhya Pradesh over the next two years. Approval has also been granted to upgrade the highways necessary for the smooth movement of pilgrims during Simhastha-2028. Approved projects include Rs. 1900 crore four-lane road from Badnawar in Dhar to Thandla and Timkawali in Jhabua (81 km), Rs. 2500 crore four-lane road from Ujjain to Jhalawar (133 km), Rs. 3500 crore six-lane eastern bypass road in Indore (77 km), and New Direct Train from Mhow to New Delhi on Ambedkar Jayanti. The Chief Minister congratulated the cabinet on the launch of a new direct rail service from Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Nagar (Mhow) to New Delhi from April 13, the eve of Ambedkar Jayanti.

Ambedkar Jayanti rally turns violent in Morena, one dead, two injured

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

What began as a peaceful celebration of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary took a tragic turn late Monday night in Morena district, after a rally turned into a violent clash, resulting in one death and two injuries. The incident occurred in the Hingona Khurd area under the jurisdiction of Civil Lines Police Station. The rally, organized by members of the Jatav community, featured DJ music and was part of their Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations. However, tensions flared when members of the neighbouring Gurjar community raised objections to the loud music, citing a birthday celebration in their household. The disagreement over noise levels quickly escalated into a verbal altercation, which soon spiraled out of control. According to police sources, the situation reached a flash-point when some youths from the Gurjar community reportedly opened fire. One young man from the Jatav community was fatally shot and died on the spot. Another sustained a gunshot wound to

his right hand and, after receiving initial treatment at the District Hospital in Morena, was referred to Gwalior for further care. A third individual also sustained injuries during the confrontation. Authorities have not yet released the names of the victims, citing heightened tension in the village. In response to the violence, additional police forces have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order. Heavy security has been put in place to prevent further escalation, and police have assured that strict action will be taken against those responsible. This was the second major violent incident reported in Morena over the weekend. On Sunday, a clash erupted in Dwarakapura village of Dimni block following a dispute over water. Armed with sticks, members of both sides engaged in a 20-minute brawl, leaving several people injured, including women. A video of the altercation has since gone viral on social media. Authorities are on high alert in the district, with efforts underway to restore peace and ensure the safety of all residents.

IndiGo passengers arrive in Bhopal without luggage

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Passengers on IndiGo flight E6-2172 from Delhi to Bhopal were left frustrated on Tuesday evening after arriving at Raja Bhoj Airport without their check-in luggage. The incident affected around 15 passengers, as their bags were inadvertently left behind in Delhi. The flight, which was delayed by nearly an hour, departed from Delhi at 4:45 PM and landed in Bhopal around 5:55 PM. However, upon arrival, several passengers discovered that their luggage had not arrived with them. According to an official statement from IndiGo Airlines, the lapse occurred due to ongoing construction work at Delhi airport's terminal, which disrupted baggage handling and loading procedures across multiple flights. The airline issued an advisory to passengers explaining the cause and assured that the issue was being addressed. Bhopal Airport Director Ramji Awasthi confirmed that 10 to 15 passengers were affected, and steps were being taken to ensure that their luggage would be delivered to them promptly. IndiGo has assured passengers that their luggage will reach Bhopal either late Tuesday night or by Wednesday morning.

Livelihood Knowledge Centers launched in villages to empower rural youth

PNS ■ Indore

In a significant step towards promoting education and knowledge accessibility at the grassroots level, Livelihood Knowledge Centers have been inaugurated in villages under the Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission. These village-level libraries, launched as part of the Gyan Daan Abhiyan, aim to support rural youth in preparing for competitive examinations by providing free access to relevant study materials. The first of these centers have been established in Gotampura village of Depalpur block and Tilor Khurd village in Indore district, with the initiative spearheaded by women's self-help group federations associated with the Livelihood Mission. The centers are fully operated and managed by the most educated members of the local groups, and are run entirely through donations of books, materials, and voluntary support. These libraries will offer the latest books on competitive exams, employment newspapers, general knowledge magazines, and other resources useful for aspiring candidates and school-going students. The initiative reflects a powerful convergence of com-

munity-led development and educational empowerment. Speaking on the occasion, Siddharth Jain, Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat Indore, highlighted that the women involved in the Rural Livelihood Mission are not only advancing their economic independence through savings and group loans but are also taking on meaningful social responsibilities. He said these women are igniting a "new light of education" in their villages through the establishment of these centers. He further stated that the success of the Livelihood Knowledge Centers in Gotampura and Tilor Khurd will pave the way for similar libraries to be opened in other villages across the district with public cooperation. The initiative is being supported by local public representatives, government officers, employees, bankers, and community members, who are contributing books, materials, and financial assistance. The centers were inaugurated in the presence of self-help group members, local leaders, and officials, marking a community-driven movement to bridge the educational gap in rural areas and inspire the youth to pursue greater opportunities through learning.



National Hydroelectric Development Corporation (NHDC) officials with artists in a street play take a pledge to fight against corruption at the birth anniversary celebration of BR Ambedkar at Boat Club in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

CM virtually inaugurates Jeevan Multispecialty Hospital

PNS ■ Jabalpur

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav stated that serving humanity is the highest form of devotion. "One finds divinity through service to mankind, and serving the poor is the true worship of God," he said. The establishment of a hospital aimed at providing maximum healthcare services at minimum cost is a commendable step towards the true

service of humanity. He congratulated and extended his appreciation to the hospital's management for taking up this noble initiative. Yadav made these remarks while virtually addressing the inauguration of Jeevan Multispecialty Hospital and Trauma Centre, a private medical facility located at Lambakheda. The Chief Minister, speaking from the Mantralaya, officially inaugu-

rated the hospital and commended its founder, Dr. Anil Meena, for dedicating the 100-bed facility in memory of his late father, Shri Jeevan Singh Meena. He noted that the hospital will offer accessible healthcare services to Lambakheda and over 100 surrounding villages. The facility is set to become a key medical center in the region, providing comprehensive emergency care under one roof.

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All issues of tribal labourers will be resolved: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, while addressing the inaugural session of the 7th Convention of the Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Gramin Mazdoor Mahasangh, stated that all problems faced by the labour community will be addressed through coordinated efforts in Bhopal across various departments. The government will leave no stone unturned to ensure the welfare of tribal brothers and sisters, along with all other sections of society. Yadav mentioned that the government has facilitated the payment of Rs 224 crore in pending dues for 4,800 workers of Hukumchand Mill in Indore. Similarly, pending dues of workers from Sajjan Mill in Ratlam will also be cleared soon. To boost industrial investment and employment generation, region-

al industry conclave has been organised at the divisional level. The 9th Global Investors Summit was held in Bhopal, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home & Cooperation Minister Amit Shah participated, further promoting industrial growth and employment in the state. He also announced that industrialists establishing employment-generating enterprises in the state would be provided land, subsidies of up to 70%, and concessions on electricity bills. Yadav highlighted the slogan of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh: "We will work in the national interest, and will be paid fairly for it." He reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring that workers serving national interests receive their due rights. A scheme is being prepared to provide ₹5,000 per month as ex-gratia to textile

industry workers. He announced that tribal workers from Alirajpur, who migrate to work in diamond factories in Surat, Gujarat, will soon be able to find employment locally as the state government plans to establish a diamond factory in Alirajpur itself. For emergency medical situations, air ambulance services will be provided to transport poor and labour-class patients to better healthcare facilities. Under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, treatment is also available in private hospitals for the underprivileged. Yadav said that medical colleges would be opened in the Dhar and Jabua districts to ensure better healthcare and educational infrastructure in tribal regions. The government is working with priority for poor women, farmers, and youth. Under the Pradhan Mantri

Kaushal Unnayan Yojana, skill development and financial assistance are being provided to artisans, masons, carpenters, and other working classes to help them establish self-employment. The Sambal Yojana is being implemented for the welfare of labourers. He urged all labourers to get themselves registered under the scheme. Benefits under health, education, housing, and ex-gratia compensation in case of accidental death of a family member are being provided. So far, 4.92 lakh workers have been registered under Sambal Yojana in the Ratlam district. A re-survey will be conducted to identify the remaining eligible beneficiaries who will be provided with permanent housing. The government is also providing cycles, study material, uniforms, and fee waivers to children for

school education. For the upliftment of farmers, the government's priority is to ensure water and electricity reach every field. Under the Rani Durgavati Anna Pratsahan Yojana, farmers cultivating coarse grains like Kodo, Kutki, and Maize will receive a subsidy of ₹1,000 per quintal. On the occasion of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Jayanti, the Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Kamdhenu Yojana is being launched, under which milk procurement will be done from cattle rearers through cooperative societies. Financial aid will be provided to those rearing more than 25 cows or buffaloes under this scheme, which promotes dairy production through a cooperative model. During the convention held at the Ratlam Assembly Hall, Mayor Prahlad Patel delivered the welcome address.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav addresses the seventh session of the All India Vanvasi Rural Labor Federation in Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday. Pioneer photo



Members of the United Malayalee Association (UMA) felicitate police personnel for their efforts in tracing a mentally unstable boy who went missing from Kerala, found in Misrod locality, in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

Rameshwar inspects works in constituency

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

On an inspection of under construction projects in the Kolar area of the state capital, MLA Rameshwar Sharma on Tuesday issued fresh directives for traffic signals, drainage and road connectivity improvements. Sharma began his inspection at CI Square, walking along the ongoing four-lane construction of Awadh Marg up to Bansal Hospital. He was accompanied by administrative officials and engineers. The MLA reviewed street lighting plans, drainage systems and the pace of connecting roadwork. He also examined the road stretch being developed from Kerwa Dam to Semri. The indoor stadium at Banjari was also inspected during the visit. Sharma gave instructions to speed up construction and ensure

timely delivery of public amenities. The Public Works Department is building a five-kilometre road between Bansal Hospital trisection and CI Square at a cost of Rs 40 crore, officials informed. Work near Danish Square and CI Square is still pending. The MLA instructed that this stretch be completed without further delays to ease local traffic. Traffic signals will be installed at Virasha Heights-Agrasen Square. Sharma stressed that installation should begin promptly to improve vehicular flow and pedestrian safety. He also issued instructions for better drainage infrastructure and urged the swift construction of all connecting roads linked to the main stretch. A new bridge near Kalibadi Temple, across the Kaliasot River, is also part of the broader development.

Cong alleges Minister's men behind dalit youth's killing

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress President Jitu Patwari has levelled serious allegations against the supporters of the state's Agriculture Minister Aidal Singh Kansana, holding them responsible for the fatal shooting of a Dalit youth during Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations in Morena district. The incident occurred in Hingona village, where a peaceful rally to mark Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary turned into a scene of violence over a dispute regarding DJ music. According to the victim's father, Mr. Chimbhan Singh, his son Sanjay Semil was shot dead by the minister's loyalists amidst the clash. Two other Dalit youths were also injured—Ranu Dauneria sustained a bullet injury, while another young man was critically wounded. Speaking to Chimbhan Singh via video call, Patwari condemned the attack in the strongest terms and described it as a brutal reflection of the BJP govern-

ment's anti-Dalit mindset. He said this was not an isolated incident, but part of a dangerous and growing pattern of atrocities against Dalits under the BJP's rule. Citing official government data, Patwari pointed out that states governed by the BJP or its allies—such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra—have consistently reported the highest number of crimes against Scheduled Castes. He highlighted that Madhya Pradesh ranks third in the country, with 3,876 cases of atrocities against Dalits reported in 2022 alone. There has been a 4.2% increase in such crimes across the country, and on average, 58 crimes against Dalits are registered in India every single day. Despite this, Patwari said, the BJP-led government in Madhya Pradesh remains silent and inactive. Recalling past incidents, Patwari reminded the media that in 2021, a Dalit youth named Rohit was murdered in Sagar district for the "offence" of sitting in front of upper-caste men. In another shocking case in 2023,

a Dalit school student in Chhatrapur district was beaten simply for sharing a meal with students from a so-called upper caste. Patwari also referred to an incident in Rajasthan where BJP leader Gyandev Ahuja ordered a temple to be "purified" after it was visited by Congress Dalit leader and Leader of Opposition, Tikaram Julie—calling it a disgraceful act that exposed the BJP's regressive views on caste and religion. Highlighting the scale and proximity of caste discrimination, Patwari narrated yet another recent episode from Betma, located near Dr. Ambedkar Nagar (Mhow), Babasaheb Ambedkar's birthplace. A Dalit groom and his wedding procession were stopped from entering a Shri Ram temple despite repeated pleas. The temple authorities and local villagers not only denied entry but also subjected the groom's family to humiliation. Patwari called this a chilling example of how caste bias continues to thrive, even near the very birthplace of the man who fought his entire life to eradicate it.

De Sa shortlisted for Commonwealth Short Story Prize 2025

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Author and former Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh, Anthony de Sa, has added another feather to his illustrious cap. Writing under the pen name Tino de Sa, he has been shortlisted for the prestigious Commonwealth Short Story Prize 2025 for his story 'Tamarind'. This latest literary recognition adds to a long list of achievements by De Sa, who has distinguished himself both as a senior public servant and a literary voice of depth and creativity. Selected from over 8,000 entries across 54 countries, 'Tamarind' is among the top 25 short stories chosen by an international panel of judges. The shortlist, representing



authors from 18 different countries, was announced in London on Tuesday. The final winner will be selected in June. Often referred to as "the Booker Prize of short stories", the Commonwealth Short Story Prize is one of the most prestigious honours in the world of English literature. Being shortlisted itself is a mark of global literary recognition.

De Sa's shortlisted story 'Tamarind' is set in a fictional village in rural Madhya Pradesh, and like much of his work, carries a compelling twist at the end. The story not only showcases his narrative skill but also reflects his deep understanding of the cultural fabric of central India. He has already published three books, including two collections of short stories—'The Disrobing of Draupadi' and 'One For Sorrow, Two For Joy'. His third book, 'The Curious Case of the Nandikote Nawab', a mystery novel for older children, has been included in the reading list by several CBSE schools. His stories often combine sharp social insights with emotional depth and narrative intrigue.

Vaccination camp for Haj pilgrims on April 21

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh State Haj Committee has announced that a vaccination camp for Haj pilgrims from Bhopal district will be organized on April 21, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The camp will be held at the Office of the Chief Medical and Health Officer, Health Card Cell for Haj Pilgrims, located at the Haj House, Gram Singharcholi, behind Gulmohar Garden, Airport Road, Bhopal. This announcement follows the directions of the Committee's Chairperson and Cabinet Minister Ms. Rifat Warsi. As per instructions from the Chief Medical and Health Officer, this special health screening and vaccination drive

is a mandatory part of the pre-departure process for Haj pilgrims from the district. In addition to the camp on April 21 for Bhopal-based pilgrims, another vaccination session for pilgrims from other parts of the district has been scheduled on April 22, 2025, at the JP Hospital in Bhopal. Pilgrims are requested to report during official working hours. All Haj pilgrims from Bhopal district are required to bring a recent passport-size photograph on April 21, along with their Health Card for Haj Pilgrims 2025 (physically printed booklet). After successful health checkup and vaccination, the certificate of vaccination will be officially recorded in this Health Card, which is mandatory to be carried during the entire Haj journey.

Health institutions in district receive certifications

Bhopal: Five more Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in the state capital have received certification from the National Health System Resource Center, taking the total number of certified health institutions in the district to 35. The certification includes primary health centres such as Ayushman Arogya Mandir in Ratibad, scoring 89.51%, and Tumda with 83.46%. Sub-centres like Ayushman Arogya Mandir in Majidgarh (82.83%), Balampur (87.60%), and Pipliya Baj Khan (84.03%) also qualified. This evaluation took place in March.

These institutions join Bhopal's health facilities, including district hospitals, civil hospitals, community health centres, primary health centres, urban health services, and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, all certified under the National Quality Assurance Standard. Ayushman Arogya Mandirs are healthcare centres established to provide comprehensive medical services, particularly for underserved communities. They aim to offer affordable and accessible

healthcare, focusing on primary care, preventive services, and the management of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. The certification process evaluates records, patient services, and feedback from service providers and beneficiaries. The assessment covers eight areas, including service provision, patient rights, support services, clinical care, infection control, quality management, and outcomes. Seven service packages are evaluated for Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, covering areas like maternal and child health, adolescent health, family welfare, non-communicable and communicable diseases, newborn care, outreach activities, and national health programmes. Chief Medical and Health Officer, Dr Prabhakar Tiwari, says that this certification reflects the ongoing efforts by the Madhya Pradesh government to improve healthcare services. In the past three months, 15 health institutions in Bhopal have received quality certificates.

Stubble fires, summer ozone push AQI close to 150

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The Air Quality Index in Bhopal continued to inch dangerously close to 150 for the second consecutive day on Tuesday, amid reports of farmers once again setting fire to crop residues in violation of pollution regulations that seem to have taken a back seat with the arrival of summer. The rise in airborne pollutants coincides with the peak stubble burning season in rural parts of the district, where enforcement efforts have repeatedly faltered, particularly during the warmer months when such practices tend to go unchecked. Winter pollution is typically dominated by smog and partic-

ulate matter, trapped close to the ground by temperature inversions and stagnant air. In contrast, summer pollution stems largely from ground-level ozone, an invisible gas formed when nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from vehicles, industry, and open burning react under intense heat and sunlight. This type of ozone, unlike the protective layer in the upper atmosphere, is hazardous when inhaled. It irritates the respiratory system, reduces lung function, and worsens conditions such as asthma and bronchitis. Health experts warn that summer pollution is no less dangerous than its winter counterpart. While PM2.5 and PM10

can penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream, increasing the risk of heart and respiratory illnesses, ozone exposure can trigger asthma attacks, shortness of breath, and other breathing difficulties—especially among children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing conditions. Meanwhile, waste burning incidents have also been reported from the vicinity of the Putilghar bus terminal in the old city, releasing toxic gases and fine particles into the air and compounding the already worsening situation. Despite repeated violations and growing public health concerns, pollution control authorities have yet to act decisively.

25-year-old youth electrocuted in Sanjay Nagar

Bhopal: A 25-year-old youth, Satish Kakote, died of electrocution on Tuesday morning in the Sanjay Nagar area of Shahjahanabad after an electric current reportedly spread through several homes. The incident occurred around 7 AM and is suspected to have been caused by a technical fault and damaged electrical wiring at the power distribution point (DP) of the electricity department. According to preliminary reports, a short circuit at the DP resulted in a surge that travelled across multiple homes, damaging several appliances and tragically claiming a life. Satish was electrocuted while attempting to leave his house. His brother, Ramu Kakote, said Satish had

touched the metal door while exiting and collapsed instantly from the shock. "Even the TV, fan, and cooler were destroyed," he added. Local residents reported similar damage to electrical appliances in their homes and blamed the electricity department for gross negligence. Many pointed out that the area has witnessed repeated incidents of current leakage and fire outbreaks in DPs over the years, with no long-term solution implemented. Satish's body was sent for post-mortem and later handed over to the family. Police have registered the case, and an investigation is underway in coordination with the power distribution company.

Stray dog bite death in Bhopal renews rabies alarm

KISHAN SINGH RANA ■ Bhopal

Labourer's death following a stray dog bite in the state capital has raised serious public health concerns, highlighting the city's ongoing struggle with rabies prevention and stray animal population control. Bablu Rana, 32, lived beneath the Singarcholi Bridge in Koh-e-Fiza. According to his wife, he was bitten by a stray dog around a month ago. His health worsened steadily, and he died on Saturday night. She said he had been behaving unusually in the days before his death. He started making strange noises and eventually began frothing at the mouth. He passed away shortly after the symptoms worsened. Health officials suspect rabies, a viral disease that is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. India remains one of the worst-affected countries, despite the disease being entirely pre-

ventable with timely treatment. According to the World Health Organisation and the National Centre for Disease Control, rabies kills between 18,000 and 20,000 people in India annually—around 36 percent of the global burden of rabies deaths. The key causes include delayed or absent vaccination after bites, poor public awareness, inadequate medical infrastructure, and an ever-growing stray dog population in both urban and rural settings. Bhopal Municipal Corporation claims it is working to make the city rabies-free by 2030. Its teams, along with the veterinary department, conduct annual sterilisation and anti-rabies vaccination drives targeting 25,000 strays. PP Singh, a sterilisation programme officer, said the city is divided into four zones across 85 wards. Dog squads catch strays and keep them under observation for five to seven days before release.

Treatment for sick and injured animals is provided at Ashra, an animal shelter in Jahangirabad. The shelter handles dogs, cows, buffaloes, and other animals that require veterinary attention or isolation. An action plan to eliminate rabies was submitted to the central government in January this year. A meeting with senior authorities on the plan's implementation is expected in the coming weeks. According to the National Health Mission, rabies treatment is available at all major hospitals. Citizens can report incidents to the toll-free number 1962. A mobile veterinary unit is sent to handle such cases. Studies estimate the stray dog-to-human ratio in urban India is 2.2 to 1. Between January and March this year, Bhopal recorded 6,728 dog bite cases—a sharp rise from previous years. In January, a four-year-old died of rabies at Hamidia Hospital. The child was bitten on the face

and neck. Despite being administered Rabies Immunoglobulin, he could not be saved. Just days later, a seven-month-old infant was mauled to death by stray dogs. Following public outrage, the mayor ordered that 30 dogs be sterilised daily at Bhopal's three ABC sterilisation centres. Officials warned dog owners to keep pets indoors. Legal action was promised against anyone obstructing sterilisation or vaccination drives in any part of the city. NHM expert Dr Rufia said 99 percent of rabies cases in India are caused by dog bites. Symptoms in dogs include aggression, hydrophobia, confusion, frothing at the mouth, and eventual paralysis. Rabies remains a deeply neglected yet deadly disease. While prevention is simple, poor systems and awareness continue to cost lives. Bablu Rana's death is another tragic reminder of that failure.

BTS to host Tamil New Year celebrations

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The Bhopal Tamil Sangam is all set to host the much-anticipated Tamil New Year Celebration 2025 on Sunday, April 20, at Hotel Western, Kolar Road, Bhopal. The event promises to be a vibrant celebration of Tamil heritage, unity, and cultural pride, drawing families, dignitaries, and cultural enthusiasts from across the region. The Tamil New Year, known as Puthandu, marks the beginning of the Tamil calendar year and is celebrated with deep spiritual and cultural significance by Tamil communities worldwide. It symbolizes renewal, prosperity, and gratitude, and holds a particularly special meaning for the Tamil diaspora in Bhopal, who continue to stay rooted in their linguistic and cultural traditions while embracing life in Madhya Pradesh.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
PENSION ADALAT

Wagon Repair Workshop, Jhansi North Central Railways, organizing Pension Adalat on 16 JUNE 2025.

As per the instructions of Railways Board, Pension Adalat will be organized by Wagon Repair Workshop Jhansi on 16.06.2025 (Monday) at 11.00 am in the meeting hall of the CWM Office. Retired employees/dependents of deceased employees. If they have any complaint related to retirement dues or pension, can drop their application in the prescribed format in the box kept in the office till 30.04.2025 or send it by post to the following address.

Postal Address to which the application is to be sent the venue Deputy Chief Personnel Officer, Wagon Repair Workshop, North Central Railway, Jhansi Meeting Hall, CWM Office.

Format of Application

1. Name of the applicant
2. Name of the former employee
3. Ticket number/employee number
4. Designation and last place of work.
5. Relationship of the applicant with the former employee
6. Present address
7. Retirement Date-
8. Type of Retirement (General/Voluntary/Compulsory)
9. P.P.O. Number (Photocopy to be attached)-
10. Last salary and pay scale-
11. Detailed description of complaint-
12. Mobile number and related pay group number.

Note- Please mention Pension Adalat June-2025 on the envelope and provide the application in 03 copies along with all the forms.

North central railways @ www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @ CPRNCR 638/25 (D)

बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र
Bank of Maharashtra
भारत सरकार का उद्यम

ZONAL OFFICE,
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POSSESSION NOTICE [RULE-8(1)]

WHEREAS, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (12) of Section 13 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 21.10.2023 calling upon the borrower and guarantor to repay outstanding Amount (mentioned below) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The notice was sent by Regd Ad Post and hand delivery. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, the undersigned has taken possession (physical) of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on 11.04.2025. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Bank of Maharashtra, Narmdapuram Branch, for an amount herein mentioned below. The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section 8 of Sec 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name & Address of Borrowers & Guarantor (s)	Details of Property
1. Mr. SHEKH AJAJ KURESHI (Applicant) 2. Smt. Rubina Bee (Co applicant) Address of Both:- Ward No 23 Radhe Heights, Spm Gate No 01, Harda Road, Hoshangabad, M.P.-461001	Mortgage of Flat A 413, Shree planet, Khasra No. 112/4, 112/7, 112/8, 112/9 Sr No 17, Adm. area 65.50 sq.mt. CTS 112/4, 112/7, 112/8, 112/9 Survey No. 17, Hoshangabad (M.P.) and boundaries as follows:- North: Flat no. A 412, East: Corridor then open below, West: Open Below, South: Lift & Staircase

Date : 16/04/2025
Place : Narmdapuram

Chief Manager & Authorised Officer
Asset Recovery Cell

Try to uplift underprivileged: Murmu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday asked a group of newly inducted IAS officers to make special efforts for the upliftment of the underprivileged.

Asserting that being in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) gives them an opportunity to bring about transformative changes in the lives of countless people, she said officers should keep in mind the rights and duties of civil servants. "The duties of a public servant are their responsibilities and their rights are the means to fulfil those duties," President Murmu said addressing the IAS officers from the 2023 batch, who are currently serving as assistant secretaries in various Union ministries and departments.

Addressing the IAS officers, she said that they had become IAS officers through extraordinary determination and hard work.

"This has brought about a transformative change in their personal lives. Now with even more determination and dedication, they have the opportunity to bring about transformative changes in the lives of countless people," she said.

Their area of service and authority are so vast that they can make the lives of many fellow citizens better in their first



President Droupadi Murmu during an interaction with a group of IAS officers from the 2023 batch at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre in New Delhi

posting itself, the President said.

She advised them to make special efforts for the upliftment of the underprivileged. President Murmu also advised them to visit the places of posting during their career journey after some time and see the far-reaching results of their work.

The President told officers that their real career story would be created by their work, not by increasing the number of followers on social media.

"Their real social net worth would be determined by their good work," Murmu was quoted as having said in a statement

issued by the President's office. The President said that every public servant should work with honesty of purpose.

"We all face the challenges of environmental pollution and climate change. Pollution of immorality and erosion in values are also very serious challenges. There should be no need to say anything else about being devoted and honest.

"The people who move ahead following life values of honesty, truth, and simplicity are happier. Honesty is the most desirable policy in public service. It is expected from the public servant that they would present examples of integrity and sensitivity in every sphere of life," she said.

President Murmu said that in the digital era, people's aspirations are rising. "They are becoming aware of the accountability of administrators," she told the officers, who had called on the President, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre here.

The President advised officers to develop closeness with their fellow citizens and increase their participation in local efforts. She also advised them to resolve public interest issues raised by people's representatives.

The President said that the development and public welfare work done by them at the local and state level would help in achieving national goals.

Congress slams Centre over fuel, LPG price hikes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Congress on Tuesday targeted the Centre over the hike in excise duty on petrol and diesel and the rise in LPG cylinder prices, demanding the government call a special session of Parliament to discuss inflation and issue a 'white paper' on the matter.

Its women's wing chief Alka Lamba urged the government to immediately reduce the prices of LPG, petrol and diesel, bring a strict policy to tame the prices of essential commodities and announce a special relief package for women and the poor.

"The government has turned its back on inflation. Their only goal is to fill the coffers of the government and private companies. The common person of the country is bearing the brunt of this inflation," she said at a press conference here.

Lamba also compared the prices of petrol, diesel and LPG under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) dispensation and the Narendra Modi government.

"In 2014, the price of petrol was ₹72 per litre. But today, it is ₹98 to ₹100 per litre. In the Congress government, diesel was ₹55 per litre, while under the BJP

government, it has become ₹88 per litre," she said. "In the Congress government, the excise duty on petrol was ₹9.20 per litre, today it has increased to ₹19.90. In 2014, the excise duty on diesel was ₹3.46, today it has increased to ₹15.80. Under the Congress government, the price of crude oil was USD 108 per barrel, but today it is USD 65.31 per barrel," she said.

Lamba said that the Congress was agitating against inflation across the country with women joining the "movement". She alleged that some companies were making profits by looting the public. "Our demand is that a CAG audit should be done in this matter. If this does not happen, it will be clear that BJP is involved in this whole matter," she said.

"The prices of LPG, petrol and diesel should be reduced immediately. A strict policy should be brought to control the prices of essential commodities, a special relief package should be announced for women and poor families and a special session should be called in Parliament to discuss inflation in which a white paper should be issued," Lamba said. The government recently hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹2 per litre each.

Gurugram police arrests 23, busts ₹32.8 Crore cyber fraud network

PARVESH SHARMA ■ Gurugram

In a big, breakthrough, the Gurugram Police arrested 23 persons in cyber fraud cases and unearthed fraud of about ₹32.8 crore across India, police said. The arrested were identified as Abhishek, Hritik, Vipul, Anurool, Siraj, Govind Jha, Digvijay Kumar, Suraj Kumar, Arjun Prasad, Suraj Srivastava alias Sanjay, Sonu Kumar, Gurdeep Singh, Harpal, Sachin Kumar, Vishnu Panwar, Ladduram, Neelam Kumari, Manoj Kumar, Kushaal Meena, Dhara Singh Meena, Naveen Kumar, Antony and Shankar Kumar.

According to the police, After reviewing the data of the 15 mobile phones and 4 SIM cards recovered from the accused by the police from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordinate Center (I4C), it was found that the accused were involved in fraud of about ₹32.8 crore and around 8,565 complaints were registered against them across India.

According to the police, 274 cyber fraud cases were registered against unknown 23 suspects across India of which around 16 cases were registered in Haryana out of which nine cases were registered against them with the Gurugram different cyber crime police stations.

ACP (DLF/Cyber Crime) Vikas Kaushik of the Gurugram police said that information related to mobile phones or SIM cards or laptops or other electronic devices recovered from the accused in any cybercrime case is shared by the Gurugram Cyber Police with the Indian Cyber Crime Co-ordinate Centre.

"While obtaining information related to mobile phone or SIM card or laptop or other electronic devices or equipment and to know how many fraud incidents have been committed by these accused we found that they had duped multiple people worth ₹32.8 crore while using four SIM cards," the ACP said.

The accused duped the people in the name of investment fraud, electricity bill payment fraud, extortion, loan app, fake ID on Instagram, he said.

Further action is being taken regularly on the information obtained by examining the devices recovered from the arrested cyber fraudsters by the Gurugram Police, he added.

Long incarceration no ground for bail in terror cases: Delhi HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has said an undertrial's long incarceration cannot be a ground to grant bail in terror cases, which have country-wide implications and the intent to destabilise the country's unity among other things.

A bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Shalinder Kaur made the observation and denied bail to separatist leader Nayeem Ahmad Khan in a terror-funding case involving Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and 26/11 Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed.

The accused, who challenged a trial court order against his bail plea, argued the trial was not likely to conclude in near future and to balance the period of custody undergone by him with his fundamental right to liberty, he ought to

be granted bail. "While we are aware that the right of an undertrial to a speedy trial is of paramount consideration, in cases involving terrorist activities which have nation-wide implications and where there is an intention to destabilise the unity of the union of India and to disrupt its law and order, more so, to create terror in the minds of general public, which are also factors that weigh in, the long period of incarceration would not, in itself, be ground enough to enlarge an accused on bail," said the bench's order on April 9.

Hurriyat Conference leader Khan was arrested on July 24, 2017 and is currently in judicial custody.

In the case registered in 2017 under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the NIA claimed secessionists entered into a criminal

conspiracy to instigate the general public to resort to violence and create a surcharged atmosphere for the propagation of their agenda in the valley.

The bench noted there was no delay in proceeding with the trial at the prosecution's end and the same had now been fast-tracked

The court, in its decision, observed prima facie, the accused persons, including Khan, conspired for secession of Jammu and Kashmir from the union of India through terrorist activities, which threatened the unity, integrity and security of the nation, and granting him bail would be detrimental to the security and safety of the public as well as the trial.

The court took note of the documentary

evidence, statements of the witnesses and other material found by the prosecution to opine there were reasonable grounds to believe the accusations against Khan to be true, therefore, attracting the limitation on grant of bail under UAPA.

"The evidence prima facie show that the appellant (Khan) was a member of the Hurriyat and the chairman of Jammu and Kashmir National Front and a part of the conspiracy.

"It can prima facie be gathered that the appellant was leading the pro-ISIS rally and had attended the Hurriyat meetings wherein directions were given to organise rallies and anti-India demonstrations, to make anti-national speeches and slogans," the court said.

The order observed protected witnesses had also brought out the nexus between the Hurriyat and the appellant

and the Pakistan establishment as per from the funding received from Pakistan for organising secessionist activities.

"The main purpose of the appellant was to engage himself to create unrest in Jammu and Kashmir," it added.

The bench noted there was no delay in proceeding with the trial on the prosecution's end and the same had now been fast tracked.

"The prosecution is also conscious of the fundamental right of the appellant to liberty and they have also made efforts to expedite the trial by dropping 92 witnesses. A trial hurried is also detrimental to the accused persons.

"Nonetheless, the present is not a case where the appellant is in custody where either the charges have not been framed or that the witnesses are not being examined at regular intervals," the court said.

India, Tanzania boost ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth met Tanzania's Minister of Defence and National Service Stergomena Lawrence Tax in Dar es Salaam and discussed new ways to bolster bilateral ties and cooperation in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations.

The meeting was held on April 14. Seth also called on Vice President of Tanzania Philip Isidor Mpango, the Indian Ministry of Defence said on Tuesday.

During the meeting between Seth and Tax, the ongoing defence cooperation was reviewed and "new ways were explored" to further bolster the ties.

"Training of Tanzanian officers in military training institutes of India, defence industry collaboration, cooperation in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations and cyber security were some of the key areas of cooperation deliberated upon during the meeting," the defence ministry said in a statement.

On April 13, Seth and Tax inaugurated the harbour phase of the Indian Navy's maiden initiative of Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME), a multilateral naval exercise in Dar es Salaam, onboard INS Chennai. A Defence Expo was also inaugurated.

In his address on the occasion, Seth emphasised oneness and unity of purpose to overcome the "vast maritime challenges" and to ensure a peaceful and prosperous future.

Co-hosted by India and Tanzania, the

naval exercise also involves participation of Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa.

During his meeting with the Tanzanian Vice President Mpango, Seth updated him on the Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement cooperation, from Indian defence industries to exercise AIKEYME, and the Defence Expo.

He offered to fulfil the defence requirements of Tanzania People's Defence Force.

India-Tanzania development partnership, cultural connections and cooperation in health and education were also discussed, the statement said.

The exercise represents the commitment of the participating countries to a free, open and secure Indian Ocean.

A "new chapter has been added today" to the growing relations between India and Africa, the Indian defence ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

On April 14, Seth also visited Sanatan Dharma and Swaminarayan Mandir prior to an interaction with the Indian diaspora.

He also participated in Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations organised in the High Commission of India in Tanzania.

During his interaction with the Indian community, Seth highlighted the progress India has made in various spheres in recent years.

He underlined the contribution of the Indian diaspora to the growth and prosperity of not only India but Tanzania too.

IAF salutes late Air Marshal Arjan Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The Indian Air Force extolled the legacy of war hero Marshal Arjan Singh on his 106th birth anniversary on Tuesday, remembering him as a leader who "led from the cockpit" and not just the command room.

An icon in the country's military history, he was the only officer of the IAF to be awarded the rank of Marshal.

Born on April 15, 1919, in Lyallpur in Punjab in undivided India, his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had served in the cavalry.

Singh had led a fledgling IAF in the 1965 India-Pakistan war when he was in his 40s. He died in September 2017 at the age of 98.

On Tuesday, the IAF, the Indian Army, the Chief of Defence Staff and the Ministry of Defence paid homage to the legendary figure and recalled his legacy and contribution to the nation.

"On the 106th Birth Anniversary of the legendary Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh, #IAF honours the remarkable legacy of a visionary leader. Promoted to the rank of #MarshalOfTheAirForce in 2002, he remains the only officer in the history of the IAF to hold the prestigious five-star rank.

#SalutingTheLegend #RememberingArjanSingh #YearsOfDefenceReforms #IAF @DefenceMinIndia @SpokespersonMoD @HQ_IDS_India @adgpi @IndiannavyMedia," the IAF said in a

post on X. The Air Force also shared a short video clip containing a montage of some of the rare photographs of the hero, tracing his journey in the IAF.

"From a young flight cadet to Marshal of the Air Force, Singh's journey began with a fearless heart and a skyward gaze. His early years shaped the legend he became," read a line used in the montage.

"A warrior. A leader. A legend," read another line. The IAF, in the tribute video, said he played a "pivotal role" in shaping the IAF into a "modern formidable force".

The IAF, the Indian Army, the Chief of Defence Staff and the Ministry of Defence paid homage to the Air force legend on his 106th birth anniversary and recalled his legacy

"His leadership during the 1965 war exemplified courage under fire" and he was "a leader who led from the cockpit, not just the command room," the IAF said.

Singh was a highly decorated officer and received the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) in 1944 for his outstanding leadership during a campaign in World War II.

Known for his gallantry and strategic brilliance, he was awarded a Padma Vibushan in 1965.

The IAF also said as the Chief of the

Air Staff, he stayed "deeply connected with flying". The Ministry of Defence, the Indian Army and the CDS paid tributes to him in separate posts on X.

"General Anil Chauhan #CDS and All Ranks of #IndianArmedForces pay tribute to Marshal of the Indian Air Force Arjan Singh, DFC, on his 106th #BirthAnniversary.

"His strategic brilliance and unparalleled contributions to India's military history continue to inspire generations. @DefenceMinIndia @SethSanjayMP @SpokespersonMoD," Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff wrote in a post on X.

The Army in its post on X, wrote: "Remembering the Legend... The #IndianArmy salutes the legacy of Marshal of the Indian Air Force Arjan Singh, DFC, on his 106th Birth Anniversary.

The first Five-Star Rank officer of the #IAF, his exemplary leadership, valour and unwavering dedication to the Nation remains a timeless source of inspiration for generations to come. @HQ_IDS_India @IAF_MCC"

The Ministry of Defence shared a brief profile of him on X and remembered him as a "fearless air warrior".

"Honouring Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh on his 106th birth anniversary. A legendary icon, fearless air warrior, and hero of the 1965 war. His legacy of valour and dedication continues to inspire generations. #ArjanSingh @IAF_MCC," it said.

CBI cracks down on digital arrest scam syndicates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In a major crackdown on syndicates running digital arrest scams, the Central Bureau of Investigation has arrested four people following searches at 12 locations, officials said on Tuesday.

Termining it "Operation Chakra-V", they said the CBI carried out searches in connection with a digital arrests case registered by it on the request of the Rajasthan government in which two persons each were arrested from Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai.

It was alleged that the arrested accused extorted a total of ₹7.67 crore in 42 instalments. The victim was digitally detained for over three months by cybercriminals posing as personnel of various law enforcement agencies, the officials said.

"The CBI has been adopting a multi-pronged approach in investigating digital arrest cases, with a special emphasis on dismantling the infrastructure behind such offences," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

He said the CBI has registered multiple

cases of digital arrests in recent months. The agency conducted an in-depth investigation involving extensive data analysis and profiling after taking over the Rajasthan case.

The agency conducted an in-depth investigation involving extensive data analysis and profiling, arresting four persons after searches at 12 locations

"The CBI employed advanced investigative techniques to identify the perpetrators. Based on the leads generated during the investigation, the CBI conducted extensive searches recently across 12 locations in Moradabad and Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh, Krishnanagar in West Bengal, Mumbai and Jaipur, leading to the arrest of four individuals involved in this highly organised crime syndicate," the spokesperson said.

The agency seized bank account details, debit cards, chequebooks, deposit slips, and digital devices or evidence during the searches, he said.

90 per cent policewomen in constabulary: Report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

India's police force has less than 1,000 women in senior positions like Director-Generals and Superintendents of Police, with 90 per cent of all women in policing serving in the constabulary, according to a new report.

The India Justice Report (IJR) 2025, initiated by Tata Trusts and supported by several civil society organisations and data partners, tracked the performance of states across four areas — Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid.

According to the report, despite growing awareness about the need for gender diversity in law enforcement, not a single state or Union Territory has met its target for women's representation in the police force.

The IJR 2025, released on Tuesday, ranked Karnataka as the top-performing state among the 18 large and mid-sized states in terms of justice delivery, maintaining its position from 2022.

Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu followed Karnataka, with the five southern states outperforming others due to better diversity, infrastructure and staffing across sectors.

The report also underscored gender

disparities within the police hierarchy. Out of 2.4 lakh women in police, only 960 are in the Indian Police Service (IPS) ranks, while 24,322 hold non-IPS officer positions such as Deputy Superintendent, Inspector or Sub-Inspector.

The authorised strength of the Indian Police Service (IPS) is 5,047 officers.

A staggering 2.17 lakh women serve in the constabulary. Madhya Pradesh tops the chart for the highest number of women Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySPs), with 133.

Around 78 per cent of police stations now have Women Help Desks, 86 per cent of prisons are equipped with video conferencing facilities and the per capita expenditure on legal aid has nearly doubled between 2019 and 2023, reaching ₹6.46.

The share of women in the district judiciary has also increased to 38 per cent in the same period.

However, the share of Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs) in the district judiciary remains low at 5 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively.

In the police force, SCs account for 17 per cent and STs 12 per cent, falling short of proportional representation.

Paralegal volunteers (PLVs), considered

a crucial link for access to legal aid, have declined by 38 per cent over five years, with only 3 PLVs per lakh population now available.

There are only 25 psychologists or psychiatrists available across prisons nationwide, the report said.

The IJR also flags serious infrastructural and staffing deficiencies across the justice system. India has just 15 judges per million people, far below the Law Commission's 1987 recommendation of 50.

High Courts are operating with 33 per cent vacancies and district courts with 21 per cent, leading to massive workloads — up to 15,000 cases per judge in High Courts like Allahabad and Madhya Pradesh. District court judges, on average, are handling 2,200 cases each.

Prison overcrowding is another area of concern, with a national average occupancy rate of 131 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh has some of the worst instances — one in every three jails there holds over 250 per cent of its capacity, the report said.

Furthermore, the availability of medical personnel in jails remains inadequate, with the prisoner-doctor ratio standing at 775:1 against the recommended 300:1.

In many large states, including Haryana, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, this ratio exceeds 1,000:1.

Among the small states, Sikkim retained the top rank, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh.

Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Odisha showed the most improvement among large and mid-sized states between 2022 and 2025. Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand also improved, surpassing Gujarat and Haryana on the improvement index.

The report also evaluated the functioning of 25 State Human Rights Commissions and featured essays on access to justice for persons with disabilities and mediation as an alternative dispute resolution method.

With India's prison population projected to hit 6.8 lakh by 2030, the IJR warned that unless systemic reforms are prioritised, the justice system will continue to disproportionately burden the vulnerable and marginalised.

The report has sourced information from official portals such as the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Law and Justice, National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and Prison Statistics India, among others.

Bihar polls: Tejashwi meets senior Congress leaders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Patna/New Delhi

With Assembly elections due in politically volatile state of Bihar, the stakeholder leaders and partners have started putting their weight as the ruling alliance member JD(U) asserted on Tuesday that Nitish Kumar will be the NDA's chief ministerial face in the Bihar Assembly polls, former Deputy Chief Minister and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav met senior Congress leaders.

Yadav called on party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, to discuss the Mahagathbandhan's preparedness for the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls and exuded confidence that INDIA bloc government will be formed in the state. Yadav, along with RJD MPs Manoj Jha and Sanjay Yadav, met the Congress leadership at Kharge's residence. He urged the media not to speculate over Mahagathbandhan's (grand alliance) chief ministerial face and said the constituents would talk among themselves and decide.

The meeting comes amid indications that hard bargaining is on the cards among Mahagathbandhan allies, with all parties looking to strengthen their hold on

the ground. The meeting also comes weeks after Congress firmed up its strategy for the upcoming Bihar assembly polls at a meeting. Last month, the Congress said it would contest the elections as part of the INDIA bloc and asserted that the alliance partners would take a "collective decision" on the chief ministerial face. The RJD-led Mahagathbandhan is looking to wrest power from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the Assembly polls, which are due later this year.

"I don't know why you all are worried about the CM face; we will talk among ourselves and decide. Things will become clear; you all should not worry about it," the former Deputy Chief Minister said.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting with Congress leaders, Yadav alleged that Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar has been "hijacked" by the BJP. "Nitish ji has been hijacked. Amit Shah has been saying that they will fight elections under his leadership but does not say he will become the CM," Yadav said.

He said the Congress and the RJD will sit in Patna to finalise a strategy and asserted that the INDIA bloc is committed to taking Bihar on the path of progress.

"The government that has been there for



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with LoP in the Lok Sabha and party leader Rahul Gandhi and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav during a meeting in New Delhi

20 years in Bihar and PM Modi is at the helm for 11 years... Amid all this, Bihar has been given step-motherly treatment. Bihar is the most economically backward (state), with the lowest per capita income, lowest

farmers' income and highest migration. We all want to fight the elections on real issues," Yadav said. "We are in the opposition. It is our responsibility to highlight the limitations of the government to the public,"

he said. The RJD leader asserted that it is certain that there won't be an NDA government in Bihar and an INDIA bloc government will be formed.

"Today we met the former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Tejashwi Yadav, and discussed the strength of the Mahagathbandhan. In the coming elections, we will give the people of Bihar a strong, positive, just and welfare option. Bihar will be freed from BJP and its opportunistic thug alliance," Kharge said in a statement on social media.

Rahul Gandhi also shared pictures from the deliberations on his WhatsApp channel and called it an "important meeting." Congress general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal, Bihar Congress chief Rajesh Kumar and AICC Bihar in-charge Krishna Allavaru were also present in the meeting. Asked if Tejashwi would be CM's face, Kumar did not give a direct reply and said, "We will sit on different dates and discuss all the points".

With the opposition seizing on Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini's remarks to mount an attack on the BJP and its treatment of allies, JD(U) national spokesperson Rajeev Ranjan Prasad shrugged off the Haryana leader's comment and asserted that the rul-

ing alliance faces no crisis over its chief ministerial face in Bihar. Saini had said at an event on Monday that the BJP's victory march will continue in polls, and it will be achieved under Choudhary's leadership in Bihar. "The Bihar elections will be held under the leadership of Nitish Kumar, and he will be the face of the National Democratic Alliance. CM Nitish Kumar will head the NDA government which is certain to be formed after the elections for a full term till 2030," Prasad said.

He said senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah has spoken on similar lines in the past and took a swipe at the opposition INDIA bloc, claiming that it is going to unravel in Bihar as it has in many other states.

He noted that while RJD has declared Tejashwi Yadav as its chief ministerial face, Congress leader Sachin Pilot had said recently that a decision on their alliance's leader in Bihar will be taken after the elections, expected to be held later this year. He claimed that Yadav had returned empty-handed from his meeting with Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and senior party leader Rahul Gandhi. The NDA will notch up its biggest-ever win in the coming polls in Bihar, he said.

No protest against Waqf Act in Assam, says Himanta

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said no protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 will be allowed in the state and suggested that the agitators present their side before the Supreme Court.

After its enactment earlier this month, several individuals and groups have challenged the controversial legislation, which seeks to improve the functioning of Waqf properties, address complexities, ensure transparency and introduce technology-driven management.

"The case is with the Supreme Court. If anyone has anything to say, please present it before the apex court as it can be properly discussed there. If someone hits the streets in Assam against the Waqf Act, then people will also hit the streets in support of the legislation. It will lead to a clash, which we don't want," Sarma told reporters.

He reminded the All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) that if the organisation opposes the law, then there are people who support it.

"We don't need any conflict. The brotherhood should be maintained for the progress of Assam. That's why we should



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attends Sri Sri Vishnu Hajanta at Barnadi in Nalbari district on Tuesday

be able to differentiate between good and bad. If anyone opposes the Waqf Act, I have nothing to say and I suggest him to go to the Supreme Court.

"Those who are supporting the Act should also go to the apex court. We went to the SC yesterday in support of the Act.

ASSAMESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATED WITH FERVOUR

Guwahati: The Assamese New Year was welcomed with festive fervour by people across the state on Tuesday, with all praying for a prosperous and fulfilling year ahead.

Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma wished the people on the occasion, hoping that the Rongali, or Bohag, Bihu celebrations will reaffirm the age-old harmony in the state.

"I extend my heartiest greetings on the occasion of Rongali Bihu and Assamese New Year," Acharya said in a post on X. "May this Rongali Bihu strengthen further our age-old harmony and bring prosperity and happiness to all," he added. The Rongali Bihu celebrations had started on Monday with 'Garu Bihu',

centering around cattle, with the first day of the month of Bohag on Tuesday marked as 'Manuh Bihu', when people greet each other. The festivities typically continue for nearly the entire month, with the first week of Bohag dedicated to celebrating different aspects and elements of nature and people. The CM, taking to the micro-blogging site, affirmed his government's commitment to the welfare of the people.

"Today, from Kamakhya to Kachakanti, people across Assam are welcoming the New Year and celebrating Assam's success in the year gone by," he said. "On this day, our Government renews its commitment to make Assam as one of Bharat's top 5 states and ensure the welfare of every citizen," the Chief Minister Sarma added.

But we will not allow anything to take place on the roads," Sarma said.

Agitators and the police clashed during a rally against the Waqf (Amendment) Act in Cachar district of Assam on Sunday. The protesters pelted the police with stones while the law enforcers dispersed them with batons.

After the clash, the Cachar district administration imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS) across the dis-

trict. The Act proposes that an officer above the rank of collector will investigate government properties claimed as Waqf. In case of disputes, the senior government official will have the final say on whether a property belongs to Waqf or the government.

This replaces the earlier system where such decisions were made by Waqf tribunals. The Act also allowed the inclusion of non-Muslim members in the central and state Waqf boards for inclusivity.

West Bengal is burning, but CM is silent, says Yogi

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Hardoi

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched a scathing attack on the Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal government on Monday, accusing it of inaction amid the recent violence in Murshidabad during protests against the Waqf Amendment Act.

Addressing a public gathering in Hardoi, Adityanath said, "Danda (the stick) is the only treatment for rioters." He alleged that Bengal is in flames while its Chief Minister remains silent. "Bengal is burning. The Chief Minister is calling rioters' peace ambassadors. This is not secularism — it is licence for anarchy," he declared. Invoking a Hindi proverb, Adityanath said, "Laton ke bhoot baaton se nahi maante (Those who understand only the language of beatings don't respond to words)." He drew parallels between the law-and-order situation in Bengal and pre-2017 UP, claiming that before the BJP came to power in the state, riots were a near-daily occurrence.

The UP Chief Minister also targeted the

Congress and Samajwadi Party, accusing them of maintaining a "conspiratorial silence" on the Bengal violence. "They (the rioters) are issuing threats shamelessly. If they admire Bangladesh so much, they should go there. Why should they be a burden on India?" he said. The unrest in Murshidabad erupted during protests against the amendments to the Waqf Act, resulting in the deaths of three people and widespread damage to homes and property. In response, the Calcutta High Court directed the deployment of central forces in the affected areas to restore order and reassure the public. Meanwhile, Mamata Banerjee has appealed for peace, emphasising that the controversial Waqf law amendments were enacted by the Central Government, not the state. She reiterated her opposition to the changes but urged citizens not to resort to violence.

The incident has reignited political tensions between the BJP and the Trinamool Congress, with law and order, minority appeasement, and the Centre-state divide taking centre stage ahead of upcoming elections.

Modi to inaugurate 250 key projects in Kanpur

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Kanpur

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Kanpur on April 24, where he is likely to address a massive public rally at the Chandrashekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSA) grounds. Preparations for the high-profile visit have already begun, with senior administrative and party officials on the ground to oversee arrangements.

Sources indicate that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath may visit Kanpur on April 16 or 17 to review the preparations and hold meetings with district officials regarding ongoing development projects and event logistics.

During his visit, the Prime Minister may also take a short ride on the Kanpur Metro from Nayaganj to Geetnagar. On Tuesday, District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh inspected the Nayaganj Metro Station and discussed security and route arrangements. The metro journey is expected to be a symbolic showcase of the city's growing urban infrastructure.

The Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone and inaugurate a total of 250 development projects across Uttar Pradesh, with the department-wise list currently being finalised.

Key among these are the newly con-

structed Panki Power Plant and the Neyveli Power Plant in Ghatampur, which are already operational and supplying electricity to both the state and the central grid. These projects will be inaugurated virtually from the rally venue.

Preparations at Chandrashekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology grounds are in full swing. Initially, the rally was to be held at the Railway Ground in Nirala Nagar, but the venue was later shifted to the CSA campus. Equipment for setting up the stage and pandal has already been delivered, and late-night inspections by senior officials, including ADM City Rajesh Kumar, are being conducted to ensure readiness.

According to preliminary plans, PM Modi's chopper will land at the Chakeri Airport, from where he will fly directly to Chandrashekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology via another chopper. After addressing the gathering, he is expected to travel by car to Nayaganj Metro Station, board a metro to Geetnagar, and then return to the rally site.

Officials from the district administration, police, and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are coordinating closely to ensure seamless execution of the Prime Minister's visit, which is seen as a significant moment ahead of upcoming political developments in the state.

Coast Guard seizes sea cucumber in Tamil Nadu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Tuesday said it has seized 145 kilograms of sea cucumbers worth ₹58 lakh during an anti-poaching operation at Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu.

Sea cucumber harvesting and trade are banned in India under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

"On April 13, 2025, Indian Coast Guard Station in Mandapam seized 145 kilograms of illegal sea cucumbers worth Rs 58 lakh during an anti-poaching operation. A major step towards safeguarding our marine environment and curbing illegal transshipment," the coast guard posted on microblogging site X.

The coast guard and Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) had on Monday seized 300 kilograms of drugs valued at ₹1,800 crore, which smugglers dumped into the Arabian Sea before fleeing across the International Maritime Boundary Line.

According to a statement issued by the ICG on Monday, the seized contraband, suspected to be methamphetamine, has been handed over to the ATS for further probe.

The coast guard and ATS had carried out a joint operation near the International Maritime Boundary Line in the Arabian Sea off Gujarat on the intervening night of April 12 and 13, the statement said.



145 kg of illegal sea cucumbers seized by Indian Coast Guard during an anti-poaching operation

Bomb threat to Ram Temple triggers panic

KAMLESH SRIVASTAVA ■ Ayodhya

A threatening email claiming a plan to blow up the under-construction Ram Temple in Ayodhya triggered a wave of panic late Monday night. The email, received on the official account of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, warned authorities to "increase the security of the temple."

Following the threat, a comprehensive search and security operation was launched across Ayodhya. Police and intelligence agencies, along with bomb disposal squads, swept the temple premises and nearby sensitive areas. Security measures were also ramped up in adjoining districts including Barabanki.

An FIR was registered at the Ayodhya Cyber police station based on a complaint filed by Mahesh Kumar, Accounts Officer of the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust. The Cyber Cell has launched a probe to trace the origin of the email and identify the sender.

Authorities have not taken the threat lightly, especially given the high-profile nature of the Ram Temple project and the upcoming religious events expected to draw massive crowds.

Senior police officials confirmed that additional forces have been deployed and surveillance has been intensified in and around the Ram Janmabhoomi complex. "We are treating the matter with utmost seriousness," a police spokesperson said.

In view of the sensitivity of the matter, security alerts were also issued in adjoining districts such as Barabanki, Gonda, and Basti. Checkpoints were set up at district borders, and inter-district vehicle movement was put under strict scrutiny.

The Ram Janmabhoomi Trust expressed concern over the threat but also assured the public that faith and security would not be shaken by such attempts. "The temple construction is a symbol of national pride and faith. We are cooperating fully with the administration to ensure the security of the site and the devotees," a senior Trust member said.

With several religious events and festivals scheduled in the coming weeks, the latest security scare has prompted the administration to review its preparedness.

Meanwhile, the district administration has appealed to the public to remain calm and cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

Jaishankar inaugurates gymnastic hall

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Rajpipla (Gujarat)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, a Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat, on Tuesday inaugurated a new gymnastic hall upgraded with modern equipment, as well as a smart classroom and an anganwadi built with MPLAD funds in Narmada district.

On the second day of his Gujarat tour, he also visited a Post Office Passport Seva Kendra at Rajpipla town in the tribal-dominated district. In a post on X, the BJP Member of Parliament commended the Centre's effort in providing "smooth and efficient passport services at grassroots level."

The Union Minister visited Lachras, one of the villages adopted by him in the district, and inaugurated a smart anganwadi (child care centre) and a digital classroom. "In the age of mobile, smart classrooms make school interesting for students," he told media persons after inaugurating the facility.

"When I became a minister six years ago and visited Narmada district for the first time, people demanded a passport centre.



External Affairs Minister inaugurating a gymnastic hall at Rajpipla in Narmada district of Gujarat

I visited there after a long time, and it is working fine with 30-40 appointments a day. Facilitates for passports have increased, and people think I have done something good for them as the External Affairs Minister," he said.

"Visited Post Office Passport Seva Kendra, Rajpipla. Commend their efforts in providing smooth and efficient passport services at grassroots level," the diplomat-turned-politician said in a post.

UP gears up for assistant teacher exam at 52 centres

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

As part of its Mission Rozgar initiative, the Uttar Pradesh government has made comprehensive preparations to ensure that the upcoming written examination for the post of Assistant Teacher (Sahayak Acharya) is conducted in a fair, transparent and free manner. The examination will be held on April 16 and 17 across two shifts at 52 centres in six districts — Agra, Meerut, Prayagraj, Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Varanasi.

Reaffirming his zero-tolerance policy on malpractice, CM Yogi has issued clear instructions to ensure that no examination is tainted by unfair practices. To safeguard the integrity of the recruitment process, sector and static magistrates will be deployed at every centre, supported by comprehensive security measures.

District Magistrates have been directed to deploy fully armed police personnel at each examination venue. They have

also been granted authority to enforce prohibitory orders if required.

A total of 82,876 candidates are expected to appear for the exam. Among them, the highest number — 18,240 — will take the exam in Prayagraj, followed by 16,010 in Meerut, 15,602 in Gorakhpur, 13,528 in Lucknow, 10,958 in Varanasi, and 8,538 in Agra. The maximum number of centres - 10 each - have been established in Meerut, Prayagraj and Gorakhpur, followed by 9 in Lucknow, 7 in Varanasi and 6 in Agra.

In line with CM commitment to restoring youth confidence in the recruitment process, the examination will be held under the joint supervision of the commission and district administration. The Chairman of the Commission, nominated members, district and centre supervisors will monitor the entire process to ensure transparency and merit-based evaluation — giving every deserving candidate a fair chance.

Editor's TAKE

Babasaheb and the battle for justice

The truest tribute to Dr Ambedkar is to see the work he began through to completion

As the nation marked the 135th birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar — the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a tireless champion of equality — a deeply unsettling incident unfolded in Indore district of Madhya Pradesh, the place where Dr Ambedkar was born. In Indore district's Sanghi village, a Dalit bridegroom seeking blessings at a local Ram temple was denied entry when members of the Rajput community forcibly locked the temple doors. The situation escalated into a major controversy, and despite the presence of police, the authorities remained unable to defuse the tension or uphold the groom's right to worship. This is exactly what Dr Ambedkar fought for throughout his life — dignity to the people and equal rights for all, clearly still a far cry in many parts of the country including his hometown.

Every year Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar Jayanti is celebrated to pay tribute to a towering intellect, a tireless reformer, and the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. But the work he started is still unfinished. A lot needs to be done when it comes to social equality, justice, and liberty. This is where Babasaheb's legacy guides us. It continues to inspire millions, especially those fighting for equality, justice, and dignity in modern India.

Dr Ambedkar served as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly. Entrusted with the monumental task of crafting the legal backbone of independent India in a caste divided society, he approached it with clarity, wisdom, and an unshakeable commitment to liberty, equality, and fraternity. He ensured that the Constitution enshrined fundamental rights for all citizens, irrespective of caste, creed, or gender — a radical and visionary step at the time. One of his most enduring legacies is his insistence on constitutional morality — the idea that institutions must function according to ethical and legal principles, not merely the will of the majority. His emphasis on social democracy as the foundation for political democracy remains deeply relevant today.

Born on April 14, 1891, in Mhow (now officially Dr Ambedkar Nagar), a town in the Indore district in Madhya Pradesh state of India, into a Dalit family, Dr Ambedkar's early life was marred by discrimination and exclusion. Yet, he rose through sheer brilliance and perseverance. He earned multiple doctorates from prestigious institutions, including Columbia University and the London School of Economics, becoming one of the most educated Indian leaders of his time. Despite his global education, Ambedkar never distanced himself from the struggles of the oppressed. He turned his intellect into a weapon against caste oppression, tirelessly working to uplift marginalised communities through education, legal rights, and political representation. Dr Ambedkar's thoughts were rooted in human dignity, rationalism, and social justice. He believed that political independence was meaningless without social equality. He was also a sharp critic of the caste system and Hindu orthodoxy. His decision to embrace Buddhism in 1956, along with millions of his followers, was both a spiritual and political act — a rejection of caste-based discrimination and an embrace of a religion founded on compassion, reason, and equality. He has been posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award. However, till India becomes as he wanted it to be — free from injustices and treating all individuals equals his work remains unfinished. Dr Ambedkar was a visionary and saw that the work he started was not easy and would take decades, if not centuries, to complete. As India reflects on his legacy, Dr Ambedkar's words serve as a reminder and a warning: "However good a Constitution may be, if those who are implementing it are not good, it will prove to be bad." His vision was not just about drafting laws — it was about awakening the moral soul of a nation.

Leaderspeak



On behalf of all the countrymen, I bow down to Bharat Ratna Pujya Babasaheb on his birth anniversary. It is due to his inspiration that the country is dedicatedly engaged in realising the dream of social justice today. His principles and ideals will give strength and momentum to the creation of a self-reliant and developed India.

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

Saluting the Gorkha spirit

From World War trenches to high-altitude patrols, and now well into their centenarian years, these warriors — my comrades, my teachers, my brothers — carry their legacy with the same quiet pride as they once did a *khukuri*

In my nearly 66 years of trekking and travelling in Nepal, from a Second Lieutenant to a General, in every rank, I have savoured Nepal at its best — from dawn to dusk and at night glow with fireflies. Especially meeting Nepal's greatest gift to mankind, the Gorkha soldier. His name is emblematic of everything tough, brave and never to be messed with — and not for the faint-hearted.

The khukuri, madal, share, Khukuri rum, Gorkha beer and the list goes on; are all synonymous with the soldier. Whether during the two World Wars, Falklands, Borneo, Kashmir, Sylhet, or Jaffna, the Gorkha has left his indomitable imprint. As there is no expiry date for his use, after retiring he has been called out as fighter — contractor in Afghanistan, several places in the Middle East and North Africa, and other places under the radar for even rogue operations. The pedestal the Gorkha occupies in India will soon vanish if the government persists with the demented Agniveer policy, willy-nilly wiping out a strategic asset from the 'colonial' era.

There is a flicker of hope that the absurdity inflicted on the Indian Army — which has damaged deterrence and combat capability — will be removed sooner than later. In my travels and trekking in Nepal since 1959 — worth 60,000 km — I have met Victoria Cross winners, Mahavir Chakra awardees and other gallantry award notables.

But with very difficult conditions in Nepal in the past, their survival rate was low. Now, with development in inaccessible places, health and education improving, and the vintage habits of old soldiers fading, the new Gorkha is living longer. There is no one better than me to make this judgment, as I have seen Nepal transform in slow motion over the years. My Holi travels last month touched Pokhara, Sallyan, Rolpa, Piuthan, Ghorai and Tikapur, where at most places I met old soldiers, some of whom even accompanied me on my climb to Swargadwar, the famous shrine in West Nepal.

I had not met many burros — as pensioners are endearingly called — who were older than me. But last year, while distributing awards to burhos above 80 years, I met 92-year-old Khetiram Pun from our 3-inch mortar platoon.

He was my Guruji when I joined my VC battalion 2/5 Gorkha Rifles FF in 1957 in Kashmir. But this Holi, occurred the mother of all surprises — attending the 106th birthday party in full Gurung style



of our own Havildar Ramprasad Gurung on 18th March; and one week later, the 99-year-old Havildar, Tejbahadur Thapa. The young Gurung joined the battalion as a 16-year-old in 1939. The Master of Ceremonies at his birthday party introduced Ramprasad with his Army number 5430423, adding that he was from Gandaki Pradesh, Syangjah district, Putlibazar Nagapalika, Oda no 6, Kolma-Pokhrichap, Majhakot ghar. Gurung was from B Company, 2/5 GR VC Paltan, who retired with 21 years of service in May 1961, fought in World War II mainly in Burma from 1939 to 1945, then was in Japan with the British Occupation Force. Later, in 1961, he served in Kashmir, and before that from 1946 in NEFA, Nagaland and Calcutta.

His only daughter, 59-year-old Jhaman Kumari, was the envy of attention and query. All of Kolma-Pokhrichap appeared to have descended on Pokhara to join the festivities. We represented his beloved battalion and were squeezed into the elaborate Tamu Samaj protocol and allotted a short window to congratulate Gurung. I recalled visiting Kolma

Pokhrichap in 1959, 66 years earlier. The cake-cutting ceremony was unique: the icing on the two cakes was used as a tika to be planted on the forehead. Every well-wisher is trying to put a pinch of cake into Gurung's overloaded mouth. Daughter Jhaman Kumari's yells of 'bhayo bhayo' (stop) — his mouth cannot take any more cake — go unheard. Gurung is unable to speak and not unhappy about it.

He is covered with confetti, icing, khatas (scarves) and gifts. Loud Nepali music signals the start of the feast. They're serving Old Durbar whiskey, Khukuri rum, Gorkha Strong beer and the hill favourite, Kodo ko Rakshi. After the mammoth menu of snacks of every edible two-legged and four-legged, there is dal, bhat and masu, without which no celebration is considered complete. The 106-year-old Gurung would have liked to recall his patrol encounters with the Japanese near Basha Hill in which he was wounded. But he has lost his voice. Fully repaired, Gurung returned to the battalion to survive the fateful Sittang River crossing in 1942.

Gurung's celebrations are covered in local newspapers as well as Annapurna Express and Naya Patrika. My second encounter a week later is with a 13-month-shy of a century-old soldier in Ghorai. His career graph is more colourful and enchanting than the 106-year-old

Gurung's. Havildar Tej Bahadur Thapa was born on 5 May 1926 and joined 2/8 GR, was transferred to 6/8 GR and again moved to 3/8 GR, where he was Signal (communications) Havildar. He too fought in the Burma jungles and at the end of the war, was chosen among 1350 Indian soldiers led by Brig JN Chaudhury, who later became Indian Army Chief, at Victory Parade 1945 in London. After retiring from the Indian Army, Thapa joined Nepal Police by fudging his age by five years. He told me triumphantly: 'I have three dates of birth and get two pensions: one from India, one from Nepal. Next year my Indian pension will double.' His memory is crystal clear and his art of mixing nostalgia with encounters of war, spellbinding.

He walks with a medical stick and has a hazy vision but imbibes with gay abandon. He loves Blue Riband gin, Tuborg beer — which we split — and of course, Old Monk Rum. But he also has local rakshi. He's a perfect specimen from Jumlepani village made famous by late Hony Capt Indrabir Thapa, Sardar Bahadur, OBI, MBE, MC from my VC Paltan. I must be blessed to have met two great old soldiers.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. Views are personal)

Human trait: Excusing the inexcusable

SECOND Opinion

BY RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It is one of the reasons why mankind has been unable to solve many national and international problems. Man, who is considered rational, has been using his reasoning in a wrong and perverted way. He has either been rationally explaining the defects of his personality and flaws of his character as his sterling virtues, or he has been using reason wrongly to justify his uncivilised behaviour as necessary for the well-being of his community or the security of his country.

He has been rationalising even his vulgar, barbarous, or animalistic behaviour as biologically 'natural', psychologically justified, and politically beneficial. Like, in the past, until recently, any woman who gave birth to many children was considered 'very fertile' and the father of those children was considered as 'potent', 'manly' or 'masculine' in character. In other words, people adored his libidinousness and her sexual vigour, rather than took notice of the lack of self-restraint or self-control on the part of the man and the woman.

Likewise, one who could slaughter large numbers of people, even for a tyrant ruler or for an aggressive and ambitious nation, was considered a 'brave warrior', a 'courageous soldier' or a 'national hero'. In other words, people praised the quality of one's being a greater butcher, i.e. a killer, and less attention was paid to the quality of forgiveness or compassion.

Moreover, they rationalised aggression as an 'instinct', as an in-built psychological response, or as genetically correct behaviour. It is this kind of rationalisation that has resulted in the present state of the world. Man's faults of character have now acquired global dimensions and are now threatening the very existence of society. Yet his attempt to rationalise his irrational behaviour continues to be. Man's arguments justifying his habits of smoking, drinking alcohol or taking a non-vegetarian diet also are due to his tendency to rationalise the irrational. A matter of more pity is that he does not recognise that he is arguing in favour of irrational and harmful behaviour.

Unless he realises this wrong tendency, no global problem can be solved. As stated earlier, this tendency to rationalise the irrational has led to small and individual defects taking the form of global problems. For example, man's libidinous tendencies, which were earlier justified on biological or psychological grounds, have now resulted in the grave danger caused by over-population, promiscuity, illegitimate children, rapes, abductions and the threat of the spread of AIDS.

The threat caused by overpopulation is not less than the one caused by nuclear weapons. Yet man does not try to have self-restraint, self-control or continence. Instead, he tries to rationalise his irrational and errant behaviour since that suits his perverted instincts, and emotions, and gives him short-lived pleasure even though it is a great strain upon his stamina and moral health.

The same can be said of his tendencies of aggression and greed. His justification of his self-interest and the wrong notion of security has led the world into the morass of grave econom-

ic imbalance and the race for war weapons. Hence there is an urgent need to put man's rational faculty on the right track and, thereby, enable him to put an end to his irrational, irresponsible and injurious behaviour to save mankind from several global upheavals.

There was a time when defects in man's personality or faults in his character were considered as of individual concern. It was thought that society had no cause to bother about an individual's habits, as it was believed that these can, at the most, be of concern to one's family members or a few individuals who directly interact with that man. But now, with our better understanding, we know that defects in man's personality are of concern not only to that individual but to the whole society as well because individual defects add up to global problems. Smoking, for example, is not only injurious to the health of the man who smokes but it is injurious to others also who do not smoke but are exposed to tobacco smoke.

The libidinousness and the aggressiveness of individuals, as already explained, have now led to the problems of high population growth and a huge stockpile of war weapons respectively. The whole society has thus to suffer because of these habits of the individuals. The way to solve these problems now lies in the inner transformation of the individual but this is not possible unless man first gives up the habit of rationalising his irrational behaviour and justifying his bad habits of perverted instincts by employing faulty reasoning.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Larger than life cut-outs are menacing

Madam — The giant cut-outs of the candidates during the time of election in our country make them appear as larger-than-life characters. This is to create supermen out of democratic leaders and to generate bhakti and awe among us for them. However, such an effort is surely against the concept of democracy. Bhakti for a superman is a roadblock to safeguarding the essence of democracy. B. R. Ambedkar categorically said, "In politics, Bhakti or hero worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship."

Hero worship emanates from a slavish mindset, which interestingly wants to enslave others. On the other hand, a person who does not have a slavish mentality will never try to enslave others. Abraham Lincoln once said, "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy." "You — master — me — slave" or "Me — master — you — slave" mentality is nothing but two sides of the same coin — and both are equally dangerous for a democracy. Bhakti in politics injects a TINA (There Is No Alternative) factor into our mindset. Ironically, this TINA has a "No" within it which says no to other leaders and no to any democratic change — which is indispensable for the survival of democracy. Thus, bhakti in politics makes democracy slip into a dictatorship, as bhakti and awe are the basic ingredients of manufacturing a dictator. Indeed, bhakti in politics weakens democratic shakti.

SUJIT DE | KOLKATA

Congress party revamps itself

Madam — Apropos the news report "Rahul Gandhi launches pilot to strengthen district units" published on 15 April, here is my response. Congress held its first AICC session in the state of Gujarat since 1961, as it has been out of power in Gujarat for almost three decades now — and it laid down a revival plan, from reviving the organisation to pledging a caste census. Congress's biggest rival — the ruling BJP — is a cadre-based party, and this is where the grand old party lacks the most. We hope that it has realised its biggest weakness. It has to build an effective organisation at the grass-roots level across the country. District committees and district-level leadership is a step in this direction — but how Congress would be able to manage this in the strongly established high-command culture, where Gandhi's way or the highway prevails, will be interesting to watch.

Almost all Congress state units are in disarray, and whether district-level leadership will unite them — or widen the gulf further — will decide Congress's fate in future state elections, including the Gujarat elections to be held in two years' time. The CWC session from the land of Mahatma Gandhi will decide which path Congress will usher into. At the moment, all that Congress needs is a sense of direction and purpose — which it must find to remain relevant in the game.

BAL GOVIND | NOIDA

Now enjoy sleep tourism

Madam — Although tourism and vacation is the most preferred time for any individual who wants to have fun with family and friends — to the surprise of the world, after ecotourism, cultural tourism, and medical tourism, a new variant is paving its way into the current world order: sleep tourism.

The level of tiredness and exhaustion is so high these days that the world needs more sleep for bodily rejuvenation than anything else. To the tiring world, deep sleep is — no doubt — the ultimate panacea which everyone is searching for. Sleep tourism is the need of the hour for the fast-forward, rushing world that is constantly chasing things with an unstoppable approach.

There was a time when tourism was all about exploring, adventure, and recreation. As we all had health soundness, we could better enjoy vacations. But with time, the level of physical, mental, and emotional fatigue has increased — and as a result, man is in search of health soundness, happiness, and mental peace.

Then many new forms of tourism were added — village tourism, medical tourism, and even slum tourism. The latest one to join is, of course, sleep tourism. The idea of sleep tourism is actually welcome in this world like Piccadilly Circus — because, at the end of the day, the art of rest is what

KIRTI | WADHAWAN

THE SC CURBS GOVERNORS' POWERS TO WITHHOLD BILLS INDEFINITELY

The Supreme Court curbed the power of the President to indefinitely delay the enactment of state legislation in a judgement that is bound to have serious repercussions on the Indian polity — especially in helping restore the balance between the Centre and the states in India's federal structure.

And it will be taken as a welcome strike in favour of states' rights that had been casually infringed upon by an authoritarian Centre that has little respect for democratic norms and federal principles.

The Supreme Court judgement settling the dispute between Tamil Nadu Governor R. N. Ravi and the ruling DMK government over the clearing of Bills speaks volumes about the courage demonstrated by the apex Court.

This is yet another bold milestone that is rarely seen these days — when the borderline between the executive and the judiciary often gets blurred, to

the peril of the institution of democracy that rests on the three pillars of the legislature, executive, and judiciary functioning independent of one another. It is in the interest of a healthy Indian democracy that its three pillars — the legislature, executive, and judiciary — run at cross purposes, rather than their interests converge.

After the 8 April judgement, the Tamil Nadu government notified 10 pending Bills as Acts in the government gazette, citing: "There is no 'pocket veto' or 'absolute veto' available to the President in discharge of his functions under Article 201.

The use of the expression 'shall declare' makes it mandatory for the President to make a choice between the two options available under the substantive part of Article 201 — that is, to either grant assent or to withhold assent to a Bill," the bench said.

YASH PAL RALHAN | JALANDHAR

Bridging education and employability

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promises a sweeping transformation of India's education system. Its success hinges not just on vision, but on action, investment, and a unified national commitment to reimagining education for the 21st century

FIRST Column



DINESH SOOD

with a vocational training kit, could promote enrollment. An increased stipend of ₹1,000 per month for students who continue in vocational training through their higher classes would further incentivise sustained commitment. Graduating students should receive certification after four years, bolstering their employability both domestically and internationally.

Bridging the Skill Gap

India, with over 260 million students in 1.5 million schools and more than 40 million in higher education, holds one of the largest student populations globally.

Yet, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) stands



INDIA, WITH OVER 260 MILLION STUDENTS IN 1.5 MILLION SCHOOLS AND MORE THAN 40 MILLION IN HIGHER EDUCATION, HOLDS ONE OF THE LARGEST STUDENT POPULATIONS GLOBALLY

at approximately 32 per cent, compelling many to seek employment in the unorganised sector — a domain fraught with exploitation and underpayment.

Vocational education has the potential to effectively address this gap. By focusing on industry-relevant skills, these programs not only enhance employment opportunities but also foster the development of future entrepreneurs.

Countries like Germany and Switzerland exemplify successful dual vocational education systems, blending classroom learning with hands-on industry experience.

India could adopt similar frameworks, ensuring students gain practical exposure, which is increasingly necessary in an evolving job landscape.

Adapting to Emerging Technologies

As technological innovation accelerates, vocational programs must incorporate modern skills relating to AI, IoT, and cloud computing. The Central

Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) initiative to introduce AI and IoT into the curriculum for Classes VI to X is a step in the right direction. With over 20,000 teachers trained in these areas, reaching approximately 350,000 students, substantial progress is evident.

However, a 2022 survey indicated that 31 per cent of teachers are still not proficient with digital tools, while a 2023 report found that 49 per cent feel unprepared to address the impact of AI on education. To tackle these challenges effectively, the public and private sectors must invest in comprehensive teacher training that equips educators for a changing marketplace.

Collaborations with ed-tech companies to bring AI-powered learning tools into classrooms can further support this transition, ensuring that students receive training that is both modern and relevant.

Addressing Regional Disparities Although the Union Education Minister has asserted that states are beginning to implement NEP 2020, the pace of implementation varies greatly.

Reports indicate that Haryana has set an ambitious target to fully implement the National Education Policy (NEP) by 2025, aiming to increase the gross enrollment ratio of girls in higher education from 32 per cent to over 50 per cent by 2030.

However, discrepancies across states — due to funding shortages, trained faculty shortages, and bureaucratic inertia — not only create inconsistencies but also significantly undermine the policy's potential.

To ensure a level playing field, a centralised monitoring mechanism is essential to track progress and enforce uniform implementation across states.

Conclusion NEP 2020 presents a transformative opportunity for integrating vocational education into mainstream schooling, but its success hinges on strategic implementation, sufficient funding, infrastructure development, and robust teacher training.

As India aspires to become a \$10 trillion economy, investing in a comprehensive vocational education system is not just an educational imperative — it's a vital economic strategy.

By addressing the barriers to implementation, India can empower its youth with essential skills, fostering innovation and adaptability that contribute to national growth.

A well-implemented vocational skills education framework represents a win-win for both students and the government, laying the groundwork for a skilled and self-reliant workforce that is pivotal to India's economic future.

(The writer is a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and a Network Member of India International Skill Centres, an initiative of the Government of India. Views are personal)

How PM Modi's vision revitalised BIMSTEC

Over the years, through initiatives like the 'Neighbourhood First and Act East policies,' the MAHASAGAR vision, and a consistent push for institutional reform and regional connectivity, PM Modi has transformed BIMSTEC into a vibrant platform for cooperation



SHEFALI GUPTA

tion of the BIMSTEC Charter. This milestone endowed the organisation with an international legal identity, clearly defined principles, and an institutional architecture that allows it to function with more coherence and purpose.

Further boosting its multilateral capacity, India appointed Indra Mani Pandey — an experienced diplomat known for his multilateral acumen — as the Secretary-General. India also committed USD 1 million to enhance the Secretariat's institutional and capacity-building efforts.

India's active diplomatic engagement has also seen it hosting the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July 2024, followed by an informal meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2024. These events marked a new phase of energised diplomacy and

engagement, laying the foundation for greater regional integration.

A Holistic Agenda

One of the standout features of BIMSTEC under India's leadership has been the expansion and organisation of its agenda.

The grouping now operates through seven key pillars, each led by a different member nation, allowing for greater ownership and specialised focus.

India leads the all-important Security pillar, while Bangladesh helms Trade, Investment, and Development.

Bhutan focuses on Environment and Climate Change, Myanmar leads on Agriculture and Food Security, Nepal on People-to-People Contacts, Sri Lanka on Science and Technology & Innovation, and Thailand on Connectivity.

This structured approach has allowed BIMSTEC to evolve into a results-oriented body, addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities across the spectrum — from trade and security to climate action and innovation. And the

change is visible in its approach.

India's Pillars of Focus

India's leadership in the Security domain has seen the development of a robust legal framework to tackle terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational crimes — issues of shared concern across the region. Efforts are underway to harmonise counter-terror frameworks, intelligence-sharing, and maritime cooperation. On Connectivity, India has placed particular emphasis on developing physical, digital, and energy links. The BIMSTEC Energy Centre, hosted in Bengaluru, coordinates initiatives toward regional grid interconnectivity.

This aligns with PM Modi's bold vision of "One World, One Sun, One Grid", which aims to create a globally interconnected solar energy grid. In the area of Sustainability and Disaster Management, India has positioned itself as a responsible regional partner. It hosts regular disaster management exercises involving member countries and leads the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate in Noida, playing a critical

role in forecasting, climate data sharing, and early warning systems. Given the region's high vulnerability to natural disasters, this collaboration holds immense practical value.

Fostering Regional Identity

Beyond policy and security, PM Modi has consistently championed the softer dimensions of regional cooperation — particularly culture, youth engagement, and environmental consciousness. These elements have been brought to the forefront through a series of vibrant events that promote shared identity and regional pride. Recent highlights include the BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship in Delhi (Feb 2024), the BIMSTEC Business Summit (Aug 2024), and cultural showcases like the BIMSTEC Pavilion at the Surajkund Mela (Feb 2025) and the BIMSTEC cultural troupe's performance at Bali Jatra in Cuttack (Nov 2024). Youth engagement, too, has been given a fresh thrust through the BIMSTEC Youth Summit in Ahmedabad and the BIMSTEC Youth-Led Climate Change Conference in Delhi, both held in February 2025. Another notable milestone was the launch of the BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network in February 2024, which aims to foster scientific collaboration and ocean sustainability.

From Goa to Bangkok

The vision articulated by PM Modi during the 2016 Goa Retreat continues to shape BIMSTEC's trajectory. The decisions taken during that seminal retreat are coming to fruition, most recently in Bangkok, where two key developments have been unveiled: the adoption of the BIMSTEC Vision 2030 and the Eminent Persons Group Report. These initiatives provide a long-term roadmap and intellectual foundation.

Conclusion

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BIMSTEC has transitioned from a dormant regional forum to a vibrant, forward-looking grouping. India's proactive engagement — rooted in strategic vision and people-centric diplomacy, has redefined the role of BIMSTEC in the 21st century. What began as a diplomatic gesture in Goa has evolved into a robust regional movement. As BIMSTEC continues to chart its course, India's leadership remains central to its strength, stability, and success, ensuring the Bay of Bengal becomes a beacon of cooperation, connectivity, and shared prosperity.

(The writer is Founder President, Om Aarohanam Sansthan (Janani Suraksha Yojana) and a BJP functionary. Views are personal)

Global markets rally even as Trump thinks more tariffs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Tokyo

Global benchmarks mostly rose Tuesday, echoing a rally on Wall Street after President Donald Trump appeared to let up on some of his tariffs and as stress from within the US bond market seemed to be easing.

Still, the Trump administration took further steps toward imposing more tariffs, saying it was investigating the national security implications of imports of pharmaceuticals, computer chips and related products.

France's CAC 40 added 0.6per cent to 7,316.09, while Germany's DAX jumped

1.5per cent to 21,277.44. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 1.0per cent to 8,215.51.

The future for the S&P 500 was up 0.3per cent while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.2per cent.

In Asian trading, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 surged 0.8per cent to finish at 34,267.54.

Automakers were among the biggest gainers, although their early surge was moderated by closing time. Toyota Motor Corp. jumped 3.7per cent, while Honda Motor Co. gained 3.6per cent. Electronics and entertainment giant Sony Corp's stock price added 2.2per cent.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added

0.2per cent to 7,761.70 and South Korea's Kospi gained 0.9per cent to 2,477.41.

Chinese shares wobbled, with Hong Kong's Hang Seng rising 0.2per cent to 21,466.27 after fluctuating much of the day. The Shanghai Composite added 0.2per cent to 3,267.66.

"You know the drill: one step forward, two steps back, then a whiplash pivot into carrot-and-stick diplomacy. It's becoming the signature of this White House — deliver a policy gut punch, then soften the blow with selective reprieves or 90-day pauses. It's market management by whack-a-mole," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management.

Iran's Khamenei endorses US talks



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

Iran's supreme leader said on Tuesday that the first round of talks with the United States went "well", in his first public comment on the negotiations, state television reported. The comments by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, while couched, represented his endorsement of the talks so far.

"We are neither radically optimistic about the talks nor radically pessimistic about the talks," the 85-year-old Khamenei said. However, he said the talks had been "implemented well in the first steps" and that Iran remained "pessimistic" about America. He also urged officials "not to tie the country's affairs" to the talks, which are scheduled to have a second round on Saturday.

US flies bombers for drill with South Korea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Seoul

The United States flew long-range B-1B bombers in a show of force against North Korea on Tuesday, days after the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to resist a US-led push to eliminate the North's nuclear programme. North Korea often reacts to the US deployment of B-1B bombers and other powerful military assets with missile tests and fiery rhetoric.

Tuesday's flyover of the US bombers could draw an angrier response because it happened when North Korea was marking a key anniversary — the 113th birthday of state founder Kim Il Sung, the late grandfather of the current leader.

South Korea's Defence Ministry said the US bombers participated in a South Korea-US aerial drill over the Korean Peninsula to strengthen the allies' combined operational capability and demonstrate their deterrence capability against North Korea's advancing nuclear programme.

A ministry statement said South Korean F-35 and F-16 fighter jets and American F-16 fighter jets also took part in the training. It said South Korea and the US will continue to expand their joint mil-

itary exercises to respond to North Korean nuclear threats.

It was the second time a US B-1B's had participated in a drill with South Korea since President Donald Trump began his second term in January.

In February, North Korea's Defence Ministry slammed the B-1B's earlier flyover as proof of intensifying US-led provocations since Trump's inauguration. It pledged to counter the strategic threat of the US with strategic means.

Days later, North Korea test-fired cruise missiles in what it called an attempt to show its nuclear counterattack capability. Trump has repeatedly said he will reach out to Kim Jong Un to revive diplomacy. North Korea hasn't directly responded to Trump's outreach.

Last Wednesday, Kim Yo Jong — Kim's sister and a senior official — derided the US and its Asian allies over what she called their "daydream" of denuclearising the North, insisting that the country will never give up its nuclear weapons programme. Her statement came as a response to a recent meeting among the top diplomats of the United States, South Korea and Japan where they reaffirmed their commitment to push for the North's denuclearisation.

US to control land on Mexico border as base, migrants could be detained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

A long sliver of federal land along the US-Mexico border that President Donald Trump is turning over to the Department of Defense would be controlled by the Army as part of a base, which could allow troops to detain any trespassers, including migrants, US officials told The Associated Press.

The transfer of that border zone to military control — and making it part of an Army installation — is an attempt by the Trump administration to get around a federal law that prohibits US troops from being used in domestic law enforcement on American soil.

But if the troops are providing security for land that is part of an Army base, they can perform that function. However, at least one presidential powers expert said the move is likely to be challenged in the courts.

The officials said the issue is still under review in the Pentagon, but even as any legal review goes on, the administration's intent is to have troops detain migrants at

the border.

The corridor, known as the Roosevelt Reservation, is a 60-foot-wide federal buffer zone that ribbons along the border from New Mexico to California, except where it encounters tribal or privately owned land. It had been run by the Interior Department until Trump directed control be transferred to the Defense Department in a presidential memo released Friday night.

For the next 45 days, the Defense Department will test taking control of a section of the Roosevelt Reservation in New Mexico, east of Fort Huachuca, which is an Army installation in Arizona, one of the US officials said. During that period, the Army will put up additional fencing and signs warning people not to trespass.

People not authorised to be in that area could be arrested by the Army's security forces, the officials said, who spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details not yet made public.

Any migrants in the country illegally who are detained by military personnel on those lands would be turned over to local

civilian law enforcement agencies, the officials said.

Troops are prohibited from conducting civilian law enforcement on US soil under the Posse Comitatus Act. An exception known as the military purpose doctrine allows it in some cases — but would not apply here and would likely be challenged in the courts, said Elizabeth Gotein, an expert on presidential emergency powers at the Brennan Center for Justice.

That's because even though troops would be on land designated as an Army installation, they would have to prove that their primary mission there was not to conduct border security and law enforcement — and the whole point of Trump's order transferring the Roosevelt Reservation to the military's control is to secure the border, she said.

The military purpose doctrine "only applies if the law enforcement aspect is incidental," Gotein said. "Does this (area) have a military purpose that has nothing to do with enforcing customs and security at the border?"

Activist expecting US citizenship arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

A Palestinian man who led protests against the war in Gaza as a student at Columbia University was arrested Monday at a Vermont immigration office where he expected to be interviewed about finalising his US citizenship, his attorneys said.

Mohsen Mahdawi, a legal permanent resident who has held a green card since 2015, was detained at the US Citizenship and Immigration Services office in Colchester by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, his lawyers said.

The attorneys said they do not know where he is. They filed a petition in federal court seeking an order barring the government from removing him from the state or country.

"The Trump administration detained Mohsen Mahdawi in direct retaliation for his advocacy on behalf of Palestinians and because of his identity as a Palestinian. His detention is an attempt to silence those

who speak out against the atrocities in Gaza. It is also unconstitutional," attorney Luna Droubi said in an email.

According to the court filing, Mahdawi was born in a refugee camp in the West Bank and moved to the United States in 2014. He recently completed coursework at Columbia and was expected to graduate in May before beginning a master's degree program there in the fall.

The petition describes him as a committed Buddhist who believes in "non-violence and empathy as a central tenet of his religion." As a student, Mahdawi was an outspoken critic of Israel's military campaign in Gaza and organised campus protests until March 2024. He co-founded the Palestinian Student Union at Columbia with Mahmoud Khalil, another Palestinian permanent resident of the US and graduate student who recently was detained by ICE.

Khalil was the first person arrested under President Donald Trump's promised crackdown on students who joined campus protests against the war in Gaza. On

Friday, an immigration judge in Louisiana ruled that Khalil can be deported as a national security risk.

Christopher Helali, a friend of Mahdawi who lives near him in Vermont, was present outside the immigration office when Mahdawi was detained and recorded a video of Mahdawi being led away by authorities. In the video, which Helali released on social media Monday, Mahdawi is shown giving a peace sign with his hands and being led away to a car.

Helali described Mahdawi as a peaceful demonstrator who has worked to foster dialogue about the struggle of Palestinians in his homeland. Helali said he and Mahdawi were aware that Mahdawi could be detained today and that his friend went forward with the appointment anyway. "And rightfully so, he was nervous for what was going on around him. But he was very much resolute in coming to this interview and coming today because he didn't do anything wrong and was a law-abiding citizen, or soon-to-be citizen," Helali said.

Israel strikes Gaza hospital, injures nine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Deir Al-Balah

An Israeli airstrike hit the northern gate of a field hospital in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, killing a medic and wounding nine other people, a spokesman for the hospital said.

The strike hit the Kuwaiti Field Hospital in the Muwasi area, where hundreds of thousands have sought shelter in sprawling tent camps. The wounded were all patients and medics, and two of the patients were in critical condition after the strike, said Saber Mohammed, a hospital spokesman. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The military has struck hospitals on several occasions during the 18-month war, accusing Hamas militants of hiding out in them or using them for military purposes. Hospital staff have denied the allegations and accused Israel of recklessly endangering civilians and gutting the territory's health system.

On Sunday, Israel struck the last major hospital providing critical care in

The military has struck hospitals on several occasions during the 18-month conflict, accusing Hamas militants of hiding in them or using them for military purposes

northern Gaza after ordering an evacuation. A patient died during the evacuation, and the strike severely damaged the emergency room, pharmacy and surrounding buildings, according to Al-Ahli Hospital.

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which runs the hospital, condemned the strike. Israel said it targeted a Hamas command and control center within the facility, without providing evidence. Hamas denied the allegations.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. Fifty-nine hostages are still inside Gaza,

24 of whom are believed to be alive, after most of the rest were released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 51,000 people, according to an updated toll released by Gaza's Health Ministry on Tuesday. That includes more than 1,600 people killed since Israel ended a ceasefire and resumed its offensive last month to pressure Hamas to accept changes to the agreement.

The ministry is led by medical professionals but reports to the Hamas-run government. Its toll is seen as generally reliable by UN agencies and independent experts, though Israel has challenged its numbers. Israel says it has killed some 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The ministry does not say how many were civilians or combatants but says women and children make up more than half of the dead. The offensive has destroyed much of the territory and displaced around 90 per cent of its population of roughly 2 million Palestinians.

Inflation, currency woes worsen Venezuela's complex economic crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Maracaibo

Erick Ojeda has no money. He returned to land almost empty-handed from an overnight trip fishing for shrimp. His sister and her newborn are waiting for him to pick them up from a hospital. He has had no luck finding a ride there, so he is still helping fishermen get boats out of the water and weigh what little they caught.

The fishermen are all struggling, like most everyone in Venezuela, whose protracted crisis continues to evolve, entering a critical phase in recent weeks by further gutting people's purchasing power and laying the groundwork for a recession. This latest chapter in the 12-year crisis even prompted President Nicolás Maduro to declare an "economic emergency" last week.

Tired, hungry and worried, the fishermen don't complain and keep to their tasks, or nap, under a hut with a view of an oil tanker on Lake Maracaibo. They know they are lucky to have a source of income, unreliable as it is, in 2025.

"I have to keep toiling away even if work is bad," Ojeda, 24, said. "We keep going trusting God. Let's see if God works miracles to fix all of Venezuela."

The country's economy is unraveling yet again as key oil revenue dries up due to renewed economic sanctions punishing Maduro for electoral fraud and as his government finds itself with little wiggle room to respond despite some post-pandemic stability.

Venezuelans emerged from the pandemic to fully stocked grocery stores and the US Dollar as the dominant currency for everyday transactions. They left behind years of bartering, lining up for hours outside

supermarkets or even fighting on the streets for flour, rice, bread or other food items. They also stopped carrying bricks of worthless bolivar bills to pay for necessities.

Those changes were the result of government decisions that eased price controls on basic goods and allowed consumers and businesses to use greenbacks without restrictions. They also occurred because the government used the Venezuelan Central Bank to inject millions of dollars into the foreign currency exchange market every week and prop up the bolivar.

Those government measures helped end a years-long cycle of hyperinflation, which had reached 130,000per cent in 2018. Gross domestic product grew 8per cent in 2022, according to the International Monetary Fund, after the economy shrank about 80per cent between 2014 and 2020.

Maduro and his government began touting an economic renaissance of sorts. In the capital, Caracas, imported goods stores, restaurants, department stores and other businesses began to pop-up seemingly overnight. The use of ride-hailing and food-delivery apps proliferated. Some families in poor neighborhoods ventured into business ownership operating hot dog carts and other food stands.

But the growth mostly concentrated in Caracas, and communities across the country, including Maracaibo, which prides itself in being the heart of the oil industry, did not see major gains.

"If you pay more attention to those main avenues... you'll see that most of the businesses are closed," Luis Medina, 21, said pointing to an avenue in downtown Maracaibo. "There's a Subway that's closed, for example, and next to it is a Movistar (cell-phone store), which is also closed. Next to



A street food vendor waiting for patrons in Caracas, Venezuela

it is an international restaurant, El Gaucho, originally from Argentina, which is closed, too."

Like people in other Latin American countries — and long before their nation came undone in 2013 — Venezuelans have used the US Dollar as a safe haven asset and see the exchange rate as a measure of the economy's health.

Maduro's government began using cash reserves in 2021 to artificially lower the exchange rate, making people at one point

pay 3.50 bolivars for \$1. That led to roughly 67per cent of retail transactions being made in foreign currency.

The rate grew slowly, and by 2023, Maduro's efforts to inject dollars into the economy were aided by energy giant Chevron, which started regularly selling millions to banks to get bolivars to pay bills after the U.S. Government let it to restart operations in Venezuela. The infusion of dollars allowed the government to maintain the rate around 35 bolivars to \$1 through mid-2024,

when the warnings of economists materialized.

"So many of us said that ... sooner or later, it was going to be unsustainable," economics professor Leonardo Vera said. "It was already evident in July that there were shortages of foreign currency in the official market in the face of growing demand, and those who couldn't get foreign currency began to move to the black market, a very small market where when a surge in demand arrives... the price goes up."

This month, the official rate reached 70 bolivars to \$1, but the black market hit 100 bolivars to \$1 last month.

Vera explained that factors influencing the price include Maduro's reelection claim, the results of the U.S. Election and the decision of the Trump administration to revoke Chevron's permit to pump and export Venezuelan oil.

The Biden administration granted Chevron's permit in late 2022 after Maduro agreed to work with Venezuela's political opposition toward a democratic election. But the election, which took place in July 2024, was neither fair nor free, and Maduro was sworn in in January for a third six-year term despite credible evidence that his opponent got more votes.

Before the official and black market rates grew apart considerably, formal and informal businesses applied the government's rate for transactions. These days, however, informal businesses, such as the food markets where the majority of Venezuelans buy groceries, favour the black market's rate, making some goods unaffordable.

Prices have also increased at formal businesses, including grocery and hardware stores, because companies are setting them based on the expected higher cost to

replenish their inventories.

Economist Pedro Palma said Venezuela's inflation rate could be between 180per cent and 200per cent. He warned that people will cut spending because salaries will not keep up with inflation and some could even lose their jobs. "We have a truly dramatic outlook: on the one hand, skyrocketing inflation; on the other, the prospect of a very significant recession," Palma said.

Maduro last week sent a decree to the ruling-party controlled National Assembly seeking powers to enact emergency measures to "defend the national economy," including suspending tax collections and establishing "mechanisms and percentages for mandatory purchases of national production to promote import substitution."

He attributed the decision mostly to the impact of the U.S. Tariffs on the global economy, but Venezuela's latest economic troubles predated Trump's announcement. Weeks earlier, he also announced the shortening of state employees' workweek, effectively giving them ample time to pick up second jobs to complement their approximately \$1.65 monthly minimum wage and \$100 monthly stipends.

But companies generally are not hiring, and some businesses are now paying employees in bolivars instead of dollars, which has increased the demand for greenbacks in the black market as exchange houses limit the sums available to the public.

The latest economic developments were the greatest fears of many Venezuelans ahead of last year's presidential election. So much so that a nationwide poll conducted before the election showed that roughly a fourth of people were thinking about migrating, primarily for economic reasons.

Xi makes case for free trade as he tours Southeast Asia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bangkok

China's Xi is making the case for free trade as he tours Southeast Asia this week, presenting China as a source of "stability and certainty."

He arrived in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital, Tuesday, for a three-day visit and will end his tour with a stop in Cambodia.

On Monday, he was welcomed to Hanoi with pomp and ceremony by Vietnam's President Luong Cuong.

In Hanoi, Xi had a meeting with Vietnam's Communist Party General Secretary To Lam, where he said the two countries "have brought the world valuable stability and certainty" in a "turbulent world." He also paid respects at the mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, the founder of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

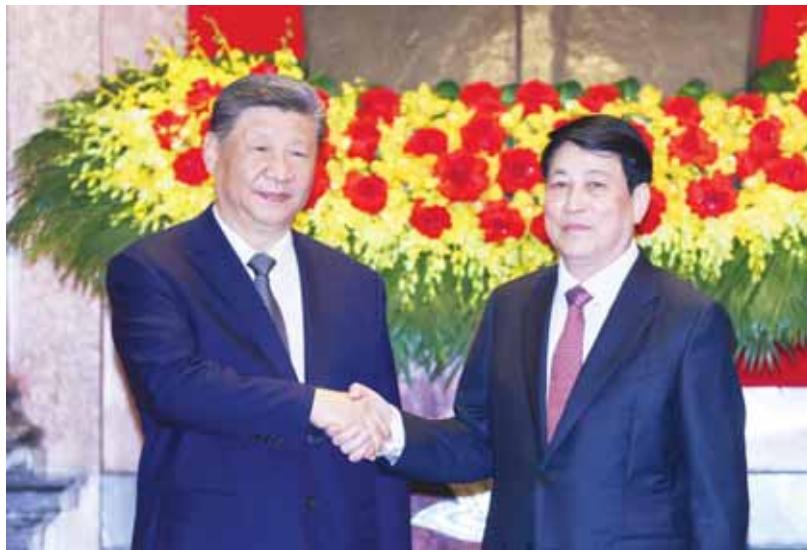
"As beneficiaries of economic globalisation, both China and Vietnam should strengthen strategic resolve, jointly oppose unilateral bullying acts, uphold the glob-

al free trade system, and keep global industrial and supply chains stable," he added, according to a statement from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

China and Vietnam signed a series of memorandums on cooperation in supply chains and a joint railway project, and Xi also promised greater access for Vietnamese agricultural exports to China, although few details were made public about the agreements.

US President Donald Trump complained about the meeting, which comes days after his tariffs upended global markets and left governments across the world scrambling. Reacting to the meeting Monday, Trump said China and Vietnam were trying "to figure out how do we screw the United States of America."

In Malaysia, Xi is expected to discuss a free trade agreement between China and 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN), as Malaysia is chair of the association this year.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Vietnam's President Luong Cuong shaking hands at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi in Vietnam on Tuesday

Xi will meet with King Sultan Ibrahim on Wednesday morning and Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim later in the day.

ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn told Chinese state media that the agreement will eliminate many tariffs between China and the bloc's members. "We will bring more tariffs down to zero in many cases, and then expand to all the areas," he said in an interview with CGTN, the state broadcaster's English channel.

Malaysia is home to several Belt and Road Initiative projects, including a USD 11.2 billion Chinese railway project. China is also its largest trading partner and a top source of foreign direct investment.

Xi's tour was likely planned before the tariff announcements had disrupted the global economy. "From the Chinese perspective, it's mostly about ensuring China's influence in the region remains strong and vibrant, with Southeast Asia being China's major trading partner," said Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at Singapore's Institute of International Affairs.

However, the trip's timing and the fact that Vietnam, Malaysia, and Cambodia, were all countries impacted by Trump's tariffs, provides Beijing an opportunity to project how it would act as a "responsible" superpower, one of China's long-time stances. "China can offer a lot to Vietnam and other ASEAN countries during this volatile period," said Nguyen Thanh Trung, a professor of Vietnamese studies at Fulbright University, Vietnam.

"I think China can be a leader."

Anwar called China a "true friend" during Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit in June and has visited China three times since he took power in November 2022.

China's claims to the South China Sea are a point of contention with both Vietnam and Malaysia. Anwar vowed last September that Malaysia will not bow to demands by China to stop its oil and gas exploration in an oil-rich maritime area in the South China Sea as the activities are within the country's waters.

Fresh warrants against Hasina, her son

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dhaka

A court in Bangladesh on Tuesday issued fresh arrest warrants against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her son Sajeb Wajed and 16 others in two cases related to alleged irregularities in allocating residential plots on the outskirts of the capital.

"Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's court issued the warrants in two cases over the irregularities in acquiring plots in Purbachal New Town, taking into consideration the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) chargesheets," a court official said.

According to a prosecution lawyer, most accused were government officials. The court ordered police to submit a report on April 29 if the now self-exiled ex-premier and other accused were arrested.

Judge Zakir Hossain directed officers-in-charge of over a dozen police stations in Dhaka and other parts of the country to submit progress reports on executing his order by that date as the ACC said all of them were fugitives, the official added.

The same court earlier issued arrest warrants against Hasina, her daughter Saima Wajed Putul, her sister Sheikh Rehana, British MP Tulip Rizwana Siddiq, Rehana's son Radwan Mujib Siddiq and 48 others in connection with the alleged illegal acquisition of land by abusing political power. The ACC in December launched an inquiry against Hasina and her relatives over allegations of illegally acquiring 60 kathas (1.86 acres) of government plots in Purbachal, abusing state power.

ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain said the Hasina family members "secretly and illegally" acquired six 10-katha plots on Road 203 under now developing Purbachal Sector 27, which was the proposed Diplomatic Zone of the land development project of state-run Rajdhani Unyan

Kartripakkha. Earlier, the High Court had formed a three-member committee headed by a former judge of the same court to investigate irregularities in the allocation of the plots.

In a related development, Hasina's niece British lawyer Tulip Siddiq claimed that the arrest warrant against her was "politically motivated" and "there is no evidence that I've done anything wrong".



"No one from the Bangladeshi authorities has contacted me. The entire time, they've done trial by media," she told the Sky TV network in the UK.

Tulip resigned as the minister responsible for financial services and fighting corruption in January after weeks of questions over her financial ties to her aunt, saying the focus on her risked diverting attention from the government's political agenda. Britain does not currently have an extradition treaty with Bangladesh.

Attack by gunmen leaves 40 dead in Nigeria: President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Abuja (Nigeria)

Nigeria's president said on Monday that at least 40 people were killed when Muslim gunmen, believed to be herders, attacked a Christian farming community in the north-central part of the country, the latest in an increasing wave of violence in the West African country.

President Bola Tinubu also said he has ordered an investigation over the late Sunday night attack on the Zike community, extending his condolences to the victims and their families. "I have instructed security agencies to thoroughly investigate this crisis and identify those responsible for orchestrating these violent acts," Tinubu said.

Such attacks have become common in this part of Africa's most populous country, where gunmen — typically herders from Fulani, a Muslim tribe — exploit security lapses to launch deadly raids on farmers in a fight over land resources. According to Andy Yakubu, a local resident, gunmen on Sunday night's attack also destroyed and looted homes in the Zike community, located in the Bassa area of Plateau state, Yakubu said no one has been arrested so far, he added.

Singapore Parliament dissolved General Election set for May 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Singapore

Singapore's parliament was dissolved Tuesday, paving the way for general elections in which the city-state's long-ruling People's Action Party will seek to strengthen its dominance under Prime Minister Lawrence Wong.

The election will be held May 3, the Elections Department said later in the afternoon. Victory is virtually assured for the PAP, which has led Singapore since its independence in 1965.

But Wong, who was sworn in as Singapore's

fourth leader in May last year, wants to clinch a stronger win after the PAP suffered a setback in 2020 polls over voters' rising discontent with the government. Wong succeeded Lee Hsien Loong, who stepped down after two decades at the helm. Lee's departure marked the end of a family dynasty started by his father, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's first leader who built the colonial trading outpost into one of the world's richest nations during 31 years in office. The PAP's share of popular support also slipped to a near-record low of 61 per cent.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
Tender Notice Reference No. GNDU/Gen/06/2025
The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the following:
Sr. No.1 Item:- Computer Quantity- 10
Item:- Server Quantity- 01
Closing date & Time: 06/05/2025 at 5:00 PM
For details log onto: www.eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only
Assistant Registrar (General) Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar-143005 (Punjab) India
NA/12/29338/2023/43558 Dated CHD :- 4/15/2025

PUBLIC NOTICE
Known to all that my client Smt. Ashu Bala owner of the SECOND FLOOR PLOT NO. RZ-A-140 (OLD PLOT NO.140) AREA 40 SQ YARDS KHASRA NO.12/25, VILLAGE DASHI STA PURI PART-I, BLOCK-A, NEW DELHI and Smt. Ashu Bala purchase property from Smt. Saroj Bala vide Notarized GPA, ATS and Will dated 24.09.2020, and now Smt. Ashu Bala wants to sell afraid property, so it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my sai client and said institution regarding said property shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.
AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarika Court Sector-10, Dwarika, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE
Known to all that my client Smt. Ashu Bala owner of the SECOND FLOOR PLOT NO. RZ-A-140 (OLD PLOT NO.140) AREA 40 SQ YARDS KHASRA NO.12/25, VILLAGE DASHI STA PURI PART-I, BLOCK-A, NEW DELHI and Smt. Ashu Bala purchase property from Smt. Saroj Bala vide Notarized GPA, ATS and Will dated 24.09.2020, and now Smt. Ashu Bala wants to sell afraid property, so it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my sai client and said institution regarding said property shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.
AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarika Court Sector-10, Dwarika, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

STATE BANK OF INDIA
BRANCH OFFICE: SHALIMAR BAGH BT 35 SHALIMAR BAGH, NEW DELHI-110088
NOTICE FOR SALE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS
The following person has availed loan against pledge of gold ornaments, and has not repaid the amount despite of demand notices. Therefore please take notice that if the principal plus interest and other charges are not paid on or before 24/04/2025 by 02:00 PM. The pledged ornaments will be publicly auctioned on 24/04/2025 at 04:00 PM in the bank's premises subject to rules and regulations of the Bank. The bank reserves the right to cancel / postpone the auction to any other convenient date without further notice and assigning the reasons there of.

S.No.	Gold Loan Account Number	Name of Borrower	Liability
1.	Loan A/c. No. 43094679593	Mrs. Kanchan Sharma 235 DDA Flats Nimit Colony Ashok Vihar, North West Delhi-110052	Rs.1,60,391/- Accrued Interest and applied Charges

Place: NEW DELHI
Date: 15/04/2025
Branch Head,
State Bank of India, Shalimar Bagh Branch, New Delhi

New York City declares April 14 as Dr BR Ambedkar Day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New York

New York City Mayor Eric Adams has proclaimed April 14, 2025 as Dr BR Ambedkar Day in New York City, with its 8.5 million residents celebrating the day, a top official in the mayor's office said here.

Deputy Commissioner for the New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs Dilip Chauhan made the announcement here in the presence of Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Dr Ramdas Athawale, who delivered the keynote address at a special event organised at the UN headquarters on Monday to commemorate Dr Ambedkar's 134th birth anniversary.

"A historic moment at the UN Headquarters in New York as Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's birth anniversary is officially proclaimed by the NYC Mayor's Office. My heartfelt thanks to Mayor @NYCMayor and Deputy Commissioner Dilip Chauhan for honouring Babasaheb's global legacy of justice and equality," Athawale posted on X along with photos and a video.

Born on April 14, 1891, Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar — popular among his followers as Babasaheb — was the chairman of the Constituent Assembly's most crucial Drafting Committee that earned him the moniker Architect of the Indian Constitution. He was also the Minister of Law and Justice in Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's first Cabinet post-Independence. Ambedkar, who played a key

role in social movements that fought for the rights of Dalits and untouchables, had received his PhD in Economics from Columbia University in 1927 and an honorary degree in 1952. Chauhan said Dr Ambedkar's ideals go beyond borders and time, finding strong connections in the halls of the United Nations and New York — a city built by immigrants, energised by its diversity and united by its shared belief in opportunity and inclusion.

Foundation for Human Horizon President Deelip Mhaske said it is a profound recognition of one of the world's most transformative champions of equality and civil rights that April 14 has been proclaimed as 'Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar Day'.

The proclamation acknowledges Dr Ambedkar's towering legacy in advancing democracy, dignity, women's empowerment and justice for historically marginalised communities, Mhaske said.

Mhaske expressed gratitude to Adams noting that "this proclamation is more than symbolic—it is a moral declaration that positions New York as a global capital for human rights and justice." Earlier at the event organised by the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, Athawale said the principles that Dr BR Ambedkar fought for — equity, representation and human rights — are more relevant than ever in the international community's collective efforts to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	GURU JAMBHESHWAR UNIVERSITY HISAR	SPECIAL REPAIR OF ROADS (PHASE-1) IN THE PREMISES OF GU SAHOT, HISAR	17/04/2025 24/04/2025	60.41 LACS	http://www.gust.ac.in	01652-263105 uudgishr@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in RO 33868-I-27-7

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL, SRINAGAR BB, CANTT, BATWARA (J&K)- 190004
Website: www.apssrinagar.co.in

INVITING QUOTATIONS

- On behalf of the Chairman APS, Srinagar sealed quotations are hereby invited for the pair of Basketball Ring iron portable for the newly constructed basketball court duly fitted and completed in all respects. Model as approved by the school authorities.
- The vendor may visit the school to see the site before quoting his final rates. The vendor should quote basic cost inclusive of transportation for delivery including, labour and installation charges. All valid taxes at the destination should also be included in the price quoted. The school reserves the right to cancel the call for quotation without assigning any reason.
- Interested parties may submit the quotations in the school by or before 22 Apr 2025. For any query contact during all working days between 10 a.m to 1 pm at 0194-2468224.

Sd/- Principial

Verka Da, Har Dil Da
THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66
www.verka.coop

Notice Inviting Tender

tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Mohali Dairy a) Lifting (Purchase) of paneer whey ex-factory Verka Mohali Dairy on daily Basis. b) Hiring of agency for packaging of dahi pouch/cups/matkas, lassi pouches, kheer cups, ghee, paneer and yoghurt. Packaging and recombination of white butter and reconstitution of SMP/WMP & sugar. c) Auction of cutting & lifting of different varieties of trees at Verka Mohali Dairy. d) Purchase of Nitric Acid (53%-54%).	Annual As per day to day requirement of market 69 No's Annual
2.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy Hiring of insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products in bathinda milkshed area.	One year with extension upto one year
3.	For Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy Outsourcing of all activities of city supply dispatch dock.	Annual
4.	For Verka Sangrur Dairy a) Design, fabrication, supply, erection & commissioning of boiler chimney with flue gas duct for 06 TPH boiler at Verka Sangrur Dairy including dismantling of old chimney. b) Flex banners, flex board, flex board both sides, glow sign board, glow sign board both side, aluminium roll up stades, flanges, danglers, A3 stickers without lamination, A3 stickers with lamination, pamphlets, Eco solvent vinyl print, canopy, sun board, umbrella, one way vision with eco print etc. c) Fresh cut firewood. d) Wall/shutter painting and vehicle painting.	01 No's Annual 500 MT Annual
5.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy Invited for sale of the unserviceable material for one time sale basis.	One time basis

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

NA/12/29335/2023/43550 Dated CHD :- 4/15/2025
Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Jairup Ram, Father Of Nk No.15420072L
I, Mohd. Shamsuddin S/o Safiuddin, R/o BK-1/2, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, have changed the name of my minor daughter Sara to Sara Sheikh. She shall hereafter be known as Sara Sheikh.
PD(1872)A
I, Joliya Ranabhai Abhabhai, Father of- No.15444757H Sep Joliya Harajibhai Ranabhai, R/o- TA- Mahuva, Dist- Bhavnagar, Gujarat, have changed my name from Joliya Ranabhai Abhabhai to Joliya Ranabhai Ehbhabhai, vide affidavit dated 10/03/2025 before Notary Public Bhavnagar Gujarat.
PD(1877)C
I, Sangita W/o- JC-682150X RIS/ASH Gade Baban Bhima, R/o- Vill- Kaginewadi, Post- Maligre, Teh- Ajara, Dist- Kolhapur, Maharashtra- 416503, have changed my name from Sangita to Sangita Baban Gade, vide affidavit dated 15/04/2025 before Notary Public Delhi
PD(1876)C

I, Jairup Ram, Father Of Nk No.15420072L
I, Bhanwar Lal, R/o- Vill & PO- Birai, Teh- Baori, Dist- Jodhpur, Rajasthan- 342603, have changed my name from Jairup Ram to Jayrup Ram, vide affidavit dated 15/04/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.
PD(1877)C
I, Remika Subba Chhetri W/o- No.10136688P L/Nk Dipesh Kumar Chhetri, R/o- Hum Busty Takdah, Hum Tukdah Khasmahal, Darjeeling, W.B.- 734222, have changed my name from Remika Subba Chhetri to Rimika Subba Chhetri, vide affidavit dated 15/04/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.
PD(1878)C

Former Singapore PM warns of unprecedented global uncertainty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Singapore

Singapore has gone through and overcome many crises in the past, but the current global uncertainty caused by the US-imposed tariffs is unprecedented and will last a very long time, warned Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong. A supportive and stable external environment is no longer a given, stressed the former prime minister. "Some people say 'don't get excited, don't over blow the issue, we've weathered bigger storms before, we haven't failed,'" said Lee, who was speaking at the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) dialogue, which was attended by NTUC president K Thanaletchimi, secretary-general Ng Chee Meng and other union leaders.

"We should take it in our own stride, but we do need to be concerned and to understand what is happening and what this means for us, because this time, something important is different," The Straits Times quoted Lee as saying.

Lee said, "I hope that Singaporeans understand what is happening, what is at stake and what we must do together to secure our future." He noted how the city state has weathered the likes of the Asian financial crisis, Sars

(severe acute respiratory syndrome) and, more recently, the Covid-19 pandemic, where the country has been able to "batten down (the) hatches and see it through."

While Singapore has been able to emerge successfully before, it had done so in a climate where it had two things in its favour, namely the ability of the country to unite during turmoil; and a working global economic system that promoted the free flow of trade and a level playing field. He said, "The free flow of investments encouraged MNCs (multinational corporations) to look for places to do business. We were efficient, we were doing well. We came out from trouble. We plugged back in. We could resume growing, resume developing, resume succeeding," said the 73-year-old leader who served as the third Prime Minister of Singapore for two decades from 2004 to 2024.

With the sanctity of the global financial system and the WTO in place, this gave countries big and small level-playing field, where the rules and market access were the same, he pointed out. This allowed Singapore to enjoy the same market access as bigger countries, and benefit from their bargaining power, thus giving it access to investments and jobs, he said.

More US tariffs on key imports, including drugs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bangkok

The Trump administration has taken its next steps toward imposing more tariffs on key imports, launching investigations into imports of computer chips, chip making equipment and pharmaceuticals.

The Department of Commerce posted notices about the probes late Monday on the Federal Register, seeking public comment within three weeks. It had not formally announced them earlier.

Although President Donald Trump paused most of his biggest tariff hikes last week for 90 days, apart from those for imports from China, he has said he still plans tariffs on pharmaceutical drugs, lumber, copper and computer chips.

The Commerce Department said it is investigating how imports of computer chips, equipment to make them and products that contain them — which include many daily necessities such as cars, refrigerators, smart phones and other

items — affect national security.

Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 permits the president to order tariffs for the sake of national security.

The probe includes assessing the potential for US domestic production of computer chips to meet US demand and the role of foreign manufacturing and assembly, testing and packaging in meeting those needs.

Among other aspects of the entire computer chip supply chain, the government intends to also study the risks of having computer chip production concentrated in other places and the impact on US competitiveness from foreign government subsidies, "foreign unfair trade practices and state-sponsored overcapacity".

After Trump said electronics would not be included in what his administration calls "reciprocal" tariffs of up to 50 per cent on some nations, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick explained in an interview on ABC News that pharmaceuticals, semiconductors and autos will be handled with



"sector specific" tariffs. "And those are not available for negotiation," Lutnick said. "They are just going to be part of making sure we reshore the

core national security items that need to be made in this country. We need to make medicine in this country," he said. "We need to make semiconductors."

The investigation into pharmaceutical imports includes ingredients used to make such drugs and touches on many of the same aspects of relying on imports to make them. Asked about his plans for more tariffs on pharmaceuticals, Trump said Monday, "Yeah, we're going to be doing that." He said it would be in the "not too distant future". "We're doing it because we want to make our own drugs," he said.

More than 70 per cent of the materials, or active pharmaceutical ingredients, used to make medicines made in the United States are produced in other countries, with India, the European Union and China leading suppliers.

The US produces about a fifth of all pharmaceuticals made worldwide, but consumes about 45 per cent, far more than any other country. The US also is a major producer of semiconductors, but only in some areas. It relies heavily on imports from Taiwan and South Korea for certain kinds of advanced chips. In particular, Taiwan dominates advanced logic chip

production at 92 per cent of all fabrication capacity according to the International Trade Administration, with South Korea making 8 per cent. Products like laptops, smartphones and the components needed to make them accounted for nearly \$174 billion in US imports from China last year.

The administration's plans suggest that such electronics will still be taxed by previous (non-reciprocal) tariffs — and potentially under additional, sector-specific levies. Although major computer chip makers like Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. are investing heavily in US manufacturing facilities, partly due to incentives put in place during former President Joe Biden's time in office, the costly process of changing entire supply chains would take years.

Separately, the Commerce Department said Monday that it was withdrawing from a 2019 agreement that had suspended an antidumping investigation into imports of fresh tomatoes from Mexico, effective in 90 days.

India's gems, jewellery exports decline in FY25, says GJEPC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

India's overall gems and jewellery exports declined by 11.72 per cent to \$28.5 billion (around ₹2.41 lakh crore) in 2024-25 compared to the previous financial year on continued geopolitical tensions, according to the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC).

The overall gems and jewellery exports stood at \$32.2 billion (₹2.67 lakh crore) in 2023-24, according to GJEPC data. However, in March, the exports improved slightly, witnessing a growth of 1.02 per cent at \$2,582.97 million (₹22,340.89 crore), compared to \$2,556.97 million (₹21,228.71 crore) in the same month of the previous year, it added.

"The decline in gems and jewellery exports is mainly due to the continuous dip in demand in China as well as the US, India's key export markets, due to the ongoing geopolitical tensions."

"Also, the correction in rough diamond prices by 10-15 per cent impacted the value, causing the overall decline in exports," GJEPC Chairman Kirit Bhansali told PTI.

The overall exports of Cut and Polished diamonds (CPD) dipped by

16.75 per cent at \$13,292.0 million (₹1.12 lakh crore) compared to \$15,967.02 million (₹1.32 lakh crore) for the same period of the previous year.

The export of polished lab-grown diamonds for the period of April 2024-March 2025 declined by 9.64 per cent at \$1,267.26 million (₹10,716.13 crore), against \$1,402.44 million (₹11,612.36 crore) in the previous year.

Total gold jewellery exports during FY25 showed a decline of 0.11 per cent at \$11,215.46 million (₹94,937.78 crore) against \$11,227.72 million (₹93,066.82 crore) in FY24.

Silver jewellery exports in FY25 dipped by 40.58 per cent at \$961.79 million (₹8,115.32 crore), compared with \$1,618.63 million (₹13,424.4 crore) in the previous year.

However, exports of platinum jewellery in FY25 witnessed a growth of 11.79 per cent at \$182.75 million (₹1,547.3 crore) against \$163.48 million (₹1,354.41 crore) for the previous year.

Meanwhile, the coloured gemstone exports showed a decline of 8.01 per cent during FY25 at \$440.38 million (₹3,729.93 crore), compared to \$478.71 million (₹3,961.98 crore) in the previous year.

Passenger vehicle demand surges to over 43 lakh units in FY25, says SIAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Passenger vehicle (PV) dispatches in India from factories to dealers rose to record levels at over 43 lakh units in FY25, with utility vehicles accounting for 65 per cent of the total sales in the segment, industry body SIAM said on Tuesday. Passenger vehicle (PV) dispatches rose to 43,01,848 units in the last fiscal year, marking a 2 per cent increase compared to 42,18,750 units in FY 2023-24.

The high base effect of FY24 resulted in moderate growth last fiscal year, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said in a statement. Utility vehicles continued to drive growth, now contributing 65 per cent of total passenger vehicle sales in FY25, up from around 60 per cent in FY24, it added. Utility vehicle sales grew 11 per cent to 27,97,229 units in FY25 as compared to 25,20,691 units in FY24. In comparison, passenger cars saw a dip of 13 per cent to 13,53,287 units as against 15,48,947 units in FY24.

The passenger vehicle segment also recorded its highest-ever exports in FY25, reaching 0.77 million units, a 15 per cent increase compared to FY24,

SIAM said. Growth in exports has been driven by the demand of global models being manufactured in the country, it added. Two-wheeler dispatches to dealers rose 9 per cent to 1,96,07,332 units in the last fiscal year, up from 1,79,74,365 units in FY24. Improved rural demand and resurgence in consumer confidence are helping the segment to recover, SIAM stated.

The passenger vehicle segment also recorded its highest-ever exports in FY25, reaching 0.77 million units, a 15 per cent increase compared to FY24

Growth in the two-wheeler segment is led by scooters due to improved rural and semi-urban connectivity and the availability of newer models with enhanced features, it added.

It is noteworthy that the share of EVs in overall two-wheelers has crossed the 6 per cent mark in 2024-25 fiscal, the industry body stated.

Besides, two-wheeler exports registered a good growth of 21 per cent last

fiscal as compared to FY24.

Total commercial vehicle wholesales declined one per cent last fiscal year to 9,56,671 units as against 9,68,770 units in 2023-24 fiscal. Three-wheeler dispatches rose 7 per cent to 7,41,420 units as compared to 6,94,801 units in FY24.

"The Indian automobile industry continued its steady performance in FY25, driven by healthy demand, infrastructure investments, supportive government policies, and continued emphasis on sustainable mobility," SIAM President Shailesh Chandra said.

Passenger vehicles and three-wheeler witnessed a moderate growth on account of the high base effect but saw the highest-ever sales in these categories, while the two-wheeler segment registered strong growth, he added.

However, commercial vehicles witnessed a slight degrowth in the FY2024-25, though performance in recent months has been comparatively better, Chandra said.

"On the exports front, good recovery is seen across all segments, particularly passenger vehicles and two-wheeler, reflecting improved global demand and India's growing competitiveness," he noted.

Not activating countercyclical capital buffer: Reserve Bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday said it has decided against activating countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB) as it is not needed in the present circumstances. The framework on CCyB was put in place by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in terms of guidelines in February 2015, wherein, it was advised that the CCyB would be activated as and when the circumstances warranted and that the decision would normally be pre-announced.

The framework envisages the credit-to-GDP gap as the main indicator, which may be used in conjunction with other supplementary indicators. "Based on review and empirical analysis of CCyB indicators, it has been decided that it is not necessary to activate CCyB at this point in time," the RBI said in a statement. The provision has not been used by the RBI since it was introduced in 2015. As per the RBI, the aim of the CCyB regime is two-fold. Firstly, it requires banks to build up a buffer of capital in good times, which may be used to maintain the flow of credit to the real sector in difficult times.

Sensex, Nifty surge over two per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surged over two per cent on Tuesday, tracking a rally in global markets after US President Donald Trump relaxed some of the tariffs on electronics products and hinted at duty revision for automobiles. Rallying for the second straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,577.63 points or 2.10 per cent to settle at 76,734.89. During the day, it zoomed 1,750.37 points or 2.32 per cent to 76,907.63, driven by the across-the-board rally.

The NSE Nifty surged 500 points or 2.19 per cent to 23,328.55. Intra-day, it rallied 539.8 points or 2.36 per cent to 23,368.35. The key indices have recovered almost all the losses induced by Trump's reciprocal tariffs announced on April 2.

All the BSE sectoral indices closed in the green. BSE Realty, Auto, Capital Goods and Industrials were lead gainers, jumping up to 5 per cent.

IndusInd Bank was the lead gainer among Sensex shares, surging by 6.84 per cent. Tata Motors rallied 4.50 per cent. Larsen & Toubro, Axis Bank, Adani Ports, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and HCL Tech were also among the gainers.

ITC and Hindustan Unilever were the only laggards.

Trump has suggested that he might temporarily exempt the auto industry from tariffs that were imposed earlier. "The rally is fuelled by the surprise pause in reciprocal tariffs which continued today led by the exemption on electronics goods also. Auto stocks gained on potential tariff relief and banking stocks benefited from deposit rate cuts.

"Domestically, the focus has shifted to the earnings season which has a weak forecast while global recovery and RBI's accommodative stance are supporting sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 3.21 per cent and midcap index rallied 3.02 per

cent. All BSE sectoral indices ended higher. Realty zoomed 5.81 per cent, Industrials soared 3.76 per cent, capital goods (3.67 per cent), auto (3.39 per cent), consumer discretionary (3.12 per cent), financial services (2.94 per cent) and metal (2.75 per cent).

As many as 3,302 stocks advanced while 785 declined and 169 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi index, Tokyo's Nikkei 225, Shanghai SSE Composite and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled in the positive territory. Markets in Europe were trading with gains. US markets ended higher on Monday.

Trump said he was temporarily exempting smartphones, computers and other electronics items from his tariffs.

"Benchmark indices extended the sharp gains on Tuesday, after Donald Trump carved out more exemptions from tariffs even as uncertainty continued. Broader mid and smallcaps also posted strong gains and so are all major sectors."

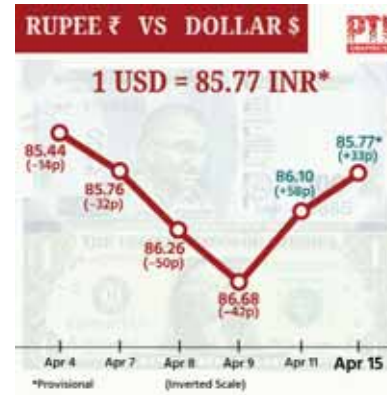
Rupee gains 33 paise against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Rising for the second straight session, the rupee jumped 33 paise to end at 85.77 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday due to a sharp rise in equity markets and continuing weakness in the American currency amid global uncertainties. Besides, lower global crude prices, favourable domestic inflation numbers and the US administration's latest move to suspend the additional 26 per cent tariffs on India till July 9 also supported the local currency, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.85, the day's lowest level, and touched the intra-day peak of 85.59 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 85.77 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 33 paise over the previous closing level.

The rupee had closed Friday's session with a sharp gain of 58 paise at 86.10 against the greenback. Forex markets were closed on Monday on account of Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Jayanti. Anuj



Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee gained on weak US dollar index and a surge in domestic markets.

Choudhary further said that the overnight decline in crude oil prices and upbeat macroeconomic data supported the rupee. However, FII outflows capped sharp gains.

"Overall weakness in crude oil prices may also support the rupee at lower levels. However, importer buying of dollars and FII outflows may cap sharp gains. Traders may take cues from Empire State manufacturing index data from the US," he said and projected the USD-INR spot price to be in the range of ₹85.40 to ₹86.

The latest government data released on Tuesday showed wholesale price inflation in the country declined to a 6-month low of 2.05 per cent in March as prices of vegetables, potato and other food items eased. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.02 per cent at 99.38, a level seen on March 1, 2022. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.11 per cent to its four-year low of \$64.81 per barrel in futures trade. The crude had earlier hit this level in April 2021. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,577.63 points or 2.10 per cent to settle at 76,734.89, while the Nifty surged 500.00 points or 2.19 per cent to 23,328.55.

Bharti-Airtel partners with Blinkit to deliver SIM cards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Bharti Airtel has partnered with quick commerce platform Blinkit for delivery of its new SIM cards to customers in Chennai within 10 minutes at a fee of ₹49, the telecom major said on Tuesday.

A first of its kind service by Bharti Airtel being introduced in 16 cities with plans to add more towns over a period of time.

"This collaboration marks a significant milestone enabling customers to receive SIM cards at their doorstep in 10 minutes at a convenience fee of ₹49. Post the delivery of the SIM card, customers can activate the number using a simple activation process through AADHAAR based KYC authentication," Airtel said in a company statement on Tuesday.

"Today, we are thrilled to partner with Blinkit for 10-minute SIM card delivery to customers' homes across 16 cities and in due course of time we plan to expand this partnership to additional cities," Bharti Airtel CEO Connected Homes and Director of Marketing, Siddharth Sharma said. Customers, post delivery of the SIM Card would need to activate the SIM within a 15 day window, the company said.

MP Dairy Federation, NDDDB sign agreement to build robust dairy cooperative ecosystem

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Anand/Ahemdabad

Madhya Pradesh State Cooperative Dairy Federation (MPCDF) and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) has signed a collaboration agreement to build a robust dairy cooperative ecosystem in Madhya Pradesh in the august presence of Home Minister Amit Shah and Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav.

Paving the way for collaboration between NDDDB and Bhopal Dugdha Sangh, NDDDB Chairperson Dr Meenesh Shah and Kaushlendra Vikram Singh, Divisional Commissioner of Bhopal exchanged another agreement.

On the occasion Amit Shah said that since formation of the Ministry of Cooperation, there has been a significant change in the cooperative sector under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

Now, this sector is progressing rapidly, he said. Shah also mentioned that Madhya Pradesh has greater potential for the expansion of cooperative societies compared to other states.

He suggested that with this agreement, we should aim to establish primary dairy cooperative societies in 50 per cent villages within the first five years. If dairy coop-

erative societies are established in 50 per cent villages, then the milk processing capacity in the cooperative sector will increase manifold and make the farmers prosperous.

Amit Shah stated that in this endeavour, the Modi government and the National Dairy Development Board are firmly supporting the farmers of Madhya Pradesh. NDDDB and MPCDF are committed to taking every possible step for the welfare of the farmers. It is a matter of great happiness that a collaboration agreement is being signed, transferring the management and operations of the federation and its allied milk unions to NDDDB.

The revival, expansion and strengthening of the dairy cooperative sector will not only benefit lakhs of milk producers in the state but also accelerate the growth of the state's dairy industry. He advised the Government of Madhya Pradesh and NDDDB to work together to ensure that dairy cooperatives reach the maximum number of villages.

CM Mohan Yadav stated that under "Prosperity through Cooperation", Madhya Pradesh is taking a significant step to transform the lives of dairy farmers through this agreement. The state has a favourable environment for milk production. Yadav conveyed that farmers will be

encouraged to increase milk production and the state government is committed to ensure that milk is purchased directly from dairy farmers at fair prices.

The processing capacity of all milk unions will be increased, providing farmers with livelihood opportunities and market access. Yadav expressed hope that NDDDB will play a vital role in the development of dairy cooperatives by providing continuous support and guidance to milk federations and producer institutions.

He also announced that his Government has decided to launch Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Kamdhenu Scheme to increase milk production in Madhya Pradesh. Dr Meenesh Shah, Chairman, NDDDB said that under the inspiring leadership of Shri Amit Shah and guidance of Dr Mohan Yadav, NDDDB will provide direction and support services in the areas of cooperation.

Major focus will be on expanding cooperative coverage; quality improvement measures at various stages of milk collection, transportation and processing; optimal utilisation of existing infrastructure, plant technology upgradation and end-to-end digitisation; market penetration activities of milk and milk products and deployment and capacity building of human resources.

Karamjit Singh Chahal takes charge as Registrar of GNDU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Amritsar

Distinguished academician and Architect, Prof Karamjit Singh Chahal has officially taken charge as the new Registrar of the Guru Nanak Dev University in the presence of VC Prof Karamjeet Singh, Prof Palwinder Singh, Dean Academic Affairs and university officials including S Hariqul Singh, OSD and S Parminder Singh, OSD.

In a brief address during the ceremony, Karamjeet Singh commended Prof Chahal's extensive experience in academic administration and expressed confidence in his ability to steer the Registrar's office towards greater efficiency and innovation. Taking the podium, Registrar Prof Karamjit Singh Chahal expressed gratitude for the opportunity and outlined his vision for the Registrar's office. "I am deeply honoured to assume this responsibility. My focus will be on fostering an environment of transparency, improving administrative processes and ensuring that we remain responsive to the needs of our students and university fraternity."

Colloquium on food safety

The Department of Hotel Management and Tourism, Guru Nanak Dev University inaugurated a colloquium

series under the aegis of CHAT 2025, themed "Feeding Tomorrow: Revolutionising Safety and Hygiene in India's Small-Scale Food Industry." The event was held under the patronage of Prof Karamjit Singh, Vice Chancellor, whose visionary leadership guided the initiative.

Jashan-2025 postponed

Guru Nanak Dev University has announced the postponement of the Inter Department Cultural Competitions 'Jashan-2025', which was originally scheduled to take place from April 16 to April 19, 2025, in the Dasmesh Auditorium and various venues of the University. The event will now be held from April 17 to April 19.

Lecture on 'Empowered Women Power Society' today

Under the Prof (Dr) Karamjeet Singh, Vice Chancellor, the Guru Nanak Dev University in collaboration with the Shaheed Nanak Singh Foundation is organising the 1st Late Sardarni Harbans Kaur Annual Memorial Lecture on the theme "Empowered Women Power Society." The lecture is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 2:30 pm at Shri Guru Granth Sahib Bhawan of the University.

Injury keeps Gayatri-Treesa duo out of Sudirman Cup Finals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The women's doubles pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly will miss out due to injury, but P V Sindhu and Lakshya Sen will spearhead a strong Indian singles challenge at the Sudirman Cup Finals to be held in Xiamen, China from April 27 to May 4.

It has been learnt that both Treesa and Gayatri, currently ranked 10th in the world, are recuperating from shoulder issues attributed to a packed schedule last year. The duo have already featured in five tournaments this season, adding to the 22 events they contested in 2024.

The pair had enjoyed a successful run last year, clinching the Syed Modi International title and reaching the semi-finals of the BWF World Tour Finals in December.

In their absence, the young combination of Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra will shoulder the responsibility in the women's doubles event after being named in the 14-member Indian squad by the Badminton Association of India (BAI).



India, who qualified for the prestigious mixed team championships based on their overall world ranking, have been clubbed in a challenging Group D alongside former champions Indonesia, two-time runners-up Denmark, and a strong English outfit. The tournament will see the return

of the formidable men's doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty after an injury break.

Chirag had suffered a back injury during the second round of All England Championships in March. The young pairing of Hariharan

Amsakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi has been named as backup for Satwik and Chirag in men's doubles.

"The selectors have picked the best possible combination in all the five categories despite some injury worries," Badminton Association of India (BAI) General Secretary Sanjay Mishra said in a release.

"We are no longer dependent on one or two disciplines to win the tie and that makes us a formidable force in any team event. We are confident that the team will not only make its mark in the group stages but can go on to create history by winning a medal," he added.

Besides Sen, the men's singles line-up also features H S Prannoy, while Sindhu will be joined by former national champion and world number 45 Anupama Upadhyaya in women's singles.

Sindhu, who was recovering from a hamstring injury sustained in February, had valuable match practice at the Badminton Asia Championships last week. In mixed doubles, Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto, who reached the quarter-finals at the Asia Championships, will lead the challenge.

Losing ISL final to Mohun Bagan stinks, says Chhetri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

He had a dream run in an eventful year both for club and country but the prized domestic trophy eluded him this time and Bengaluru FC captain Sunil Chhetri admitted that the loss to Mohun Bagan Super Giant in the Indian Super League (ISL) final will hurt him immensely.

Bengaluru FC lost 1-2 to Mohun Bagan Super Giant in the ISL summit clash on April 12 in Kolkata with the latter lifting the Cup after winning the League Winners' Shield earlier in the season.

"I know how all of you are feeling. Losing stinks. And this one will linger for a while," the 40-year-old Chhetri wrote on his social media accounts.

"I did what everyone does after losing a final. I sat with all the what-ifs and should-haves. The freckle. The header. Every half chance."

It's not that Chhetri and BFC have not won the ISL Cup. They had claimed it in the 2018-19 season with the talismanic striker as the captain. But lifting the Cup as a 40-year-old after retiring and making a comeback for the national team would have been a fairy-tale story.

He scored 14 goals in 28 matches this ISL season to be the highest scorer among

the Indians and second only overall to Moroccan and NorthEast United striker Alaeddine Ajaraja — 23 goals from 28 matches. Chhetri had also scored 14 goals from 21 matches in the 2017-18 season. He has scored 75 goals from 183 matches since 2015 in the ISL. He has turned up for BFC since then till now.

"And so, in what is uncharacteristic advice, go and sink into that tub of ice cream. Call for that cheat meal on a Monday. Skip the gym. Whatever it takes for you to feel better. Then after a few days, acknowledge that this hurt will end only when we win," he wrote.

"You love this team because you know how we're built. Don't let anything change that. We have lost many finals and have only come back stronger. That's the only way we at BFC know how to operate."

"We'll hurt for now, and then we'll brave it till we get over the line. That's how we'll do it. That's how we've always done it at this football club."

Chhetri announced international retirement in June 2024 but made a shocked return to play for India's two matches in March — against Maldives in an international friendly and against Bangladesh in an AFC Asian Cup qualifying round matches — when the ISL was in recess due to FIFA international window.

Asia Road Racing tourney to be held in Thailand in April

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

The 2025 Idemitsu FIM (Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme) Asia Road Racing Championship scheduled to be held later this month in Thailand would see the participation of top racers from newer geographies including Spain, England and Argentina.

Sarthak Chavan, Chiranth Viswanath and KY Ahamed all from India would also be part of the TVS Asia One Make Championship (OMC) Season 4 in the event to be held between April 25 and 27 at Chang International Circuit, Thailand.

A race-optimised 310cc motorcycle TVS Apache RR 310, from TVS Motor Company, would also feature this season, a company statement here said on Tuesday.

As many as 15 riders from 12 countries would battle for the championship title which includes seven returning racers from the 2024 squad. Last year, Japan's Hiroki Ono bagged his second championship title.

Sarthak Chavan from India made history in 2024 season by becoming the first

Indian to secure a top-three finish internationally.

"As we enter our fourth season at the Idemitsu FIM Asia Road Racing Championship with the TVS Asia One Make Championship, we are raising the bar once again with a race-optimised TVS Apache RR 310 and participation from diverse set of racers from new countries.

With top racers from 12 nations and key performance enhancements to the TVS Apache RR 310, including an upgrade aero package, increased power and refined riding dynamics—this season is set to push the boundaries of racing technology and competition," TVS Motor Company Head-Premium Business Vimal Sumbly said.

"Our commitment to motorsport excellence continues to drive innovation, nurture global talent and reinforce TVS Racing's leadership in two-wheeler motorsport. The 2025 season promises to be the most competitive yet, and we look forward to seeing our racers showcase their skills and set new benchmarks on the track," he added.

Turf war in India's boxing administration intensifies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The turf war in India's boxing administration intensified on Tuesday with members of various state units calling for immediate elections while the newly-formed Interim Committee announced its own set of key decisions, including the conduct of national championships and appointment of coaches.

The tenure of the BFI office-bearers ended on February 2. However, the elections have been delayed by legal disputes.

In its latest order, the Himachal Pradesh High Court directed the Sports Ministry observer and the Returning Officer to issue a fresh election schedule before April 28, when the case is set to be heard again.

"Ajay Singh (the former BFI President and current head of the interim committee) has tried all tactics to delay the election and undermine the constitution of the Boxing Federation of India," Assam Boxing President and former secretary general of the BFI Hemanta Kalita told reporters on Tuesday.

"We are grateful and happy that the law of the land has prevailed and the honourable High Court has passed the order to conduct the election in a free and fair



manner," he added.

The elections, which were scheduled for March 28, had been "paused" by Returning Officer RK Gauba following directives from the Delhi and Himachal Pradesh High Courts to reinstate names omitted from the Electoral College, including that of former union sports minister Anurag Thakur.

"Ajay Singh is working in a dictatorial

manner. We did not have any national championship last year, our performance at the Paris Olympics was zero," Madhya Pradesh Boxing President and former BFI Treasurer Digvijay Singh said.

"We are worried and want the elections to happen as soon as possible. So that our athletes don't lose out and their future is secure," he added.

Himachal Pradesh Boxing Association

President and former BFI Vice President Rajesh Bhandari alleged that Singh refused to take the inputs of the executive committee while deciding on the coaching staff, which led to the poor performance in the Paris Games.

"It's because of Ajay Singh's wrong policies, Indian boxing is going down," Bhandari said.

The Interim Committee, formed by World Boxing to oversee the affairs of the BFI and ensure administrative continuity and management of domestic and international competitions, in its first meeting on Monday took decisions to rejuvenate the domestic circuit as well as restart the elite boxing system.

The six-member committee includes BFI Vice President Narendar Kumar Nirwan, Executive Director Arun Malik, Olympian L Sarita Devi and Singapore Boxing Association's president Fairuz Mohamed.

The final member of the committee is yet to be nominated by the Indian Olympic Association President.

The committee also decided that the selections of coaches and support staff for the elite men's and women's national coaching camps will be appointed soon.

Anything is possible: Real Madrid on three-goal deficit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Madrid

Real Madrid's website defiantly told fans that "anything is possible," one day before the defending champion attempts to overcome a three-goal deficit to Arsenal in the Champions League.

A video showed Madrid's memorable comebacks in recent years, mentioning the "team of dreams" and the club's achievements "in this stadium, in this competition."

"Bernabeu, again," was the headline on the website ahead of the second leg of the quarterfinals at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Wednesday.

Record 15-time European champion Madrid lost the first leg 3-0 in England last week.

Only four times has a home team erased a first-leg deficit of three goals or more, accord-

ing to UEFA. Madrid rival Barcelona recovered after a 4-0 loss at Paris Saint-Germain with a historic 6-1 home victory in the round of 16 in the 2016-17 season. In the 2018-19 semifinals, Liverpool lost 3-0 at Barcelona but advanced with a 4-0 home victory. A season earlier in the quarterfinals, Barcelona was involved again. After beating Roma 4-1 at home, Barcelona lost the second leg 3-0 in the Italian capital.

The only other three-goal comeback by the home team came in 2004 in the quarterfinals, when Spanish club Deportivo La Coruna lost 4-1 at AC Milan and then won 4-0 at home to advance.

Madrid has a recent history of comebacks in the Champions League that has given fans hope of another magical night at the Bernabeu.

Madrid won its 14th Champions League title

We (Real Madrid) are aware of how much our fans and the stadium can help us. We're going to try until the last minute and until the last ball

— CARLO ANCELOTTI, COACH

in 2022 after rallying its way through the knockout rounds. It looked beaten at the Bernabeu in the last 16 against PSG, in the quarterfinals against Chelsea and in the semifinals against Manchester City, but every time it found a way to advance.

Against City, Madrid needed two late goals by forward Rodrygo — in the 90th minute and in stoppage time — to force extra time, when Karim Benzema converted a decisive penalty kick to put Madrid in the final, where it beat Liverpool.

"Real Madrid is the only team that has done

more goals in nearly 80 matches across all competitions, since a 4-3 win at Luton in the Premier League in December 2023.

The English side last overcame Madrid in the Champions League knockout stage in 2005-06, when it reached the final and eventually lost the title to Barcelona.

Arsenal is looking to reach the European semifinals for the first time since 2009, when it was eliminated by Manchester United.

Madrid will be without midfielder Eduardo Camavinga on Wednesday because of a red card late in the first leg.

Amar Sarin creates National Record of 1.90m jump at Delhi Horse Show

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In a historic moment for Indian equestrian sport, Amar Sarin, astride his magnificent Belgian stallion Bajrang, soared to a record-breaking height of 1.90 meters in the Open Jumping Six Bar at the prestigious Delhi Horse Show 2025, held at JPC. This remarkable feat has now been officially recognised as a National Record.

Representing TARC Equestrian Centre, Amar's achievement stands as a testament to his unmatched athleticism, precision, and years of dedicated training under the expert guidance of renowned international coach Nick Verlies. Bajrang, born in 2014 and imported from Belgium, has consistently delivered top-tier performances and once again proved his class in a packed arena filled with equestrian enthusiasts.

Adding to the celebratory weekend, Amar's eight-year-old daughter, Shivaaya Sarin, secured gold in the Future Star Show Jumping category, riding her pony Mistral and Silver in Fault and Out on her pony Fairy Tale. It was a heartwarming and symbolic moment—father and daughter both standing atop their podiums, united by their shared love for the sport. This dual triumph is even more inspiring given Amar Sarin's multifaceted life. As Managing Director and CEO of TARC Limited, a leading name in the Indian luxurious real estate known for its innovative developments and customer-centric vision, Amar juggles the demanding roles of corporate leadership and competitive sport with extraordinary grace. His journey is a rare blend of boardroom precision and athletic grit.

"Balancing the world of high-performance sport



with the responsibilities of leading a major corporation is challenging, but deeply fulfilling," said Amar Sarin. "Moments like these—standing in the arena with my daughter—make it worth it." Amar Sarin is no stranger to the spotlight. A qualified individual for the 2025 Asian Continental Championship, Amar has steadily risen to become one of India's most respected figures in show jumping.

His deep involvement with TARC Equestrian Centre, New Delhi a state-of-the-art riding and training facility—has also been instrumental in mentoring young Indian talent and fostering a new generation of riders.

As Amar continues to elevate Indian equestrianism on the global stage, this national record is not just a personal milestone—it is a symbol of what's possible when passion meets perseverance, and for the future of the sport in our country.

Office of The Chief Engineer (Bhopal Zone) P. W.D Bhopal (M.P.)

Email:- cepwdcapital@mp.nic.in Telephone/Fax No. 0755-2551403

Tender Notice

NIT No. 08/G/1/Mis/Bpl.Z./2019 (Year 2025) Bhopal, Date 11-04-2025

Online Tender for mentioned below are being invited. The Tender have been uploaded on the e-Procurement system of Public Works Department on the Portal <https://mptenders.gov.in> Tender details are as below :-

S. No.	Tender No.	District	Nature of work	Name of work	Call No.	Cost of Project (PAC) (Rs. In lack)	Remarks
1	2025_PWDRB_416371_1	Narmadapuram	Road	Construction of Sail Kharar Misrod & Bundara Kalan (Seoni Malwa) to Pipalber road Length 7.00 KM.	1st Call	818.84	EMD/AII Document are to be submitted online only.
2	2025_PWDRB_416372_1	Narmadapuram	Road	Construction of Choutlay to Jhiliay & Choutlay to Soyat road, Length 4.50 KM.	1st Call	828.95	EMD/AII Document are to be submitted online only.
3	2025_PWDRB_416373_1	Narmadapuram	Road	Construction work of sahalwada to Machala (Ramjhaniki Asbram road)	1st Call	1057.44	EMD/AII Document are to be submitted online only.
4	2025_PWDRB_416374_1	Narmadapuram	Road	Upgradation work of old MPM to Pachmari Road	1st Call	803.03	EMD/AII Document are to be submitted online only.
5	2025_PWDRB_416375_1	Narmadapuram	Road	Sohagpur, Nimora, Panchvati, Rainipani, Pathai, Urdan, Mangariya, Ghoghri to Sarangpur road Length- 24.30 KM.	1st Call	2762.43	EMD/AII Document are to be submitted online only.
6	2025_PWDRB_416376_1	Narmadapuram	Road	Construction work of Taronkala to Khairkala, Sonpur, Kursikhapa, Mohari road.	1st Call	1208.02	EMD/AII Document are to be submitted online only.
Total						7478.71	

The document can only be purchased online from the above website after making online payment. The last date & time for purchase of Document on line is **Dated 29-04-2025 up to (17:30)**. Detailed NIT and other details can be viewed on the above mentioned portal Amendments to NIT if any, would be published on website only, and not in newspaper.

Chief Engineer (Bhopal Zone)
P.W.D. Bhopal Madhya Pradesh

G-11606/25

IPL: DC eye comeback against RR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Jolted by a dramatic loss at home after a dream start to the season, Delhi Capitals (DC) will look to put the setback behind them when they take on a faltering Rajasthan Royals (RR) in the IPL here on Wednesday. Riding high on a four-match winning streak, the Axar Patel-led Capitals looked like a well-oiled machine before a stunning batting meltdown against Mumbai Indians (MI) halted their momentum here on Sunday.

What was meant to be a triumphant return to base ended in despair as the loss saw them slip to second on the points table. In contrast, Rajasthan Royals find themselves in a precarious position with just two wins from six matches, languishing at eighth. Their season has been marred by inconsistency.

Impact substitute Karun Nair, fresh off a prolific domestic season, led Delhi's chase against MI with a dazzling 89 in pursuit of 206 in their first game at the Feroz Shah Kotla this season.

At 119/1 in 10 overs, the match looked all but sealed. But what followed was a jaw-dropping collapse, which included three run-outs in the penultimate over. DC were eventually bowled out for 193 in a chase of 205.

Though the Capitals will undoubtedly rue the missed opportunity of collecting two points, they have little time to dwell on the defeat with another crucial clash looming. Once again, the spinners will hold the key for Delhi. Despite the challenge of the evening dew, wrist spinners Kuldeep



Yadav and 20-year-old Vipraj Nigam will look to weave their magic.

Both these bowlers have been DC's standout performers this season, their spin variations bamboozling opposition batters. However, skipper Axar Patel is yet to leave his mark. As captain, he has led the side admirably but the left-arm spinner has gone wicket-less in 14 overs across six matches, conceding runs at an economy that is a touch lower than 10.

Known for his batting heroics as well, the all-rounder is yet to get going in the tournament.

Young Jake Fraser-McGurk, who set the stage ablaze last season with his power-hitting, has been a shadow of his former self this time around. His high-risk game has completely backfired, yielding a meagre 46 runs, including two ducks.

With Faf du Plessis still side-lined due to injury, Nair looks to have firmly secured his spot in the team.

Delhi's middle-order looks strong this season thanks to the experience of KL Rahul, the firepower of Tristan Stubbs, Ashutosh Sharma, and the promising Nigam. Royals, meanwhile, have been plagued by inconsistency. Their batting unit, which is heavily reliant on Indian stars, has misfired repeatedly.

While Yashasvi Jaiswal notched a fluent fifty in the previous outing in the loss to RCB, his overall form remains patchy. Skipper Sanju Samson is yet to produce a defining knock, while the young guns Riyan Parag and Dhruv Jurel have shown potential without lasting impact.

On the bowling front, Jofra Archer seems to have shaken off the rust after copping the most expensive spell in IPL history. But the Royals' attack as a whole has been toothless. Apart from Sandeep Sharma, their other bowlers have struggled to control the scoring rate.

Squads

Delhi Capitals: Axar Patel (C), Faf du Plessis, Karun Nair, Sameer Rizvi, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Ashutosh Sharma, KL Rahul, Abishek Porel, Donovan Ferreira, Tristan Stubbs, Madhav Tiwari, Tripurana Vijay, Manvath Kumar, Vipraj Nigam, Ajay Mandal, Darshan Nalkande, Mukesh Kumar, Mohit Sharma, T Natarajan, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Kuldeep Yadav.

Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubham Dubey, Nitish Rana, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel (w), Shimron Hetmyer, Jofra Archer, Maheesh Theekshana, Tushar Deshpande, Sandeep Sharma, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Kunal Singh Rathore, Akash Madhwal, Kumar Kartikeya, Kwen Maphaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Yuvraj Singh Charak, Ashok Sharma, Vaibhav Suryavanshi.

Panjab Kings bundled out for 111 by KKR bowlers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mullanpur

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) dished out a clinical bowling show to bundle out hosts Panjab Kings (PBKS) out for a mere 111 — the third lowest total in this season of the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday. PBKS captain Shreyas Iyer's ploy to bat first after winning the toss at their home ground backfired as all their batters, except openers Priyansh Arya (22) and Prabhsimran Singh (30) struggled on the home pitch.

Only three more batters — Nehal

Wadhwa (10), Shashank Singh (18) and Xavier Bartlett (11) — could register double-digit scores. Some PBKS batters were also guilty of reckless batting and poor shot selection.

Harshit Rana (3/25) was the most successful bowler while Varun Chakaravathy (2/21) and Sunil Narine (2/14) chipped in with two apiece. Arya (22 off 12 balls), who hit a sensational hundred to win PBKS' match against Chennai Super Kings, struck two fours off Anrich Nortje in the second over to set the tone of the home side's innings.

Prabhsimran then struck a six and two fours in the next over bowled by

Vaibhav Arora, who conceded 20 runs. Rana was welcomed by Arya with a six but the batter had the last laugh as the batter holed out to Ramandeep Singh.

In-form PBKS captain Iyer was dismissed first ball with Ramandeep taking a stunning catch. Ramandeep ran a few yards and made a full length head-first dive and grabbed the ball inches above the turf.

Punjab's shoddy batting show continued as Josh Inglis (2) was bowled by Chakaravathy as the home side were three wickets down in the fifth over.

Prabhsimran, however, was not

affected by the fall of wickets as he smacked Rana for two consecutive sixes in the sixth over. But he got out two balls later to become Rana's third victim of the day.

Ramandeep also grabbed his third catch of the day, all of them off the bowling of Rana, as the duo made a perfect pair.

With 54 for 4 at the end of powerplay, Punjab were clearly in trouble. Glenn Maxwell and Nehal Wadhwa were kept quiet in the next two overs by the clinical KKR bowlers. Nortje then returned to take Wadhwa's wicket in the ninth over to leave Punjab in disarray. The

home side's slide continued as no batter was willing to stay put for even a few overs. Maxwell (7) fell in the 10th over off Chakaravathy to continue his poor form.

Punjab were in deep trouble at the halfway mark with just 80 on board for six wickets. Veteran KKR spinner Narine played his part to virtually seal Punjab's fate by dismissing both Suryansh Shedge (4) and Marco Jansen (1) in the 11th over. By that time, Punjab were 86 for 8.

Shashank and Bartlett shared 23 runs for the ninth wicket to take Punjab past the 100-run mark.



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