



## Disappearing green cover leaves behind sustainability fears

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

It takes about ten minutes to fell an organically grown native tree. It takes about as many years for a replacement sapling to mature and begin contributing meaningfully to the environment. The arithmetic is simple, but often overlooked.

Across Bhopal, the effects of a significant reduction in the number of trees over the decades are beginning to become evident with harsher summers, dipping groundwater levels, and the growing frequency of summer fires.

The Smart City project at TT Nagar alone came at the cost of nearly 9,000 trees. Officials pointed out that several times that number were planted in compensation. However, without systematic tracking, the survival of these young saplings

remains an open question. Afforestation drives are announced regularly, often accompanied by ceremonial plantings and photo opportunities. Yet the hard part begins after the cameras leave. Fragile saplings, left to face the elements without sustained care, struggle to survive the demanding conditions of a warming climate.

Young trees need more than just planting. They require years of nurturing: regular watering, protection from grazing cattle, shielding from extreme sun, and sometimes simple measures like fencing or mulching. Without such aftercare, survival rates plummet, and well-meaning initiatives fade quietly over time.

Even the transplantation of mature trees — often offered as a compromise during development projects — comes with

its challenges. Experts caution that trees shifted from their original locations experience significant stress. Without extensive post-transplant care, many fail to adapt. Survival rates are rarely disclosed, but anecdotal evidence suggests that losses are high.

Meanwhile, the ecological debt keeps growing. A mature tree anchors soil, cools the surrounding air, replenishes groundwater, and supports local biodiversity — benefits that are not immediately visible, but vital nonetheless. Studies show it takes seven to ten years before a sapling can begin to perform these roles. When a mature tree falls, the loss goes far beyond the visible. The rise in summer fires across the city offers a warning. Without tree cover, land dries faster, grasslands become brittle, and surface temperatures

rise sharply. Recent fires at Kaliyasot and other green areas are not just accidents of nature; they are part of a slow, predictable shift in the land's resilience.

It is tempting to see ecology and development as opposing forces. But better planning could bridge the gap: designing roadways and layouts around trees, auditing ecological costs before projects begin, and nurturing compensatory plantations long after the ceremonies are over.

Greater focus on urban permaculture, Miyawaki forests, and other regenerative practices offers practical, scalable solutions. Pilot projects in small pockets of the city could demonstrate how green spaces might be rebuilt, even within a rapidly growing urban environment.

A few years ago, city-based

Water and Land Management Institute (WALMI) had announced work on a more cost-efficient adaptation of the Miyawaki technique. Ironically, the WALMI campus itself was the venue of the Kaliyasot fire that gutted thousands of trees this week. The administration is yet to announce how it plans to compensate for the loss in green cover.

Criticism aside, development does make some tree losses unavoidable. But delaying a creative, determined approach to rebuilding green cover comes with its own price. Every tree protected or successfully replaced will matter — not only for beauty or shade but for cooling a warming city, preserving its water, and ensuring that Bhopal remains a city that can sustain future generations.



Muslim women during a protest against the Pahalagam terror attack, in Bhopal on Sunday.

Pioneer photo

## SBI donates equipment to Army AYUSH Welfare Centre

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

In a significant gesture of support to the Indian Armed Forces, State Bank of India (SBI), under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, contributed a sum of Rs 10,78,806 to the Indian Army for the establishment of a Health and Wellness Centre (AYUSH) at Sultania Infantry Lines, Bhopal Military Station. Apart from this Two E-Rickshaws were also donated for the use of Indian Army War veterans and their dependents inside the military station.

The ceremonial handover took place on 25th April 2025 in the esteemed presence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, senior officers from the Indian Army, and senior SBI officials

including General Manager of SBI Manoj Kumar, Deputy General Manager Lokesh Chandra, Deputy General Manager Saikrishna Shridhara, and Regional Manager Sunil Rajvaidya. The cheque was presented by the General Manager of SBI Manoj Kumar to Indian Army senior officials as a token of the Bank's commitment to the health and holistic well-being of armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families.

The donated amount will be utilized for procuring essential medical equipment for the proposed AYUSH Wellness Centre, which is named Niramaya, which aims to provide preventive, curative, and rehabilitative healthcare services based on traditional Indian systems such as Ayurveda and Yoga. The cen-

tre is expected to benefit over 40,000 personnel and dependents at Bhopal Military Station, promoting a culture of wellness and strengthening the morale of the armed forces community. E Rickshaws will be used by Army veterans to commute inside the Military Station.

This initiative is part of SBI's broader CSR focus on "measures for the benefit of armed forces veterans, war widows and their dependents," and reaffirms the Bank's ongoing commitment to national service and social responsibility. The Indian Army extended its heartfelt appreciation to SBI for this meaningful contribution, which not only honors the sacrifice of soldiers but also ensures their families have access to quality wellness facilities.

## Probe begins in complaint against DEO employee

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

A formal complaint alleging financial misconduct and Arule violations by a District Education Office employee has prompted the Directorate of Public Instruction to order a swift investigation.

The Physical Education Foundation of India, Bhopal Chapter, submitted the complaint directly to the School Education Minister's office. Acting promptly, Director KK Dwivedi instructed the Divisional Joint Director, Bhopal, to examine the matter and submit a factual report.

The allegations centre on Assistant Grade-3 employee CJ Joyson, who is accused of forging documents to cause financial losses worth lakhs of rupees to the government. Joyson is posted at the DEO office.

Responding to the accusations,

Joyson has said that the complainant is not a registered organisation. He dismissed the allegations as false and said the department is conducting its inquiry.

The complaint highlights serious charges, including Joyson's alleged salary increment after falsely claiming to pass a typing test, despite lacking actual typing skills, and misbehaving with colleagues.

Other allegations include illegally occupying two government accommodations, amassing disproportionate assets, involvement in police cases, and repeatedly causing financial damage to the government through unauthorised actions. Joyson has previously faced controversy. Around six years ago, a purported video of an alcohol party at the DEO office allegedly featuring him surfaced on social media platforms.

## Dr Ambedkar served as a guiding force: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar served as a guiding force in the creation of an egalitarian society and laid a strong foundation for preserving the spirit of the nation's independence. In a country that endured a thousand years of slavery, Baba Saheb made a remarkable contribution by identifying the root causes of subjugation and offering effective solutions. Dr. Ambedkar further strengthened the spirit of equality by giving the reservation system a constitutional foundation. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav was addressing the Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Samman Abhiyan program held at the State Museum in Shyamala Hills as part of the Dr.

Ambedkar Youth Conclave. Member of Parliament VD Sharma, MP from Dewas Mahendra Singh Solanki, and MLA Bhagwandas Sabnani were also present on the occasion. At the beginning of the program, Anil Sarvaiya, Madhya Pradesh Chapter Head of DICCI, presented the Social Justice Patra to the Chief Minister. A memento was also presented to Dr. Yadav, while Mudit Shajwar outlined the details of the program.

Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that as a result of the system envisioned by Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, every section of society has been provided equal opportunities for progress. Citing the example of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said that individuals from humble and struggling backgrounds, including farmers and laborers,

have been able to rise to leadership roles and contribute to the nation from key positions. Dr. Yadav further highlighted that recognizing the significance of Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts, a university was established at his birthplace, Mhow. He also noted that under the initiative of Prime Minister Modi, Dr. Ambedkar's contributions have been incorporated into the curriculum under the New Education Policy, and research on his ideas is actively being promoted.

During the program, Member of Parliament V.D. Sharma said that Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar played a pivotal role in uniting the entire nation. He emphasized that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working tirelessly to fulfill Baba Saheb's vision of a developed India.



Priests from different religions under the banner of Madhya Pradesh Sadhbhavana March light candles to pay tributes to Pahalagam terror victims, at Shaheed Gate in Bhopal on Sunday.

## CM orders strict safety measures for Jammu and Kashmir students

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Following heightened tensions in the wake of the Pahalagam terror attack, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has directed state officials to ensure the safety of Jammu and Kashmir students studying in the state and to expedite the deportation of Pakistani nationals as per the Union Home Ministry's directives.

In a high-level meeting convened on Saturday, CM Yadav outlined clear instructions regarding the implementation of security measures in the wake of the attack, which claimed the lives of 26 people, mostly tourists, earlier this week in Pahalagam, Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, Yadav instructed the administration to identify Pakistani nationals residing in the state and ensure their return before the April 27 deadline set by the Centre. As per the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) directive, all Pakistani nationals, except those with long-term, diplomatic, and official visas, must leave India. Pakistani nationals holding medical

visas have been given an extension until April 29 to depart.

In his statement posted on X (formerly Twitter), Yadav emphasized: "I have directed officials to identify Pakistani visa holders in the state within the stipulated time limit. All Pakistani citizens, except those holding long-term, diplomatic, and official visas, should be expelled from the state. We are also ensuring the safety of Jammu and Kashmir students studying in Madhya Pradesh," he said.

The Chief Minister further instructed senior police officers to monitor sensitive areas in the state, ensuring peace and law and order at all costs. The directive comes after the MEA revoked the visas of Pakistani nationals currently in India and ordered them to leave before their visas expire. Pakistani nationals holding medical visas are given time until April 29 to leave the country.

The Pahalagam terror attack has led to rising tensions between India and Pakistan, prompting increased security measures in various states, including Madhya Pradesh.

## Five per cent DA hike for state employees

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

In a significant relief for state government employees, the Madhya Pradesh government, under Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, has announced a 5% increase in the Dearness Allowance (DA). With this announcement, the total DA for state employees will rise to 55%, up from the previous 50%. This decision was made public by the Chief Minister during the Madhya Pradesh Gazetted Officers' Association's provincial conference held in Bhopal.

Dr. Yadav explained that the revised DA would now be on par with the allowances given to central government employees, ensuring similar relief for the state's workforce. He further clarified that this increase would be implemented in two phases - Phase 1- A 3% increase starting from July 1, 2024. And Phase 2- An additional 2% increase from January 1, 2025.

This hike comes as a relief to the state's employees amidst rising inflation, ensuring that they receive a fair compensation to cope with the rising cost of living.

## GRP cop attacked by drunk youths at Rani Kamlapati Railway Station

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

A shocking incident unfolded late on Saturday night at Rani Kamlapati railway station when a group of drunk youths attacked a Government Railway Police (GRP) personnel during an operation to enforce closure of shops and restaurants. The attack occurred around 2:00 am, when GRP officials arrived at Bansal One to ensure that the station's commercial establishments adhered to the closure orders.

During the operation, the officers encountered a group of youths consuming alcohol inside a car. When instructed to vacate the area, the situation quickly escalated into a violent confrontation. The youths, under the influence of alcohol, began arguing with the officers, which soon turned hostile.

The altercation quickly became physical, with Head Constable Nazar Daulat Khan being the first target. He was assaulted, his uniform was torn, and he was subjected to verbal abuse, including objectionable remarks targeting his religion. As the situation escalated, his fellow officers Sandeep and Kamal Raghuvanshi rushed to his aid. However, the assailants contin-

## NHRC seeks report from Bhopal CP in gang rape, blackmail case

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

In a shocking turn of events, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought a detailed report from Bhopal Police Commissioner regarding the ongoing investigation into the organized gang rape, blackmail, and forceful religious conversion activities orchestrated by a criminal gang. This follows a fresh case filed against the main accused, Farhan Khan, who was arrested earlier in connection with the case.

Police investigations have uncovered a horrifying dimension to the crimes, with reports suggesting that videos of the sexual assaults and atrocities carried out by the gang have been shared and possibly sold to the porn industry. Authorities believe that these videos were traded on the dark web, and they are now working with cybercrime experts to trace the transactions.

The police are closely scruti-



Noted singer Ajay Yagnik performs during a Sunderkand recital programme at Ravindra Bhawan in Bhopal on Sunday.

## UBI signs MoU with MPPGCL for employee salary accounts

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Union Bank of India and Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company Limited (MPPGCL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to open salary accounts for MPPGCL employees and officers.

During the signing ceremony, Rajeev Jha, the Regional Head of Union Bank of India, confirmed that the bank is committed to offering enhanced services under

its salary account scheme. He mentioned that the collaboration is aimed at providing comprehensive financial solutions to MPPGCL employees. Samir Kumar, the Zonal Head of Union Bank, further elaborated that the bank will offer MPPGCL employees a corporate salary account with advanced features, which will be equipped with digital products and provided without any charges, making it more competitive compared to other banks.

In addition to salary accounts, the scheme will also include benefits such as interest rate concessions on loan accounts, discounts on locker rentals, Rupay Select Debit Cards (Top Variant), medical and accident insurance, term life insurance, and overdraft facilities. This partnership is expected to offer MPPGCL employees a comprehensive and convenient banking experience while strengthening the ties between Union Bank of India and MPPGCL.

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# India emerges as global space leader: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Noting that India has become a global space power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the country is leading the most cost-effective but successful space programme in the entire world and is going to scale new heights in the future. Many youth are attaining new milestones in the field of space startups, Modi said, adding 10 years ago, there was only one company, but today there are more than 325 space startups working in the country. In his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat', he also paid tributes to former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K Kasturirangan, who passed away last week. "Two days ago we lost the country's great scientist Dr K Kasturirangan ji. Whenever I met Kasturirangan ji, we discussed topics like the talent of Indian youth, modern education, Space-Science. His contribution in lending newer heights to science, education and India's space programme shall always be remembered. ISRO attained a new identity under his leadership," he said. The space programmes that moved forward under his guidance gave global recognition to India's efforts, Modi said. Many of the satellites that India uses today were launched under the supervision of Dr Kasturirangan, he said. "There was one more special facet to his personality, which the younger generation can learn from. He always accorded

importance to innovation. The vision of learning, knowing and doing something new is very inspiring," Modi said. The prime minister said Kasturirangan also played a major role in formulating the new National Education Policy of the country. Kasturirangan came up with the idea of "forward looking" education according to the modern needs of the 21st century, Modi said. "His selfless service to the country and contribution to nation building will always be remembered. Very humbly, I pay my tribute to Dr K Kasturirangan," he said. Noting that April marks 50 years of the launch of the Aryabhata Satellite, Modi said, "Today, when we look back and remember this journey of 50 years, we realise how far we have come. This flight of India's dreams in space once commenced with just conviction. Some young scientists with the passion to do something for the nation - they neither had the modern resources like today, nor the access to world technology as such. If at all they had anything, it was talent, dedication, hard work and the passion to do something for the country." "You must have seen pictures of our scientists carrying critical equipment themselves on bullock carts and bicycles. It is the result of that very dedication and spirit of service to the nation that so much has changed today," he said. Modi pointed out that India has become a global space power, pointing "We have created a record by launching 104 satellites simultaneously. We have become the first country to reach the South Pole of the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi FILE PHOTO

Moon. India has launched the Mars Orbiter Mission and we have reached pretty close to the Sun through the Aditya - L1 Mission," he said. Today, India is leading the most cost-effective but successful space programme in the entire world, he pointed out. Many countries of the world take help from ISRO for their satellites and space missions, Modi said. "When we see a satellite launch by ISRO, we are filled with

pride. I had a similar feeling when I witnessed the launch of PSLV-C-23 in 2014. I was also present at the ISRO Centre in Bengaluru during the landing of Chandrayaan-2 in 2019. At that time Chandrayaan failed to achieve the expected success, it was a very difficult time for the scientists. But I could see with my own eyes the patience of the scientists and their zeal to achieve something," he said. And a few

years later, the whole world too noticed how the same scientists made Chandrayaan-3 a success, the Prime Minister added. Noting that India has opened her space sector for the private sector as well, Modi said today many youth are attaining new milestones in the field of space startups. "The times to come are ushering in a lot of new possibilities in Space. India is going to scale new heights. The country is busy preparing for many important missions like Gaganyaan, SpaDeX and Chandrayaan-4. We are also working on the Venus Orbiter Mission and Mars Lander Mission," he said. Indian space scientists are going to fill the people of the country with new pride through their innovations, Modi said. Recalling the 'Champran Satyagrah', Modi said it was the first big experiment by Bapu in India. "The entire British rule was shaken by Bapu's Satyagrah. The British had to suspend the law that forced farmers to cultivate indigo. This was a victory that infused new confidence in the freedom struggle. All of you must be aware that another son of Bihar also contributed a lot to this Satyagrah, who became the first President of the country after Independence. The great personality was Dr Rajendra Prasad. He also wrote a book on the 'Champran Satyagrah'," Modi said. Many more indelible chapters of the freedom struggle are associated with April itself, he said. "Gandhiji's 'Dandi March' culminated on the 6th of April itself. This march which commenced on the 12th of

March and continued for 24 days had shaken the British. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place in April itself. The marks of this blood stained history are still present on the soil of Punjab," Modi said. He said that in a few days, on May 10, the anniversary of the first freedom struggle would also be there. The spark that arose in that first battle for freedom, later became a torch for millions of freedom fighters, Modi said. "On April 26, we observed the death anniversary of the great hero of the 1857 revolution, Babu Veer Kunwar Singh. The entire country derives inspiration from this great freedom fighter of Bihar. We have to keep alive the immortal inspirations of lakhs of such freedom fighters," he said. The energy received from them provides renewed strength to our resolve of 'Amrit Kaal', Modi added. He said the biggest strength of the country is our 140 crore citizens, their capability, their will power, and when crores of people join a campaign together, its impact is huge. He cited the example of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign and pointed out that on the 5th of June, on 'World Environment Day', this campaign is completing one year. "During this one year, under this campaign, more than 140 crore trees have been planted in the name of the mother across the country. Observing this initiative of India, people outside the country have also planted trees in the name of their mother," he said. In his broadcast, Modi also lauded how in Wayanad, saffron is not being grown in any field or soil but with the help of aeroponics technique.



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan paying tribute to former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan at Raman Research Institute in Bengaluru PTI

## Dharmendra Pradhan pays tribute to K Kasturirangan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday paid homage to former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan, who died on April 25, in Bengaluru, saying he was one of the brightest stars of the scientific and academic community. "Paid homage to the mortal remains of Dr K Kasturirangan ji at Raman Research Institute, Bengaluru. One of the brightest stars of the scientific and academic community, Kasturirangan ji leaves behind an unparalleled legacy. "May his soul attain sadgati. Pray to Almighty to grant solace to the bereaved family," Pradhan wrote on social media and shared pictures. Kasturirangan, who led the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for nearly a decade and was the man behind the reforms proposed in the new National

Education Policy (NEP), passed away at the age of 84 in Bengaluru. His mortal remains, wrapped in the national flag, were kept at the Raman Research Institute (RRI) for the public and well-wishers to pay their last respects. His last rites will be conducted with full state honours. Pradhan shared a heartfelt post for Kasturirangan on social media on Friday, saying the space scientist was "more than a mentor" for him. "I am deeply heartbroken by the passing of Padma Vibhushan Dr K Kasturirangan ji. His loss is not only a profound one for the global scientific and academic community, but an intensely personal one for me. "To me, he was far more than a mentor — he was a guiding light, a wellspring of wisdom, compassion, and quiet strength. I consider myself truly fortunate to have received his affection, blessings and guidance over the years," the minister wrote.

## 509 Pakistanis leave India after notice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

As many as 509 Pakistani nationals, including nine diplomats and officials, left India in three days beginning Friday through the Attari-Wagah border point as the exit deadline for the 12 categories of short-term visa holders of the neighbouring nation ended Sunday, officials said. A total of 745 Indians, including 14 diplomats and officials, have returned from Pakistan through the international border crossing located in Punjab. The 'Leave India' notice to the Pakistani nationals was issued by the government after 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed by Pakistan-linked terrorists at Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir on April 22. Officials said that altogether 237 Pakistani nationals, including nine diplomats and officials, left India through the Attari-Wagah border post on Sunday, 81 Pakistani nationals left on April 26 and 191 on April 25. Similarly, 116 Indians, including one diplomat, returned from Pakistan on Sunday through the international land border crossing, 342 Indians, including 13 diplomats and officials, came back from Pakistan on April 26 and 287 Indians crossed over on April 25, officials said. Some of the Pakistanis might have left India through airports too, they said, pointing out that since India does not have direct air connectivity with Pakistan, they might have left for other countries. The deadline for exiting India for those holding SAARC visas was April 26. For those carrying medical visas, the deadline is April 29. The 12 categories of visas whose holders have to leave India by Sunday are — visa on arrival, business, film, journalist, transit, conference, mountaineering, student, visitor, group tourist, pilgrim and group pilgrim. Three Defence or Military, Naval and Air Advisors in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi have been declared Persona Non Grata and they

were given one week to leave India. Five support staff of these defence attaches were also asked to leave India. India has also withdrawn its defence attaché from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. However, those having long-term and diplomatic or official visas were exempted from the 'Leave-India' order. At the Attari border in Amritsar district, vehicles queued up as Pakistani nationals hurried to cross over to their country. Many Indians came to bid farewell to their relatives, the pain of separation evident on their faces. Sarita and her family had come to India for a kin's wedding set for April 29. "We came to India after nine years." Besides, 438 Pakistani nationals are in the foreign countries on long-term visas and they include Hindus who have applied for Indian citizenship. She, her brother and her father are Pakistanis while her mother is an Indian national. "They (the authorities at Attari) are telling us they will not allow my mother to go along. My parents got married in 1991. They are saying Indian passport holders will not be allowed," she said, crying bitterly. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said all Pakistanis have been accounted for and arrangements are being made to deport the people whose visas have been revoked as per the Centre's directives. State minister Yogesh Kadam on Saturday said the 1,000 Pakistani nationals with short-term visas have been asked to leave India. Around 5,050 Pakistani citizens have been living in Maharashtra and most of them are on long-term visas, officials said. The Bihar government said that all Pakistani nationals, who had been to the state in the recent past, have left well

ahead of the April 27 deadline. In the southern state of Telangana, police chief Jitender cited official records to say that as many as 208 Pakistani nationals were staying in the state, mostly in Hyderabad. Among them, 156 hold long-term visas, 13 short-term visas and 39 were with the travel document for medical and business purposes. There were 104 Pakistani nationals in the southern coastal state of Kerala, of whom 99 were on long-term visas. The remaining five, who were on either tourist or medical visas, have left the country. Central India's Madhya Pradesh had around 228 visiting Pakistani nationals, many of whom have left the country already, officials said. On the other hand, around 12 Pakistanis have been identified in Odisha and all of them have been asked to follow the deadline set for them to leave the country. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said three Pakistani nationals, who were in the state on short-term visas, have been asked to leave. Seven Pakistanis were in Gujarat on short-term visas — five in Ahmedabad and one each in Bharuch and Vadodara. They have either left India or are leaving by Sunday, officials said. Besides, 438 Pakistani nationals are in the western state on long-term visas and they include Hindus who have applied for Indian citizenship. In the north, Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police Prashant Kumar said on Saturday that the process of sending back all categories of Pakistani citizens visiting the state who have been ordered to leave India has been completed. One Pakistani national is still in the state and he will depart for Pakistan on April 30, the DGP said. As many as 19 Pakistani nationals staying in Bihar with short-term visas have left the country. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday called up the chief ministers of all states and asked them to ensure that all Pakistani stays in India beyond the deadline set for leaving the country.

## PM Modi to inaugurate first WAVES summit in Mumbai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai on Thursday, a four-day event that will bring together the entire spectrum of the media and entertainment industry. The prime minister is also expected to interact with top leaders of the media and entertainment industry during the summit, which is also aimed at giving a boost to the creator's economy taking shape across the world. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will also address the inaugural session of the summit, which is expected to witness participation from top actors such as Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth, Mohanlal, Hema Malini, and Chiranjeevi, among others. The summit will feature theme-based plenaries and discussions aimed at shaping the future of the audio-visual industry in India and beyond. The first two days will focus on cinema, filmmaking, and marketing, while the next two days will witness business meetings and participation from the general public. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is expected to chair the Global Media Dialogue which will see participation from ministers, leaders of the media industry and policymakers from across the world. Mumbai is expected to be the permanent venue of the WAVES summit, billed as the biggest gathering of the media and entertainment industry, similar to what World Economic Forum meeting at Davos is for the business and economy sectors, officials said.



Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna being greeted by Supreme Court Bar Association President Kapil Sibal before the start of a friendly cricket match between CJI XI and SCBA-XI at Modern School Cricket Ground in New Delhi on Sunday PTI

## IIT-Madras non-destructive evaluation centre grows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

From sensors detecting leaks in pipelines, tanks, bridges and dams without tearing those down to robots for ending manual scavenging — IIT-Madras has established itself as a global centre of excellence for developing disruptive material testing technology. "Non Destructive Evaluation" (NDE) is the broad name given to the field of testing and analysis used by industry to characterise components or structures for indicators of performance degradation, without causing damage to the original part. The "NDE 5.0 — Industrial Assets and Process Management CoE (CNDE)" at IIT-Madras is developing advanced inspection solutions using X-rays, infrared thermography, lasers, ultrasonics, microwave, terahertz and eddy currents, leveraging industry tools in robotics, drones, AI, Machine Learning, virtual reality, distributed ledgers, hyperspectral imaging and quantum computing. Krishnan Balasubramanian, Chair Professor, IIT-Madras, said that the centre of excellence has a team of internationally acclaimed professors and researchers who have executed projects with a cumulative value over ₹200 crore, attracted industry funding in excess of ₹50 crore and CSR funding of ₹10 crore for

socially-relevant projects. "The research undertaken by this team has already led to 15 IIT Madras-incubated startups with a combined valuation in excess of ₹2,000 crore. "The vision is to carry out cutting-edge research on asset integrity platforms for society and industry validated and accepted as benchmarks that can be commercialised worldwide," he said. Balasubramanian also underlined that technologies from this CoE impact the efficiency of industry operations and increase the availability and safety of industrial and infrastructural assets. "The key objectives of this CoE include impacting industries by helping them reduce operating costs by 40 per cent, decrease failure risk, improve availability and uptime by 20 per cent and extend as well as maximise asset life safety," he added. "The country has the second-longest road network in the world (6 million km) and the Indian Railways is one of the largest rail networks in the world under one management. The ports handle 95 per cent of its international trade in and out of India. "The country is currently the fourth largest consumer of energy globally after the US, China and Russia and, hence, has over 40,000 km of cross-country pipelines and underground oil reserve storage facilities," he said.





# Regaining Pahalgam's lost paradise

A brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam's Baisaran Valley has shattered dreams, reignited fear, and exposed the fragile calm, threatening Kashmir's hard-earned progress and hopes for lasting peace

FIRST  
Column

Holidaying in happiness turned into a nightmare at the idyllic landscape of Pahalgam, often described as a 'heaven on earth', as a scene of unimaginable horror broke open on April 22, 2025.

A brazen terrorist attack on a group of tourists in the Baisaran Valley — mainly men being killed based on their religious identity — resulted in the tragic and unfortunate loss of at least 28 lives and left over 20 others critically injured.

This barbaric act, claimed by 'The Resistance Front' (TRF), a shadow outfit of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), has not only devastated families and shattered dreams but has also ripped apart the fragile veneer of normalcy that authorities had been attempting to bring back in the Kashmir Valley.

The gruesome incident unfolded in the afternoon of 22 April when a group of four to six heavily armed militants, disguised in military — style uniforms, emerged from the dense forests surrounding Baisaran Valley (a meadow accessible only by foot or pony and an open area with no hideouts for safety). According to eyewitness accounts, the assailants systematically targeted non-Muslim tourists after checking their identities and religious affiliations.

This selective targeting underscores the malicious intent to sow communal discord and further destabilise the region. The victims included 24 tourists from various parts of India, two local residents, and two foreign nationals from Nepal and the UAE. The serene meadow erupted into chaos and grief in the attack's immediate wake.

Social media feeds flooded with harrowing videos — terrified cries for help mingled with the grim sight of lifeless bodies scattered across the onepicturesque landscape.

The emotional wounds inflicted on the bereaved families are immeasurable. While the Government's offer of ₹20 lakhs for information on the terrorists' location is one step to involve citizens' participation in nabbing the culprit, it cannot erase the haunting memories of this devastation.

The image of the young woman beside her fallen Navy officer husband, a honeymoon tragically cut short; the local pony owner's family, now without their sole provider after his courageous son tried to shield tourists; the woman forced to witness the brutal murder of her husband and son; the recently married IAF officer from Arunachal Pradesh on vacation — these stories of unimaginable loss and despair paint a stark and enduring picture of terrorism's human cost, shattering the illusion (read deception) of calm in this vulnerable region.

Following the Pahalgam attack, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) recommended a set of five decisive actions against Pakistan — that included holding the 'Indus Waters Treaty of 1960' in abeyance until verifiable cessation of cross-border terrorism; immediate closure of the 'Integrated Check Post Attari' with a grace period until 1 May for those with valid endorsements to return; the cancellation of all 'SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme'



RAJDEEP PATHAK

(SVES) visas for Pakistani nationals with a 48-hour deadline for those currently in India to depart; the declaration of Pakistan's Defence/Military, Naval, and Air Advisors in New Delhi as 'Persona Non Grata' with a week to leave (and a reciprocal withdrawal of Indian counterparts from Islamabad along with five support staff from each mission); and a significant reduction in the overall strength of High

Commissions from 55 to 30 personnel by May 1, 2025.

The Pahalgam attack has triggered widespread condemnation across India, with many viewing it as a direct assault on the nation's unity and secular fabric. Many countries, including the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and several European

and Middle Eastern nations, especially the UAE, issued strong statements condemning the attack. They emphasised the need for international cooperation to eradicate terrorism and called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. This incident has added a new dimension to Kashmir's intricate geopolitical scenario. For decades, this region has been a fiercely contested territory between India and Pakistan, leading to repeated conflicts and border tensions and solidifying its status as a highly sensitive area. The situation has become even more complex with China's bordering presence. Adding to this volatile mix, Bangladesh has recently emerged as a neighbour in dispute with India, further intensifying regional dynamics. The timing of this unrest could be a calculated move to draw international attention to the Kashmir issue and undermine India's attempts to showcase normalcy, particularly as it coincided with US Vice President JD Vance's visit and the ongoing WAQF debate. Moreover, striking at the height of the tourist season — a critical period for the local economy —

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is a calculated attempt to inflict maximum economic harm and cultivate an atmosphere of fear, thereby disrupting peace and stability.

Since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the Indian Government has been actively pursuing peace-building and confidence — regaining measures in Jammu and Kashmir, while also promoting local entrepreneurship and development, recognising the practicalities of the situation on ground, which had begun to yield positive results, thereby projecting a return to normalcy in the region.

The recent attack has severely impacted its sector, specifically, the recovering tourism sector in Jammu and Kashmir. Travel agencies in Delhi experienced nearly 90 per cent booking cancellations, as per media reports.

This reverses the remarkable growth from 1.62 crore tourists in 2019 to 2.36 crore in 2024, which had significantly boosted local economies and livelihoods dependent on the hospitality industry, including hotels, houseboats, guides, and artisans, thereby reigniting fear and uncertainty.

Amidst the tears of this tragedy, the response of the Kashmiri people showcased a powerful display of humanity. Immediately following the attack, residents rushed to the scene to assist the injured tourists.

They helped with evacuations, offered first aid, and provided emotional support to those traumatised by the event. A day later, on April 23, religious organisations condemned the attack and large numbers of Kashmiri citizens took to the streets in protest of this massacre, holding peaceful demonstrations with the Tricolour, besides candlelight vigils, further underscoring the rejection of violence by the local population and their desire for peace and stability.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the insidious nature of terrorism often finds fertile ground in the tilled soil of human emotions — fear, anger, and envy — emotions that are tragically amplified by the harsh realities of systemic inequalities and sometimes, forced acts of blind belief.

It is a matter of grave national concern to observe the seeds of violence taking root even in our villages, and growing children's aggressive behaviour. This early violence is often a bitter harvest of neglect, stemming from a lack of fundamental education that instils mutual respect, and the gnawing anxiety of unemployment, that darkens the horizons of their future. These interconnected issues demand serious and sustained attention to prevent the escalation of individual frustrations into larger societal threats.

While the Government is taking strong counter-terrorism measures in light of this barbaric attack, the participation of citizens in rebuilding the shaken confidence is crucial. Despite this barbaric act that threatens to undermine the hard-won progress in the Valley, rebuilding trust is now paramount. The time is now to act — in all directions, for peace is the only way.

(The writer is a programme executive Gandhi Smriti Sansthan. Views are personal)

## Congress in crisis: Reform or perish

Despite the energy generated by Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo campaigns, the session offered little more than ritualistic rhetoric, exposing deep structural inertia and a status quo mindset at odds with the urgency of the political moment

Why is the Congress reluctant to change its formation in terms of organisational network, and reform the decades — old processes related to the functioning of its highest bodies — Congress Working Committee, AICC and its customary session?

Are the Congress leaders fearful of the change or intense pressure from some invisible forces that have forced them to play safe and be status quo?

These questions confronting the current Congress dispensation (read Sonia Gandhi-Mallikarjun Kharge-Rahul Gandhi powerful troika) are not new. But a refresh button pressed by the recently held non-happening Ahmedabad AICC session has once again made these questions relevant and begging for answers.

The session left all those participating or not (the party leaders rank and file, and the public) unenthused to the level of the lowest ebb, as it failed to throw an alternative vision to fight the might of Mr Narendra Modi — led well-oiled ruling network — and also to ignite the minds of the Congresspersons to make them ready for future political battles — elections or otherwise.

The abysmal affair that the AICC session turned out to be, with no clear-cut direction emerging out of it as to how the Grand Old Party (GOP) proposes to fight the politico-ideological battle on its way to strengthening its place as the premier opposition party and the unchallenged leader of the fledgling opposition combine — I.N.D.I.A. The session has ended up adding to the confusion and demoralisation rather than emanating any ray of hope.

The Ahmedabad AICC session was not different from the preceding ones held in the last few decades. At a time when the Congress is facing the toughest battle of its survival, with an all-round onslaught launched by the ruling dispensation — both at the political and Government levels — the session was expected to be a path-breaking one, if not revolutionising the party's thinking or strategy. But nothing of the sort happened.

Where does the Congress — particularly Mr Rahul Gandhi, whose remarkable Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra had rekindled a fresh hope — go from here?

The Ahmedabad AICC session was a valuable opportunity to unveil the blueprint of what the party intends to do in the coming times. Most of the contentious but significant issues — such as strengthening and overhauling the organisational set-up, changing the style of working, purging the party of non-performers and the deadwood, and those coniving with the arch-political rivals — went missing from the discourse.

Those who had their eyes and ears fixed on the session and waited with bated breath for a new look



ANIL ANAND

agenda to unfold were despaired to be content with passing references (on these issues) made by Mr Kharge and Mr Gandhi in their speeches.

The scores of leaders and the delegates who travelled long distances to be in attendance, left without carrying a message to enthuse the workers back home, as there was none. Under the circumstances, getting back to the grassroots and convincing the people to be back in the Congress — fold remains a tall order.

Although Mr Kharge, as the Congress president, has done commendable work despite age-related and physical constraints and has left no opportunity to go inside and outside the Parliament — without

fighting back on crucial issues — the challenge is more daunting for Mr Gandhi. It remains a fact that Mr Kharge is acting only as a guardian figure, but every policy decision in the party has Mr Gandhi's stamp affixed to it. The party president has no one in doubt about his position and candidly admitted from time to time that Mr Gandhi was the real force. A very tricky situation seems to have arisen in Congress, particularly after the lacklustre AICC session and with the next set of assembly elections approaching fast. Normally, the onset of any election has been used as a standard excuse by the Congress strategist to ward off or postpone decisions on vital issues — to the great disadvantage of the party — which is there for everyone to see at the AICC and the state/UT levels where confusion prevails supreme. The play would not work anymore. The clock is ticking fast and the indecisiveness is getting entrenched deeper, a situation that demands

**ACCORDINGLY, THE ENTIRE GAMUT OF ORGANISING AICC SESSIONS MUST ALSO DRASTICALLY CHANGE. IT SHOULD NOT BE MERELY A CUSTOMARY FULFILMENT OF ELECTION COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS BUT AN EXERCISE THAT SHOULD BE DEEPLY INTERACTIVE AND ALL, ENCOMPASSING.**

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a fast remedy.

Since Mr Gandhi has led the battle from the front, notwithstanding the personalised campaign against him to tarnish his image, with two pan-India sojourns having a dramatic effect both for the party and at the personal levels, unfortunately, the spirit has not been carried forward. A weak organisation, dotted by leaders with vested interests and at times working at cross-purposes to BJP's advantage, has been the Congress's bane and spoke in Mr Gandhi's wheels.

With this backdrop, it has become imperative that Mr Gandhi must press the alarm bell. The image of indecisiveness has to be shed and the mask of the status quo has to be blown to smithereens as fast as possible.

The charity must begin at the AICC with a thorough change in its work culture. In most of the cases, it has become a parking place for those elevated as its office-bearers in charge of key tasks. A big casualty is that they tend to lose touch with the middle-lower rung leaders and workers.

Accordingly, the entire gamut of organising AICC sessions must also drastically change. It should not be merely a customary fulfilment of Election Commission requirements but an exercise that should be deeply interactive and all — encompassing. The Ahmedabad AICC session starkly revealed the Congress party's deep-rooted reluctance to confront its structural inertia and outdated processes.

Despite the hopes ignited by Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo initiatives, the session failed to offer any meaningful vision or reforms, leaving leaders and workers disillusioned.

The Congress's continued avoidance of internal overhaul — especially in revamping the AICC, energising the grassroots, and purging non-performers — has eroded morale at a time when clarity and decisiveness are critical.

With Mr Kharge serving more as a caretaker and Rahul Gandhi being the de facto decision-maker, the party can no longer afford to hide behind election timelines to defer reforms. The Congress must shed its image of indecisiveness and break free from status quoist tendencies.

Only a bold reimagining of its organisational network and work culture — starting at the top — can revitalise the Grand Old Party and position it as a credible challenger in the evolving political landscape. The clock is ticking.

Every missed opportunity deepens the disconnect with the electorate and empowers the opposition narrative. Time for half-measures is over — action must replace introspection.

(The writer is a political and national affairs analyst. Views are personal)





Massive explosion at Iranian port kills 25, injures at least 800

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Muscat

A massive explosion and fire rocked a port on Saturday in southern Iran...

Helicopters and aircraft dumped water from the air on the raging fire through the night into Sunday morning at the Shahid Rajaei port.

The explosion occurred just as Iran and the United States met Saturday in Oman for the third round of negotiations over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program.

No one in Iran outright suggested that the explosion came from an attack.

However, even Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who led the talks, on Wednesday acknowledged that "our security services are on high alert given past instances of attempted sabotage and assassination operations designed to provoke a legitimate response."



Firefighters work to extinguish the fire on Sunday, after a massive explosion and fire rocked a port near the southern port city of Bandar Abbas, Iran on Saturday

State media offered the casualty figures, saying authorities identified only 10 of the dead, including two women.

Meanwhile, state TV reported the fire was under control and will be fully extinguished later Sunday. It also said activities have resumed at the port, showing footage of containers of a commercial ship being unloaded.

There were few details on what sparked the blaze just outside of Bandar Abbas, causing other containers to reportedly explode. Private security firm Ambrey says the port received missile fuel chemical in March. It is part of a shipment of ammonium perchlorate from China by two vessels to Iran, first reported in January by the Financial Times.

The chemical used to make solid propellant for rockets was going to be used to replenish Iran's missile stocks, which had been depleted by its direct attacks on Israel during the war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

"The fire was reportedly the result of improper handling of a shipment of solid fuel intended for use in Iranian ballistic missiles," Ambrey said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas appoints new deputy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Ramallah (West Bank)

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday named a veteran aide and confidant as his new vice president. It's a major step by the aging leader to designate a successor. The appointment of Hussein al-Sheikh as vice president of the Palestine Liberation Organisation does not guarantee he will be the next Palestinian president. But it makes him the front-runner among longtime politicians in the dominant Fatah party who hope to succeed the 89-year-old Abbas.

The move is unlikely to boost the image among many Palestinians of Fatah as a closed and corrupt movement out of touch with the general public. Abbas hopes to play a major role in postwar Gaza. He has been under pressure from Western and Arab allies to rehabilitate the Palestinian Authority, which has limited autonomy in parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. He has announced a series of reforms in recent months, and last week his Fatah movement approved the new position of PLO vice president.

The PLO is the internationally recognized representative of the Palestinian people and oversees the Western-backed Palestinian Authority. Abbas has led both entities for two decades. Under last week's decision, the new vice president, coming from the PLO's 16-member executive committee, would succeed Abbas in a caretaker capacity if the president dies or becomes incapacitated. That would make him the front-runner to replace Abbas on a permanent basis, though not guarantee it. The PLO's executive committee would need to approve that appointment, and the body is filled with veteran politicians who see themselves as worthy contenders.

The Palestinian Authority, meanwhile, would have a separate caretaker leader, Rawhi Fattouh, the speaker of the Palestinians' non-functioning parliament. But within 90 days, it would have to hold elections. If that is not possible, the new PLO president would likely take over the position.

Al-Sheikh, 64, is a veteran politician who has held a series of top positions over decades, most recently as the secretary-general of the PLO's executive committee for the past three years. He spent 11 years in Israeli prisons in his youth and is a veteran of the Palestinian security forces — experiences that could give him credibility with the broader public.

Now he finds himself in a strong

position to shore up his power.

He is Abbas' closest aide and, most critically, maintains good working relations with Israel and the Palestinians' Arab allies, including wealthy Gulf countries. As Abbas' point man with Israel, al-Sheikh is responsible for arranging coveted travel permits for Palestinians, including VIP leaders, giving him an important lever of power over his rivals.

However, polls show al-Sheikh, like most of Fatah's leadership, to be deeply unpopular with the general public. This week's decision behind closed doors by the PLO's aging leadership is likely to reinforce its image as being stodgy and out of touch.

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In a 2022 interview with The Associated Press, al-Sheikh defended his unpopular coordination with Israel, saying there was no choice under the difficult circumstances of the occupation. "I am not a representative for Israel in the Palestinian territories," he said at the time. "We undertake the coordination because this is the prelude to a political solution for ending the occupation."

The most popular Palestinian, Marwan Barghouti, is serving multiple life sentences in an Israeli prison, and Israel has ruled out releasing him as part of any swap for Israeli hostages held in Gaza by the Hamas militant group.

As Israel's war with Hamas drags on, with talk by US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of uprooting Palestinians in Gaza to relocate them elsewhere, al-Sheikh will be under mounting pressure to unite the Palestinian leadership.

The PLO is a rival for Hamas, which won the last national elections in 2006 and is not in the PLO. Hamas seized control of Gaza from Abbas' forces in 2007, and reconciliation attempts have repeatedly failed.

Abbas is still seen internationally as the leader of the Palestinians and a partner in any effort to revive the peace process, which ground to a halt when Netanyahu returned to office in 2009. The chain-smoking political veteran has clung to power since his mandate expired in 2009.

UAE president strongly condemns J and K attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Abu Dhabi/New Delhi

President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, spoke with Prime Minister Narendra Modi over phone and "strongly condemned" the Pahalgam terror attack, expressing full solidarity and support with India, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Saturday. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal in a post on X said the two leaders agreed that terrorism must be rejected in all its forms and manifestations.

President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, further stated that Narendra Modi appreciated our sentiments and words of sympathy

The terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, which claimed 26 lives, has drawn widespread condemnation from countries and world leaders around the globe. "President HH @MohamedBinZayed of UAE called PM @narendramodi and conveyed condolences on the loss of lives in the barbaric terror attack on the Indian soil of Jammu & Kashmir. He strongly condemned the attack and expressed full solidarity and support with India," Jaiswal posted. He further stated that Prime Minister Modi appreciated the President's sentiments and words of sympathy.

"Both leaders agreed that terrorism should be rejected in all its forms and manifestations. PM conveyed India's strong resolve to bring the perpetrators of the heinous crime and their supporters to justice," Jaiswal said.

Terrorists opened fire in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on Tuesday, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019.

The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), claimed responsibility for the attack.

Iranian President condemns Pahalgam terror attack, calls for regional unity against terrorism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Tehran/New Delhi

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday condemned the Pahalgam terrorist attack during a phone call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and emphasised the need for regional cooperation to combat terrorism.

President Pezeshkian said that Iran unequivocally denounces such "inhumane acts", Iran's embassy in New Delhi said in a post on X.

These tragic events amplify the shared responsibility of all countries in the region and compel the regional states to eradicate the roots of terrorism through empathy, solidarity, and close cooperation, ensuring lasting peace and tranquility for the nations in the region, Pezeshkian stressed.

Referencing the valuable legacy of renowned Indian leaders, the president noted that Iran holds the Indian nation and its prominent figures, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlar Nehru — "who were messengers of peace, friendship,

and co-existence" — in high regard. He also expressed hope that this spirit will remain in India's relations with all countries.

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Regarding mutual economic ties between Iran and India, he expressed hope for the expansion of cooperation in trade and infrastructure more than ever before.

The development of Chabahar Port can serve as a hub for strategic interactions in the region and as a vital connection point between Iran, India, and Russia, the president said.

Pezeshkian also invited Prime Minister Modi to visit Tehran, noting that Iran is keen to discuss ways to strengthen comprehensive collaboration with India in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

In turn, Modi appreciated Iran's sympathy regarding the tragic terrorist attack in Pahalgam, noting that New Delhi fully agrees with Tehran's perspective that the fight against terrorism requires the unity and comprehensive cooperation of all countries in the region, the embassy said. Modi also praised Iran's constructive role in fostering peace and security, adding that India supports the Islamic Republic's efforts to enhance regional and international stability.

The prime minister further emphasised the need for a diplomatic solution to differences, including those between Iran and the United States.

He expressed deep sorrow over the massive explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port and conveyed India's readiness to assist Iran in addressing the aftermath of this incident. Modi also extended his heartfelt wishes to the Iranian president, expressed his hopes for the health of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, and conveyed his aspirations for the ongoing progress of the great nation of Iran, the embassy said.

South Africans show solidarity with India after terrorist attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Johannesburg

Scores of South Africans, along with members of the Indian expatriate community, have gathered to express their solidarity with India and pay tribute to the victims of the Pahalgam terrorist attack at a memorial service organised by the Consulate General of India here.

Speakers representing the Jewish and Hindu communities on Friday shared their outrage over the attack and extended condolences to the families of those killed and injured. Rabbi Aharon Zulberg condemned terrorism in all its forms.

"We know all too well the effects of terrorism... Today, we stand together with you. Let us work as one to mend this broken world, replacing hatred with understanding, love, and hope," Zulberg said in his opening prayer.

Consul General Mahesh Kumar said the attack was "a cowardly act of terror" that

should be unequivocally condemned.

"This attack marks the largest number of civilian casualties in India since the 26/11 Mumbai attack (in 2008), which was also targeted against Indian civilians and some foreigners from friendly countries and others who were visiting us then," Kumar said. "The attack forms part of a recurring pattern of targeting civilians, minority communities and visitors to Jammu and Kashmir, especially following the successful and peaceful democratic elections held in the Union Territory last year," the envoy added.

Kumar also pointed to a disturbing historical parallel, noting that the Pahalgam attack coincided with the visit of US Vice President JD Vance to India — similar to an attack in March 2000 in Chittisinghpura in Jammu and Kashmir, during then-US president Bill Clinton's state visit, when 35 Sikh civilians were massacred.

"The motive behind the attack appears



An Indian Army personnel at the site of the Pahalgam terror attack, in Anantnag district

very clear: to disrupt the narrative of returning peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. The region has recently witnessed record tourism and a democratic government assuming office.

"The Indian nation stands united in the face of this tragedy. We will not be cowed. The memory of the victims will strengthen our resolve to eradicate terrorism and bring those responsible to

justice," Kumar said. Yashika Singh, representing the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) of South Africa, also denounced the attack.

"Wherever it may be and in whichever country, we do not wish for these organisations to hijack these communities, to hijack religion, and to speak on behalf of people that they don't know themselves," Singh said.

Rajesh Gupta, CEO of Mahindra South Africa, said the attack had shamed humanity. "This barbaric act has been extremely shameful. From any part of the world, belonging to any caste or religion, what matters to us is being human, but not getting butchered like the way it happened there. I think the time has come when we, all from all aspects of the world, should stand up against this kind of sentiments which are prevailing in such a way that they get subdued over a period of time," Gupta said.

Russia launches 150 drones against Ukraine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kyiv

Russia launched a sweeping drone assault and airstrikes across Ukraine overnight into Sunday, killing at least four people, officials said, after US President Donald Trump cast doubt over Russian President Vladimir Putin's willingness to end the war.

Three people died and four were wounded Sunday morning in airstrikes on Kostyantynivka in the Donetsk region, the regional prosecutor's office said. Another person died and a 14-year-old girl was wounded in a drone attack on the city of Pavlohrad in the Dnipropetrovsk region, which was hit for the third consecutive night, local Governor Serhii Lysak said.

The attacks came hours after Russia claimed to have regained control over the remaining parts of the Kursk region, which Ukrainian forces seized in a surprise incursion last August. Ukrainian officials said the fighting in Kursk was still ongoing. Trump said Saturday that he doubts Putin wants to end the more than three-year war in Ukraine, expressing new skepticism that a peace deal can be reached soon. Only a day earlier, Trump had said Ukraine and Russia were "very close to a deal."

"There was no reason for Putin to be shooting missiles into civilian areas, cities and towns, over the last few days," Trump wrote in a social media post as he flew back to the United States after attend-



ing Pope Francis' funeral at the Vatican, where he met briefly with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Trump also hinted at further sanctions against Russia. The Trump-Zelenskyy conversation on the sidelines of the pope's funeral was the first face-to-face encounter between the two leaders since they argued during a heated Oval Office meeting at the White House in late February. Russia fired 149 exploding drones and decoys in the latest wave of attacks, the Ukrainian air force said, adding that 57 were intercepted and another 67 jammed.

One person was wounded in drone

attacks on the Odesa region and one other in the city of Zhytomyr. Four people were also wounded in a Russian airstrike on the city of Kherson on Sunday morning, according to local officials. Russia's Defense Ministry said Sunday that air defences shot down five Ukrainian drones in the border region of Bryansk, as well as three drones over the Crimean peninsula, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014.

Five people were wounded when Ukrainian forces shelled the city of Horlivka in the partially occupied Donetsk region, the city's Russian-installed Mayor Ivan Prikhodko said.

PUBLIC NOTICE DECLARATION. I, Smt. Smiti Tilanga, wife of No. 2850246 Ex. Naik (Late) Nanda Lal Tilanga and an Indian citizen by birth residing at Flat No. - 304, Forest View Apartment, New Delhi for many years do hereby declare the following:-

PUBLIC NOTICE. Notice to General Public. That, Mr. Sumit Choudhary has seeking a loan from M/s Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. for the House No. H-114, area measuring 50 sq. yds., Block -H, Gali No. 1, Out of Khazra No. 676, situated at Village Ghonda Gurjan Khadar, Jai Prakash Nagar, Shahidra, Delhi; hereinafter referred to as "said flat/door".

PUBLIC NOTICE. General Public is hereby informed that Flat Unit No.-1051, Floor- 5th, Tower-01, Pious Orchards, Sector-150, Noida, was booked in the name of Mr. Raj Kumar Garg S/o Mishri Lal Garg. Mr Raj Kumar Garg expired on 29-10-2024. Regarding mentioned property, the name of Sushma Garg is being noted as Primary allottee in M/s Homekraft Infra Pvt. Ltd. records in respect of captioned unit. If anybody has any objection to this, he or she may approach M/s Homekraft Infra Pvt. Ltd. within 21 days of publication of this notice at address: ATS Tower, Plot No;16, 2nd Floor, Sector-135, Noida-201305. Ph; 91-120-7111500.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS. CHANGE OF NAME.

I, Arti Devi, legally wedded spouse of- No.15415710P NK/Artisan WW Sachidanand Upadhyay, Unit- Army Hospital R & R, Delhi Cantt- 110010, have changed my name from Arti Devi to Arti Upadhyay, vide affidavit dated 26/04/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1936)/C I, No.14668083H Rank Nk Brajesh Kumar Kurmi, R/o-VIII/PO- Chhulla, Teh-Garhakota, Dist- Sagar, M.P.-470232, Now at Unit - 6121 (I) FWC (608 EME BN) C/O 56 APO, declare that I have changed my daughter's name from Diya to Diya Kurmi, vide affidavit No.IN-DL74880762436612X, Dated 26/04/2025 by Notary Public Delhi.

PD(1937)/C

BSES Yamuna Power Limited, Delhi. NOTICE INVITING TENDER. E-tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) are invited as per the following details:-

# Finance Ministry to bring Insurance Bill in Parliament during monsoon session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The Insurance Amendment Bill, which proposes 100 per cent FDI in the insurance sector, may be introduced in Parliament in the upcoming monsoon session, sources said.

The draft bill is ready and will be placed before Cabinet for its approval soon, sources said, adding, after Cabinet nod the Department of Financial Services under the finance ministry would begin the process for introduction of the Bill in the Parliament. The ministry hopes to table the Bill in Parliament during the upcoming monsoon session, sources said.

Monsoon session of Parliament usually commences in July.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in this year's Budget speech proposed to raise the foreign investment limit to 100 per cent from existing 74 per cent in the insurance sector as part of new-generation financial sector reforms.

"This enhanced limit will be available for those companies which invest the entire premium in India. The current guardrails and conditionalities associated with foreign investment will be reviewed and simplified," she had said.



FILE PHOTO

The finance ministry has proposed to amend various provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938, including raising foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector to 100 per cent, reduction in paid-up capital, and provision for composite licence.

The bill also proposes agents to be allowed to sell products from multiple insurers breaking away from the existing

exclusivity model.

Such changes will help enhance efficiencies of the insurance industry, enabling ease of doing business and enhancing insurance penetration to achieve the goal of 'Insurance for All by 2047'.

The Insurance Act, of 1938, serves as the principal Act to provide the legislative framework for insurance in India. It provides the framework for the functioning of insurance businesses and regulates the relationship between an insurer, its policyholders, shareholders and the regulator IRDAI. The entry of more players in the sector would not only push penetration but result in greater job creation across the country.

Currently, there are 25 life insurance companies and 34 non-life or general insurance firms in India. These include companies like Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd and ECGI Ltd.

# Need to end tax terrorism: Congress on World Bank report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Attacking the Modi government citing a World Bank report, the Congress on Sunday claimed that sharpening inequality is now firmly embedded in the nature of the country's economic growth, and called for a compelling need for tax reforms in GST, ending "brazen corporate favouritism" and providing income support for families.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the World Bank has released its Poverty and Equity Brief for India this month, and the report raises several concerns even as the Modi government spins it to its benefit.

In its report, the World Bank has said, "Over the past decade, India has significantly reduced poverty. Extreme poverty (living on less than \$ 2.15 per day) fell from 16.2 per cent in 2011-12 to 2.3 per cent in 2022-23, lifting 171 million people above this line." In his statement on the report, Ramesh noted that as per calculations based on the international poverty line (\$ 2.15/ day), poverty has continued its downward trend in recent years to reach extremely low levels.

"This reflects the success of India's growth story - which began with liberalisation in June 1991 and which has since taken a momentum of its own - and that of several social welfare interventions

developed by Dr Manmohan Singh's government during 2004-14," he said.

Ramesh claimed the most important intervention is the MGNREGA, 2005 which has effectively set a floor on the annual income for crores of families, acting as a safety net to keep families out of poverty and the National Food Security Act, 2013 that provides the foundation for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKY).

He, however, pointed out that the World Bank has also warned that more updated data adoption of purchasing power parity conversion factor from 2021 as compared to that of 2017 would result in a higher rate of extreme poverty.

"Changes in the questionnaire design, survey implementation, and sampling in the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23 present challenges from making comparisons over time," the Congress leader said, citing the report.

"It is worth recalling that these changes were made after the Government rejected the previous iteration of the survey (conducted in 2017-18) after it showed falling consumption in rural areas," he said. As a lower middle-income country, the appropriate rate to measure poverty in India is that of \$ 3.65/day, Ramesh said, adding that by this measure, the poverty rate for India in 2022 is significantly higher at 28.1 per cent.

# RBI Governor asks US industry to invest in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra has exhorted the US industry to invest in India, stressing that the country continues to be the fastest growing major economy supported by policy consistency and certainty.

Addressing the US-India Economic Forum organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and US India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) here on Friday, Malhotra said that India is expected to record a growth rate of 6.5 per cent in the current financial year despite tremendous increase in uncertainty and volatility in global financial markets.

"At a time when many advanced economies are facing economic headwinds and a deteriorating economic outlook, India continues to offer strong growth and stability making it a natural choice for investors seeking long term value and opportunity," the governor said. India, he added, "continues to be an economy supported by stability monetary, financial and political; policy consistency and certainty; congenial business environment; and

strong macroeconomic fundamentals."

Malhotra said that India offers a policy ecosystem that is transparent, rule-based, and forward-looking an ideal setting for long-term and productive investments. As the world's fastest-growing major economy, India is not just a destination for investment, it is a partner in prosperity, he said, adding, "together, we have the chance to shape the future not only for India but for a better world. I invite you to be a part of this journey, to collaborate, innovate, and invest in India."

Observing that the Indian economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience and dynamism, Malhotra said that over the past four years (2021-22 to 2024-25), the country recorded an average annual growth rate of 8.2 per cent.

"It was and continues to be the fastest-growing major economy in the world. This is a significant step up from the average growth rate of 6.6 per cent in the preceding decade (2010 to 2019)," he added.

Even in the current financial year, he said that growth was expected to remain robust at 6.5 per cent. This, he added, "is despite the tremendous increase in uncertainty and volatility in global financial markets."

Although 6.5 per cent growth rate falls short of India's aspirations, it remains broadly in line with past trends and the highest among major economies, he said.

Malhotra told the gathering over the last ten years, India has leapfrogged from the tenth largest economy to the fifth. In terms of purchasing power parity, India is already third.

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फ़ोन क्र.287/निर्वाह/2025 भोपाल, दिनांक 19.04.2025

**खुली नीलामी हेतु विज्ञापित**

अनुपयोगी सामग्री (कबाड़) की खरीद-फरोख्त से संबंधित समस्त व्यापारियों को सूचित किया जाता है कि केन्द्रीय जेल भोपाल में उपलब्ध अनुपयोगी सामग्री जैसे- पुश्त (गत्ता), पेपर रद्दी, प्लास्टिक एवं जूट का बरदाना, दूध की खाली पानी, प्लास्टिक केन, टीन के कनस्तर, प्लास्टिक कबाड़, टोस लोहा कबाड़, स्टील कबाड़, लोहे के पत्रे/चादर, बंदी वस्त्र, चादर, कबल, पेपर कतरन, लोहे की कतरन, टायर-ट्यूब एवं अन्य सामग्रियों के विक्रय हेतु खुली नीलामी दिनांक 20.05.2025 को दोपहर 12:00 बजे केन्द्रीय जेल भोपाल पर की जाना है।

अतः इच्छुक व्यापारी खुली नीलामी में भाग लेने हेतु आवश्यक शर्तें तथा अन्य जानकारी एवं सामग्री का अवलोकन किसी भी कार्यदिवस में नीलामी दिनांक से एक दिन पूर्व तक प्रातः 10:00 से दोपहर 02:00 बजे के मध्य कार्यालय, जेल अधीक्षक केन्द्रीय जेल भोपाल पर उपस्थित होकर प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। तिथि में परिवर्तन की सूचना जेल के सूचना पटल पर लिखित में चप्पा कर, दी जावेगी, संशोधन की सूचना पृथक से समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित नहीं की जाएगी।

जेल अधीक्षक  
केन्द्रीय जेल भोपाल  
G-12053/25

# Zomato CEO refutes allegations of toxic workplace

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Zomato Founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal has rejected an anonymous Reddit post alleging that things were "going off the rails" with the company, rebranded as Eternal, losing market share to Zepto Cafe and Swiggy and forcing employees to order from its food delivery platform.

The post also claimed that the work culture has become "laughably inconsistent" with "toxicity" baked in, and the only thing keeping the company profitable now is platform fees, and the "crisis" compounded by "underpaid and overworked" delivery partners.

In a post on X on Saturday, Goyal said, "All of this - reddit.Com/r/StartUpIndia! - is utter nonsense. Neither are we losing market share, nor will we ever force our employees to order on Zomato. Freedom of choice is something we stand for vehemently." He further said "it is embarrassing to even clarify this but doing it since many people reached out to me with concern. And thanks everybody for your concern.. Appreciate it!"

The Reddit post had alleged that "in a recent internal huddle, leadership admitted we're losing a good chunk of the market share to Zepto Cafe and Swiggy. The reaction? Panic and ridiculous new rules. One of them: employees must order from Zomato at least seven times a month and yes, they'll track it. Ordering from competitors is outright banned in the office!"



FILE PHOTO

It claimed that on Monday, Rakesh Ranjan, the CEO of Zomato's food delivery business is on Slack doing a townhall, telling everyone to "stay focused" and "get back on track." By Wednesday, he's removed from the role.

"You seriously can't make this stuff up."

No clear direction, just a game of musical chairs in leadership and everyone's shitting their pants not knowing what will happen next," the post stated.

"The only thing keeping the company profitable now is platform fees unbelievably. Internally, no one seems to care about

long-term sustainability, just numbers. One of the biggest crises right now is the delivery partners. They are being underpaid and overworked. Compared to competition who Zomato pays significantly less and sometimes nearly half. As a result, many riders are quitting or switching platforms," the post said.

It further claimed that Zomato might still look shiny from the outside but inside, "it's falling apart".

Eternal, formerly Zomato, on Thursday clarified that its food delivery CEO Rakesh Ranjan has not resigned and that any reshuffling of the leadership team at the company is a standard practice as part of its efforts to optimise organisational effectiveness.

The clarification through a regulatory filing came in response to a media report on the stepping down of Ranjan.

"We would like to clarify as on date, there has been no resignation tendered by Rakesh Ranjan and he still continues to be part of the leadership team. At Eternal Group, internal reshuffling of the leadership team is considered a standard practice as part of the company's ongoing efforts to optimise organisational effectiveness," Eternal said.

Earlier this month, the food and grocery delivery platform officially changed its name to 'Eternal Ltd' on the stock exchanges following approval from Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

The brand name of the company's food delivery business, Zomato remains the same, along with the app.

# Geopolitical developments, earnings to drive markets in this week: Analysts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Geopolitical developments between India and Pakistan, quarterly earnings and macro data will be the key drivers of stock markets in the holiday-shortened week, say analysts.

Trading activity of foreign investors, who were sustained buyers in the Indian market last week, and global trends would also guide movement in the market, they said. Equity markets will remain closed on Thursday for Maharashtra Day.

Further updates related to tariffs will also be watched by investors, experts noted. Stock markets witnessed profit-taking in the last two sessions due to increased geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan following the death of 26 people in a terror attack on tourists at Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The upcoming holiday-shortened week also marks the beginning of a new month, making monthly auto sales data a key area of focus for market participants. On the macroeconomic front, investors will closely track the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data and the HSBC manufacturing PMI data.

and trade will also be watched closely," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge climbed 659.33 points or 0.83 per cent, and the NSE Nifty went up by 187.7 points or 0.78 per cent despite profit-taking in the last two sessions.

On Friday, the 30-share BSE barometer Sensex tanked 588.90 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at **Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge climbed 659.33 points or 0.83 per cent, and the NSE Nifty went up by 187.7 points or 0.78 per cent despite profit-taking in the last two sessions**

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Meanwhile, Reliance Industries Ltd on Friday reported a 2.4 per cent rise in its March quarter net profit as store rationalisation in retail business and improved margins in telecom helped offset weakness in mainstay oil and petrochemicals business and higher finance cost.

Consolidated net profit of Rs 19,407 crore, or Rs 14.34 per share, in January-March - the fourth quarter of April 2024 to March 2025 fiscal (FY25) - was higher than Rs 18,951 crore, or Rs 14 a share, in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement.

"The week from April 28 to May 2, 2025, is set to bring another series of crucial economic releases that could impact global market dynamics and investor sentiment. In India, attention will be on the Industrial Production (YoY) data for March, scheduled for release on April 28, which will offer insights into the strength of the country's manufacturing and industrial sectors," according to Bajaj Broking Research.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "There is a distinct trend reversal in FII strategy in India. During the last eight days FII's (Foreign Institutional Investors) were sustained buyers in the Indian market."

An interesting point in this reversal of FII strategy is that it has happened at a time of heightened India-Pak tensions following the Pahalgam terror attacks, he noted.



# Self-Care Now a Lifestyle, Not a Luxury

In an age of overstimulation, walking into a wellness clinic is a kind thing you can do for yourself, says ABHI SINGHAL

In a typical working week, how much time do you really take out for yourself, to slow down, to recharge, or to nourish your skin and scalp? For many, the answer still leans towards "too little." But the narrative around self-care is shifting. Wellness is no longer considered a luxury; it has steadily become a lifestyle choice. As individuals strive to balance demanding careers with personal well-being, they're beginning to invest not just in rest, but in routines that nourish both body and mind.

At the heart of this evolution lies a deeper appreciation for skincare and hair care - once seen as cosmetic indulgences, they are now recognised for their therapeutic and preventive benefits.

Facials, in particular, have transformed from occa-

sional treats to essential self-care rituals. More than just a glow-up, they are a reflection of inner health and mindfulness.

Daily skincare routines, while foundational, often fall short when it comes to tackling environmental stressors, premature ageing, and hormonal fluctuations. This is where professional facial treatments come in - offering targeted solutions that cleanse, nourish and repair the skin at a cellular level. Treatments like Hydrafacials, Fire & Ice facials, nano-needling, and chemical peels are now powered by dermatologist-led protocols and medical-grade devices. These don't just make the skin look good, they help it function

## SKIN ANALYSIS IS IMPORTANT

Every facial is preceded by an in-depth skin analysis, ensuring that the treatment is suited to your skin and current condition - particularly important in seasons like summer, where a simple de-tan facial without proper diagnosis can do more harm than good.

better.

But the modern wellness journey doesn't stop at skincare. A healthy scalp is just as vital as a glowing face - and this realisation has brought hair care treatments into the wellness spotlight.

Much like skin, the scalp suffers from pollution, stress, and lifestyle choices, and requires targeted care to stay healthy. Advanced therapies such as Scalp Analysis, the K Revive Scalp Spa, and Low-Level Laser Therapy (LLLT) now provide holistic solutions for common issues like hair thinning, dryness, and dandruff, while also encouraging new growth and scalp balance.

However, just like with skincare, a one-size-fits-all approach does more harm than good. It's crucial to consult a qualified dermatologist or cosmetologist before beginning any facial or scalp treatment. These professionals can assess your skin and scalp type, identify underlying concerns, and

## APPROACH TO BETTER HAIR

Equally impressive is Merakki Wellness and Co., approach to hair wellness. Recognising that good hair starts with a healthy scalp, the clinic offers FDA-approved treatments like LLLT and the K Revive Scalp Spa, a luxurious therapy that

detoxifies the scalp, boosts circulation, and nourishes hair follicles from the root. With rising cases of stress-related hair fall and scalp sensitivity, such treatments are no longer a niche - they're a necessity.

curate a plan that works best for your individual needs. Choosing the wrong products or treatments without expert advice can lead to allergies, acne breakouts, or further damage.

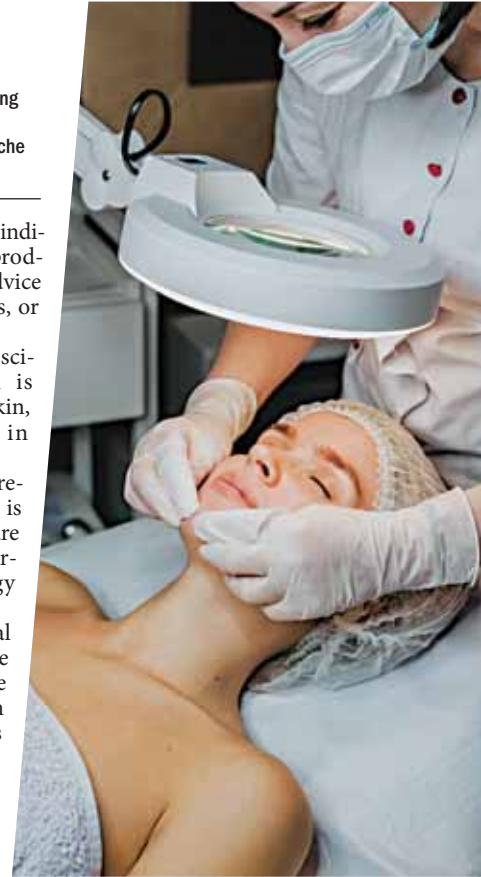
One wellness centre leading this science-meets-self-care revolution is Merakki Wellness Co., a premium skin, hair, and beauty clinic based in Faridabad.

Founded in 2023 by wellness entrepreneur Rima Narula, the centre is redefining what it means to take care of oneself - offering personalised services that blend advanced technology with natural healing principles.

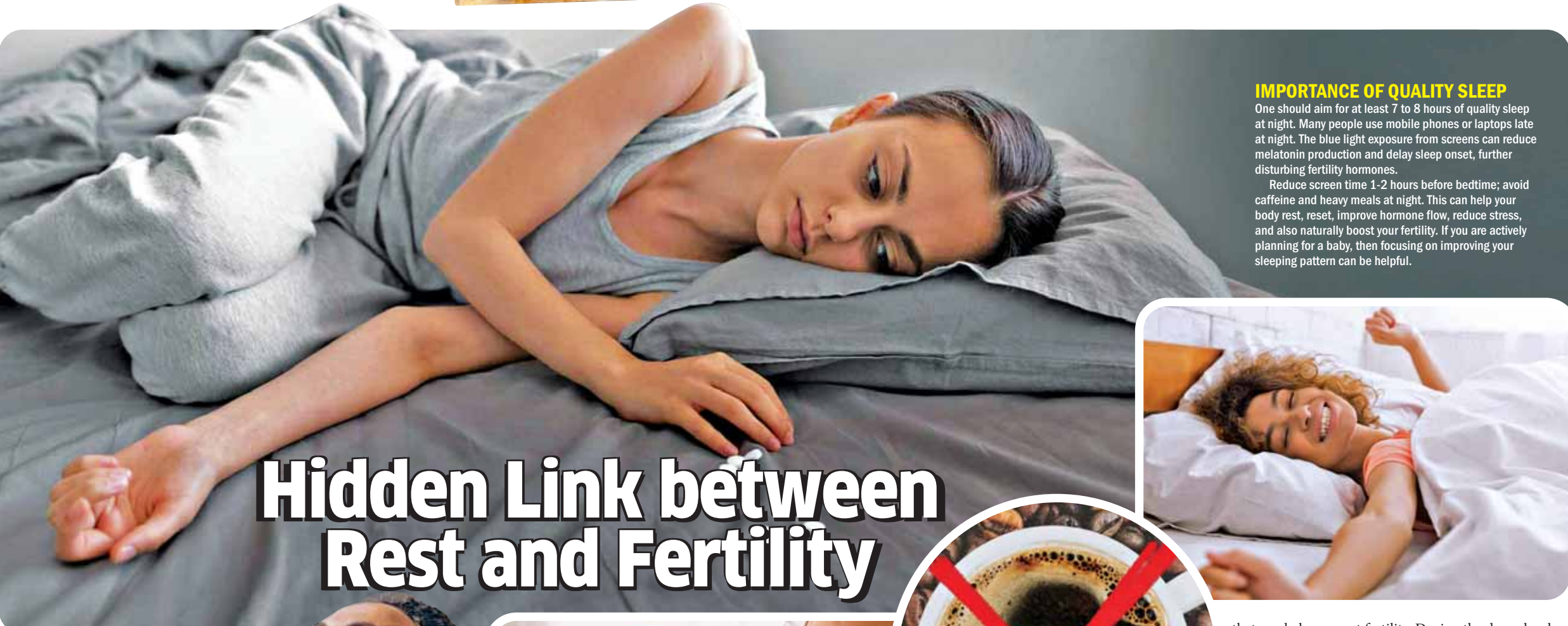
At this wellness centre, the facial menu reads like a tailored skincare blueprint: from the calming Signature Facial to the luxurious Platinum Hydra Facial, each treatment is designed to address specific concerns, whether it's pigmentation, dullness, or fine lines.

The use of LED therapy, oxygen infusion, and deep exfoliation ensures both immediate results and long-term skin health. But what truly sets Merakki apart is its commitment to expert-led care.

Every facial is preceded by an in-depth skin analysis, ensuring that the treatment is suited to your skin type and current condition - particularly important in seasons like summer, where a simple de-tan facial without proper diagnosis can do more harm than good.



What makes centres like Merakki Wellness Co. in Faridabad a growing part of people's routine is not just the range of services, but the shift in how people perceive self-care. Today, facials and scalp therapies are seen much like a balanced meal or a weekly workout - they are maintenance tools, designed to keep your body functioning at its best. It's not about vanity; it's about vitality. Because when you take time for your skin and scalp, you're not just pampering yourself - you're protecting your peace and embracing a lifestyle that puts you first.



# Hidden Link between Rest and Fertility

## IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY SLEEP

One should aim for at least 7 to 8 hours of quality sleep at night. Many people use mobile phones or laptops late at night. The blue light exposure from screens can reduce melatonin production and delay sleep onset, further disturbing fertility hormones.

Reduce screen time 1-2 hours before bedtime; avoid caffeine and heavy meals at night. This can help your body rest, reset, improve hormone flow, reduce stress, and also naturally boost your fertility. If you are actively planning for a baby, then focusing on improving your sleeping pattern can be helpful.



that can help support fertility. During the deep slumber, your body works effortlessly to regulate important hormones like oestrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and luteinising hormones that are essential for the production of sperm and regular ovulation. Not getting enough sleep for an extended period can easily confuse your internal clock, causing imbalances. It can increase the production of a stress hormone called cortisol. This can further lower fertility by negatively interfering with these reproductive hormones. Lack of sleep is more likely to reduce melatonin, a hormone that protects the eggs and sperm from getting damaged. Disturbed sleep patterns in women can lead to irregular menstrual cycles or problems with egg release. Poor sleep is also linked with insulin resistance, which can affect fertility; in this way, metabolic hormones and sleep are also interconnected. Chronic sleep deprivation can impact thyroid hormones which can be linked with poor sleep, and can lead to irregular periods or ovulatory issues. In men, it can lower their testosterone levels, reduce sperm quality, and also affect libido. This is why it becomes crucial to prioritise your sleep. Many people use mobile phones or laptops late at night. The blue light exposure from screens can reduce melatonin production and delay sleep onset, further disturbing fertility hormones.

count, difficulty in conceiving despite continuous efforts, or frequently feeling tired, then your sleeping pattern may be the culprit. Both women as well as men need enough sleep to ensure that their reproductive hormones are working smoothly. One must understand that good quality sleep not only helps boost fertility but also supports your overall health.

## The Role of Sleep in Hormonal Balance and Fertility

Your sleep plays a vital role in efficiently balancing the hormones

al balance, particularly the hormonal system. Your hormones are responsible for controlling various key functions such as mood, energy levels, metabolism, and most importantly, reproduction. If you are someone who is dealing with problems like irregular periods, low sperm

BY DR JYOTI GUPTA

Trying to balance your hormones or start a family? Your sleep schedule might be more important than you may think. Discover how a good night's sleep can support your hormones and boost your fertility naturally.

Sleep is more than just resting your body. It is also about giving yourself enough time to do crucial internal work, especially when it comes to hormones. In today's busy lifestyle, many people often struggle to get quality sleep for even a few hours. This can lead to sleep deprivation. This can be mainly due to taking too much stress, long and busy working schedules, or excessive screen time. But what one may not realise is how a lack of sleep can silently disrupt your body's natur-



