



RAKSHA MANTRI BRIEFS PRIME MINISTER

RAHUL DATTA ■ New Delhi

Amidst the preparedness to fight against terror, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack. Rajnath arrived at PM's residence and he was joined by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, top brass of the defence and ministry bureaucrats. The crucial meeting came a day after Singh met the Chief of General Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan to discuss the key decisions taken up by the military to counter Pakistan following the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam. Sources said General Chauhan briefed the Defence Minister on critical military decisions to counter Pakistan following the attack. Singh had also chaired an all-party meeting three days ago to discuss the security situation in the region.

There was however no official word on Singh's meeting with PM Modi however sources said the meeting was scheduled following the briefing by Chief of General Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan to the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence also met on Monday afternoon to further review preparedness and the Government's response to the situation while the Opposition demanded a Special Parliament Session to be convened to discuss the current situation prevailing in country following the terror activities.

Since the attack, teams from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) have been stationed in Pahalgam, intensifying evidence collection and investigations. The Indian Army remains on high alert, launching extensive search operations to neutralise the terrorists behind the assault. The teams, led by an IG, DIG, and SP from the anti-terror agency, are questioning eyewitnesses who observed the April 22 attack.

On April 23, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by Prime Minister Modi, held an emergency meeting, strongly condemning the attack and expressing condolences to the victims' families. The CCS noted the cross-border linkages to the attack and pointed out that it came amid successful elections and growing development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Citing "cross-border linkages" to the horrific attack, India has promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike that triggered wide-spread outrage

In the briefing to the CCS, cross-border linkages of attack were highlighted. It was noted that this attack came in the wake of the holding successful elections in the Union Territory

within India and abroad.

In the briefing to the CCS, the cross-border linkages of the terrorist attack were brought out. It was noted that this attack came in the wake of the successful holding of elections in the Union Territory and its steady progress towards economic growth and development.

As a security measure, India has decided to withdraw its own Defence, Navy, and Air Advisors from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. These posts in the respective High Commissions are deemed annulled. Five support staff of the Service Advisors will also be withdrawn from both High Commissions. The overall strength of the high commissions will be brought down to 30 from the present 55 through further reductions, to be effective by 1 May 2025.

On Sunday, the prime minister said the "perpetrators and conspirators" of the Pahalgam attack will be "served with the harshest response". "The whole world

stands with 140 crore Indians in our fight against terrorism. I once again assure the affected families that they will get justice, and justice will be done. The perpetrators and conspirators of this attack will be served with the harshest response," Modi said in his 'Mann Ki Baat' address.

Meanwhile Opposition MPs on Monday called for convening a special session of Parliament in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack. Rajya Sabha RJD MP Manoj Jha wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while Communist Party of India (CPI) MP P Sandosh Kumar sent a letter to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju, urging them to convene a special session of Parliament to express the will of the nation and send a message of unity.

Independent Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal too requested political parties to urge the Government to convene a special session of Parliament as early as possible in May.

The former Union minister has called for passing a resolution condemning the Pahalgam terror attack to convey the message to the world that the country is united.

Jha, in his letter addressed to the prime minister, said the Parliament of India stands as the cornerstone of the republic and the highest forum for democratic expression. "At this time of grief and testing, the Parliament must come together to pay heartfelt homage to the victims of the Pahalgam attack, honour their memory, and reaffirm our shared commitment to the ideals of unity, justice and peace," Jha said.

Kumar, a CPI MP from Rajya Sabha, in his letter addressed to Rijju, said the special session would allow members across party lines to come together to mourn the loss and express the will of the nation. He said the attack did not only cause immense sorrow to the victims' kin but also shook the "collective conscience of our nation."

Nervous Pakistan continues to play dirty

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Sensing the mood of the Indian establishment in the aftermath of the horrific killing of 26 tourists in Pahalgam, the troops of the Pakistan army remain on their tenterhooks, anticipating 'punitive strikes' on the 'terror factories' located along the line of control to launch heavily armed infiltrators inside the Indian territory.

For the last four days, the Pakistan army has been resorting to 'unprovoked' ceasefire violations across different sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to a Defence Spokesman, late Sunday night Pakistan army resorted to unprovoked firing in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Kupwara districts. A defence spokesperson in Jammu said, "During the night of April 27-28, Pakistan Army posts initiated unprovoked small arms fire across the LoC in areas opposite Kupwara and Poonch districts." Indian troops responded swiftly and effectively, he added. There were no reports of any casualties, he added.

According to field reports, the army has been keeping a close eye on the cross LoC activities especially along the possible routes of infiltration.

A fresh assessment was made by the security forces, suggesting that despite remaining on high alert, the Pakistan army is also providing cover fire to a small group of infiltrators to sneak into the Indian territory. It is for the same reason, local villagers in the border areas of Rajouri and Poonch districts have spotted the presence of suspicious men in the forward areas and alerted the security forces to launch searches to capture them before they could launch a fresh strike targeting Indian security personnel. The local villagers living in the direct line of fire in the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch are also spending sleepless nights amid heightened tensions in the region.

At several places, the farmers have started harvesting their maize crop to prevent heavy losses in the wake of escalating tensions in the region.

The local villagers have also started

cleaning the community bunkers to ensure the safety of their loved ones. The Indian army is maintaining a close liaison with the villagers and, wherever necessary, providing training to the members of the Village Defence Guards to maintain a tight vigil during the night. The army has advised these VDG groups to assist the local police during the night to maintain a tight vigil in the area.

agencies are carefully scanning the details to identify the perpetrators behind the attack. Several tourists present on the spot on April 22 have shared images and videos with the investigating agencies as responsible citizens to provide clues.

Meanwhile, a massive hunt is going on in the South Kashmir district of Anantnag to capture the group of terrorists behind the attack. The security



Security personnel keep vigil in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist attack in Srinagar PTI

Meanwhile, the teams of Jammu and Kashmir police and the National Investigations Agency have widened the scope of investigation by detaining a large number of service providers, active over-ground workers, pony wallahs, and others to gather vital clues about the Pahalgam terror attack.

The exact number of people questioned so far could not be ascertained immediately, as the local police authorities are still collecting vital clues.

With a series of amateur videos surfacing on social media, the intelligence

forces have been combing the entire area for six days but have failed to hunt them down.

The security forces remain deployed at various locations in the adjoining areas bordering the Anantnag district. The local villagers in the region have been directed to share information about any suspicious movement in their areas in real time with the local police and army authorities. On the other hand, the Baisaran valley and other local getaways remain out of bounds for tourists arriving in Pahalgam.

The Bystander



At least 24 arrested for objectionable posts following J and K terror attack

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh Police have registered a case against noted folk singer and poetess Neha Singh Rathore, accusing her of making provocative social media posts that allegedly threatened national unity and incited communal disharmony in the aftermath of the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir.

The complaint was lodged by Abhay Pratap Singh at the Hazratganj police station in Lucknow. In his statement, Singh alleged that Rathore, through her Twitter (now X) handle @nehafolkingsinger, made several objectionable remarks targeting a particular religious community at a time when the nation was mourning the brutal killing of 26 individuals, most of them tourists. According to reports, the assailants had selectively targeted victims based on their religious affiliation.

Folk singer Neha Rathore has been charged for endangering the sovereignty and integrity of India, and promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion

The complainant asserted that while the entire country was grappling with grief and outrage over the Pahalgam incident, Rathore's posts sought to "incite one community against another," thereby undermining national integrity and public tranquility. The remarks, Singh contended, had the potential to disturb the peace and endanger the sovereignty and unity of India. In one of her posts, Neha Singh Rathore wrote:

"Why this selective outrage? Are the lives of people from a particular faith less valuable? Hatred has no religion, but unfortunately, some are using religion to spread

hate openly. Justice for all innocent lives lost - not just slogans, but actions." In a subsequent post, she further criticised perceived selective condemnation of violence, stating:

"Silence in the face of such tragedies deepens divisions. Hypocrisy and hate crimes must be called out, regardless of the faith of the victims or the perpetrators." Following the complaint, the police registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Rathore under several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the new criminal code that has replaced the colonial-era Indian Penal Code (IPC). She has been charged under Section 152 of the BNS, which pertains to acts endangering the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India, as well as sections related to promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion and disturbing public order.

ABVP gets a foot in the door in JNU red fortress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Left-backed candidates secured three of the four key posts in the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) elections, maintaining their stronghold over the premier university even as the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS)-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) broke a nine-year drought to win the post of joint secretary.

According to the results announced by JNUSU election commission early on Monday, Nitish Kumar of the All India Students' Association (AISA) secured 1,702 votes to win the post of president. His closest competitor, Shikha Swaraj of the ABVP secured 1,430 votes, while the Students' Federation of India (SFI)-supported Tayabba Ahmed polled 918 votes. Manisha of the Democratic Students' Federation (DSF) won the post of vice-president by securing 1,150 votes, ahead of the ABVP's Nittu Goutham who polled

1,116 votes. The DSF also bagged the general secretary's post, with Munteha Fatima polling 1,520 votes, ahead of the ABVP's Kunal Rai, who secured 1,406 votes.

The ABVP clinched the post of joint secretary, with Vaibhav Meena polling 1,518 votes, ahead of AISA's Naresh Kumar (1,433 votes) and Progressive Students' Association (PSA) candidate Nigam Kumari (1,256 votes). Vaibhav Meena's win marked the first time the ABVP has bagged a central panel post since Saurav Sharma's victory on the same post in 2015-16. The last time the ABVP won the post of president was in 2000-01 when Sandeep Mahapatra had emerged victorious.

This year's election saw a split in the Left alliance, with the AISA and the DSF contesting as one bloc while the SFI and the All India Students' Federation (AISF) formed a coalition with the Birsra Ambedkar Phule Students' Association (BAPSA) and the PSA.

Honour killing must get strong punishment: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday said upheld the conviction of 11 accused for the "dastardly murder" of a young couple in Tamil Nadu in July 2003 and said honour killing must get a strong measure of punishment. A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Prashant Kumar Mishra refused to interfere with the Madras High Court's June 2022 verdict that upheld the conviction and sentence of the accused persons, including two police officers.

The bench said the victims — Murugesan and Kannagi — who were in their early twenties were killed by administering poison in full view of a large number of villagers. The masterminds and the main perpetrators of this "macabre act" were none other than the father and brother of the woman, it added. The top court observed the reason behind the murder was that Kannagi belonged to the "Vanniyar" community whereas Murugesan was a Dalit from the same village in Cuddalore district. The couple secretly married in May 2003.

"So, at the root of this crime is the deeply entrenched hierarchical caste system in India, and ironically, this most dishonourable act goes by the name of honour-killing," the bench said in its 73-page verdict. Advocate Priyadarshini Rahul appeared for Murugesan's family.

"A crime is an act against the State. But a wicked and odious crime, as the one we have just dealt with, is the ugly reality of our deeply entrenched caste structure. Honour-

killing, as these are called, must get a strong measure of punishment," it said.

The bench awarded a compensation of ₹5 lakh to Murugesan's kin and said the amount was liable to be paid by Tamil Nadu Government. On the role of the police officers, the bench said both committed the offences under Section 217 of IPC and the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 as they

Witnesses turning hostile was underlined to be one of the key events in the case. The bench noted the many reasons for witnesses turning hostile was the delay caused in the trial

neglected their duties and disobeyed the law by not registering the FIR at the first instance with the intention to save the culprits.

Witnesses turning hostile was underlined to be one of the key events in the case. The bench noted one of the many reasons for witnesses turning hostile was the long delay usually caused in a trial. The court underscored the presence of "enough material" placed by the prosecution in the trial court turning sufficient to prove the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt.

The bench directed those on bail in the case to surrender within two weeks to undergo their remaining sentence. Of the total 15 accused who faced trial in the case, 13 were convicted.

Cases against CWG scam accused closed

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

Bringing down curtains on a 13-year-old case, a special court on Monday accepted the Enforcement Directorate's closure report in a money laundering case against Suresh Kalmadi, the former head of the organising committee of 2010 Commonwealth Games and then secretary general Lalit Bhanot and others. The acceptance of the closure report brings to end the money laundering angle in the alleged scam, which took place 15 years ago.

The allegations of corruption in conducting the 2010-Commonwealth Games (CWG) triggered a huge political uproar in the country, leading to filing of several criminal and money laundering cases, including the present one. Kalmadi and others were accused of misconduct in award and execution of two important contracts for the games.

Special judge Sanjeev Aggarwal noted the CBI had already closed the corruption case, based on which the ED started its money laundering probe and accepted the report, which also named CWG OC's then COO, Vijay Kumar Gautam, its then treasurer, A K Matto, Ewent Knowledge Service (EKS), Switzerland, and CEO, Craig Gordon McLatchey.

The judge noted ED's submission that the offence of money laundering was not found during its investigation. "Since during the investigations, the prosecution has failed to make out an offence under section 3 (money laundering) of the PMLA...



As no offence under section 3 of the PMLA has been made out or has been committed, despite discreet investigations by the ED, therefore, there is no reason to continue with the present ECIR, as a consequence, the closure report filed by the ED stands accepted," the judge held.

The sole money laundering investigation was initiated by the ED based on the case lodged by the CBI. According to the CBI, the works contracts related to Commonwealth Games were Games Workforce Service (GWS) and Games Planning, Project & Risk Management Services (GPPRMS). An undue pecuniary gain was caused by the accused persons to the consortium of EKS and Ernst and Young, by way of awarding the two contracts in a deliberate and wrongful manner and caused corresponding loss of ₹30 crore to OC, CWG, the CBI alleged.

The CBI later filed a closure report in January 2014, saying "no incriminating evidence surfaced during the investigation in the matter" and the allegations in the FIR could not be substantiated against the accused persons. The Games took

place in Delhi from 3 to 14 October, 2010. Even before the event, the collapse of a new pedestrian bridge near the CWG main venue-Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium-made international news.

The event changed the face of Delhi but ultimately unseated the Congress Government, led by Sheila Dikshit. Every aspect of the city beautification and games management-from upgrading street lighting to renovation of stadiums-was marred by allegations of mismanagement and irregularities. A CAG audit report pointed out that Government procedures had not been adhered to meet the delay in the timelines. "Inexplicable delays in decision making-which put pressure on timelines, and thereby, led to the creation of an artificial or consciously created sense of urgency. Since the target date was immovable, such delays could only be overcome by seeking, and liberally granting, waivers to laid down Governmental procedures," the report noted.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered at least 19 FIRs. However, in the last 15 years, nobody has been able to fix the responsibility for the 'scam'. At least 11 FIRs have been closed, so far. These included FIRs related to the construction of badminton and squash courts at Siri Fort Stadium and another related to the upgrade and renovation of the Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Swimming Pool Complex. The first conviction came five years after the 'scam' in August 2015 on an FIR that pertained to the upgradation of street lighting in Delhi.

PIONEER IN SHORT

India, France sign ₹64,000 crore deal for 26 Rafale jets

India and France signed an intergovernmental agreement on Monday for the acquisition of 26 Rafale-Marine fighter jets, valued at approximately ₹64,000 crore, to bolster the Indian Navy's air power. The deal includes setting up production and maintenance facilities in India, technology transfer for integrating indigenous weapons, and delivery of the jets by 2030. The aircraft, to be deployed on INS Vikrant, will enhance joint capabilities with the Indian Air Force. Signed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his French counterpart Sebastien Lecornu, the pact also covers weapons, spares, and training, marking a major step in Indo-French defence cooperation.

PIB debunks false claims of Indian Army document leak

The Press Information Bureau (PIB) has flagged false claims by pro-Pakistan social media accounts alleging a leak of confidential Indian Army preparedness documents. PIB Fact Check confirmed on X that the documents are fake, urging the public to avoid spreading unverified information and rely on official sources. The disinformation follows a terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, where 26 people were killed. In response, the Cabinet Committee on Security, led by PM Modi, ordered heightened vigilance. The Defence Ministry also warned against a fraudulent WhatsApp message claiming the Government is seeking donations for army modernisation, calling it misleading and fake.



Two more dengue cases reported in Dehradun

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

Two new cases of dengue were reported in Dehradun district on Monday. This year, an early onset of dengue cases has been observed. In response, the health department has ramped up its efforts to prevent further cases.



Commenting about the current status, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Dehradun Dr Manoj Kumar Sharma said

that the total number of hospitalisations related to dengue now stands at two, both of whom are being treated at Shri Mahant Indresh Hospital. This latest report brings the total number of ELISA-positive dengue cases to 34, including 20 patients from Dehradun and 14 from other districts or States. Currently, there are 11 active patients hospitalised, with 10 at Shri Mahant Indresh Hospital and one at Graphic Era Hospital.

On Monday, 179 dengue samples were collected, contributing to an overall total of 1,814 samples collected to date. Dr Sharma also stated that there have been no reported deaths from dengue so far.

Additionally, the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, has directed the State administration to implement comprehensive measures to control the spread of dengue, which include regular fogging and public awareness campaigns.

IN BRIEF

Youth held after minor found pregnant

JYOTIRMATH: After a minor girl from Gopeshwar in Chamoli district was found six months pregnant following ultrasound and other medical tests, a youth (21) was arrested on the basis of the police interrogation and investigation. A police sub inspector, Rajesh Singh, who investigated the case, said that they had arrested the youth identified as Nitin, resident of Lasi village, on the basis of the complaint lodged by the minor's relatives at Gopeshwar police station. He had been produced at the court and was then remanded under judicial custody.

Rawat fasts in protest against State Govt neglecting Gairsain

GAIRSAIN: The Congress veteran and the former chief minister Harish Rawat undertook a silent fast on the weekend for one and half hours at Gairsain in protest against the State government's continued negligence being shown to the summer capital of the State. The senior party leaders who accompanied Rawat during the stir were the State Congress chief Karan Mahara and Ganesh Godiyal. They reached the main intersection of Gairsain and staged the agitation. In a scathing attack on the BJP government in the State, Rawat said that it had taken the people for a ride on the sensitive issue of Gairsain. "Gairsain epitomises the self-respect of Uttarakhand," he said while warning of an intensified movement in coming days if the State government continued to neglect the place.

Uniyal inaugurates development meet in rural Tehri

NEW TEHRI: The Cabinet minister and the MLA from Narendra Nagar, Subodh Uniyal inaugurated the development conference involving Gram Panchayats-Dobakoti, Ghargaon and Digothi- in Chamba blocks of Tehri district on Monday. He said that the State government would go all-out to developmentally transform this rural region through boosting adventure tourism, rural initiatives and self-employment schemes. Further, he stressed on launching homestays in places with mythological significance to enhance tourist footfalls. Also, he emphasised on solar power generation as a means of improving the financial status of the locals.

DM inspects facilities for Adi Kailash & Om Parvat Yatra

DHARCHULA: With the Adi Kailash and Om Parvat Yatra drawing near, the Pithoragarh district magistrate Vinod Goswami conducted an on-ground inspection along with some senior district administration officers. During the two-day inspection, he took stock of the road conditions and other facilities like drinking water, toilet and lodging meant for the pilgrims. The DM interacted with the locals at Gunji and Koti Gaon and visited the Shiva temple at Parvati Kund. The DM said that the portals of the Shiva temple would open on May 2 while the process of receiving online applications for inner line permits would begin on April 28 and the permits would be issued on April 30.

IIT Roorkee hosts Industry-Academia Meet 2025

ROORKEE: The Department of Water Resources Development and Management (WRD&M), Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, hosted the Industry-Academia Meet 2025. The event served as a platform for dialogue between academia and industry, paving the way for transformative innovation in water resource management, and engineering education, said the director, IIT Roorkee, Prof K K Pant. "Science, technology, engineering, mathematics, management, and marketing—all are vital to achieving the 17 interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," he added.

UCO Bank's total business increases by 14.12 %

DEHRADUN: The managing director and chief executive officer of UCO Bank, Ashwani Kumar announced the financial results for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2024-25, ending on March 31. The announcement was made via video conferencing broadcasted from the UCO Bank head office in Kolkata with all zonal offices participating. Team from the zonal office, Dehradun also joined the press briefing via video conferencing. As per the MD, total business of the bank stood at Rs 5,13,527 Cr as on March 31, 2025 showing an increase of 14.12 per cent Y-o-Y wherein gross advances increased by 17.72 per cent Y-o-Y to Rs 2,19,985 Cr while the total deposits grew by 11.56 per cent Y-o-Y to Rs 2,93,542 Cr. Net profit for the quarter ending March 31, 2025 stood at Rs 652 Cr as against Rs 526 Cr for the same period of preceding year, registering a growth of 23.98 per cent Y-o-Y. The zonal head of UCO Bank zonal office, Dehradun Randhir Kumar stated that during the FY 2024-25, the profitability has improved and no provision is required for Mark to Market (MTM) losses.

Team reviews health services under NHM in Uttarkashi

UTTARKASHI: To review the implementation of health services under the National Health Mission (NHM), the State Review Mission Team led by the assistant director, NHM, Uttarakhand Dr Ajay Nagarkar visited Chinyalisaur, Dunda and Bhatwadi blocks of Uttarkashi district for three days. During the visit, the team inspected and evaluated the District Hospital (male and female wards), community health centres, primary health centres and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Besides, it took stock of various programmes run under the National Health Mission at the community level. The team specifically reviewed the following programmes: free medicine and diagnostic services, screening and management of non-communicable diseases, TB eradication programme and expanded package facility under Ayushman Arogya Mandir among others. During the inspection, the team went door-to-door in the community and interacted directly with the common people. After the review visit, a meeting was held by the team at the chief medical officer's office.

Health Dept gears up to prevent dengue after it hits

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Haridwar

To mitigate the occurrence of dengue after more than two dozen cases were reported in Dehradun district, the Health department has prepared an action plan set to begin in May. This year's early emergence of dengue cases has raised concerns among residents, healthcare professionals and relevant departments. To address these issues and avert future dengue incidents, the health department is moving forward with its action plan.

Informing about this, the additional chief medical officer of Dehradun and the district surveillance officer Dr CS Rawat said that the department has developed an action plan aimed at dengue prevention that will start in May. He said that the initiative will involve approximately 651 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) in Dehradun and 40 in Rishikesh, who will conduct surveys in their respective wards—100 in Dehradun and 40 in Rishikesh. During these surveys, the assigned ASHAs will inspect for mosquito larvae, promote awareness and communicate dengue prevention details to the residents.

In addition, the action plan stipulates that, besides the ASHAs, 100 volunteers for Dehradun and 40 for the Rishikesh area will engage in raising awareness and

inspecting for larvae within their assigned wards. These volunteers are also tasked with submitting their findings to the ASHA facilitator, who will then relay the information to the relevant department. Should any larvae be detected in the reports from the volunteers or during inspections conducted by ASHAs, larvicidal treatment and fogging will be carried out in those locations. He also informed that they are responsible for fogging inside residences, while the municipal corporation of Dehradun manages fogging outside. Additionally, regular fogging operations are already in progress.

He said that the ASHA facilitator will hire the volunteers in accordance with the district magistrate's directives. To qualify, volunteers must reside in the respective ward, have completed at least class X and own a smartphone. He also provided information that guidelines for dengue prevention have been issued to the concerned departments. He also emphasised that to tackle the cases of dengue, society and the line department should come together and work coordinately.

UPES hosts 3rd edition of Sustainability Fair

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The third edition of the Sustainability Fair at UPES, held under the umbrella of the 5th International Sustainability Conference on Health, Safety, Fire and Environmental Advances (HSFEA

and publication partners, including University of Surrey, Springer, Elsevier, MDPI.

Inaugurating the conference, the environmentalist, founder of Himalayan Environmental Studies and Con-



2025), saw academic leaders, industry professionals, policymakers and students deliberate on challenges and innovations in the field of sustainability. Over 1500 delegates from diverse stakeholders and representatives from reputed industries attended the conference.

This mega event was supported by Makeen Energy, Anusandhan National Research Foundation, Anand Fabricators & Engineers, Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board, CORE EHS, Fire & Security Association of India (FSAI), besides the academic

Organisation (HESCO), Anil Prakash Joshi emphasised the critical urgency of sustainability-focused action and the role of research in solving societal problems.

Among others who addressed the gathering were the vice-chancellor, UPES, Prof Ram Sharma and cluster head of Sustainability Cluster and conference convener, Prof Bikrama Prasad Yadav. The concluding address was delivered by the pioneer of the Maiti Movement of Uttarakhand, Kalyan Singh Rawat.

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून

अल्प कालीन ई-निविदा सूचना दिनांक 28.04.2025
वित्तीय वर्ष 2025-26 में नगर निगम, देहरादून द्वारा स्वच्छ भारत मिशन/N.C.A.P के दृष्टिगत निगम देहरादून सीमान्तगत स्थित बड़े एवं मध्यम नदी/नालों की सफाई उपकरण निकलने वाले कूड़े को निर्धारित स्थल पर निस्तारित करने हेतु निविदा आमंत्रित करने के सम्बन्ध में। ई-निविदा की समस्त जानकारी उत्तराखण्ड ई-निविदा पोर्टल www.uktenders.gov.in पर दिनांक 29.04.2025 से देखी जा सकती है। निविदादाता द्वारा निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक-12.05.2025 सायं 5:00 बजे तक जमा किये जा सकते हैं, जो समिति के समक्ष दिनांक-13.05.2025 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे अथवा उसके बाद खोली जाएगी। निर्धारित अर्धे के उपरान्त किसी भी आवेदन पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। नगर आयुक्त, नगर निगम, देहरादून

नगर पालिका परिषद, मुनिकीरेती-ढालवाला टिहरी गढ़वाल

अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना
नगर पालिका परिषद, मुनिकीरेती-ढालवाला, टिहरी गढ़वाल द्वारा वर्ष 2025-26 में निकाय निधि/राज्य वित्त आयोग/15 वें वित्त आयोग/अन्य के अन्तर्गत निकाय में पंजीकृत टेकदारों से निकाय क्षेत्रान्तर्गत विभिन्न निर्माण कार्यों हेतु सीलबन्ध निविदाएं निकाय द्वारा जारी निर्धारित प्रपत्र पर दिनांक 14.05.2025 को अपराह्न 1.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है, जो कि उसी दिन सायं 3.00 बजे निविदा समिति के समक्ष खोली जायेगी, निविदा के कार्यों का विवरण एवं शर्तें नगर पालिका की वेबसाइट www.nppmunikireti.in, कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिषद मुनिकीरेती-ढालवाला के सूचना पट्ट एवं निर्माण अनुभाग में देखी जा सकती है, निविदा, निविदा खुलने की तिथि से 30 दिनों की अवधि के लिए वैध रहेगी। निविदा फार्म व शर्तें नगर पालिका परिषद मुनिकीरेती-ढालवाला कार्यालय से दिनांक 13.05.2025 तक कार्यालय दिवस में मध्यान 12.00 बजे तक निर्धारित शुल्क जमा कराकर प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। निविदा आमन्त्रण की तिथि पर अयकाश होने पर अगली तिथि पर निविदा की जायेगी। निविदा के साथ सलन एफ०डी०आर०/सी०डी०आर० एवं अन्य समकक्ष रूप में शुल्क जमा करने से पूर्व ही कार्यालय में जमा करानी अनिवार्य होगी, बिना एफ०डी०आर०/सी०डी०आर० के निविदा प्रपत्र जारी नहीं किया जायेगा। किसी भी अथवा समस्त निविदाओं को स्वीकार/अस्वीकार करने का अधिकार अध्यक्ष निविदा समिति में निहित है। (अंकिता जोशी) (नीलम विजलवाण) अधिशासी अधिकारी अध्यक्ष

7K Yuvak and Mahila Mangal Dals to get self-employment opportunity soon: Arya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Sports and Youth Welfare minister, Rekha Arya said that over 7,000 Yuvak Mangal Dal and Mahila Mangal Dal in the State will soon have the opportunity for self-employment. She said this during a meeting held on Monday.

Arya said that the role of Yuva and Mahila Mangal Dals would be expanded and proposals for employment under the proposed scheme will be sought from them. The department plans to provide financial assistance for the proposals that are approved after careful scrutiny. She instructed officials to prepare and submit these proposals within a week.

The meeting also addressed the issues faced by more than 2,800 Prantiya Rakshak Dal (PRD) Jawans who are on duty during the Char Dham Yatra. Arya emphasised that officials must work to resolve the challenges experienced by PRD Jawans stationed at high altitudes. Sugges-

tions were requested from the District Youth Welfare Officers of all districts connected online during the meeting. Preparations are underway to provide essential equipment, such as shoes, jackets, rain-coats, and waterproof tents, to those PRD Jawans working at elevated locations.

Additionally, Arya called for the prompt completion of preparations for this year's Khel Mahakumbh.

Further, Arya inspected the restoration work at the Himadri Ice Rink at Maharana Pratap Sports College. She informed that the revival of the first ice rink in India and South Asia has been completed and it is expected to be ready for hosting competitions within a week. The department has already received proposals to organise national-level competitions there, with one or two events anticipated to occur within the next month and a half, she said.

E-AUCTION DATE: 12.06.2025
FORM NO. 22 [See Regulation 36(1)]
REGD. A/D/ DASTI/ AFFIXATION/ BEAT OF DRUM
SALE PROCLAMATION
OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER-I
IN THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- DEHRADUN AT 2ND FLOOR, PARAS TOWER, MAZRA, SAHARANPUR ROAD, DEHRADUN, UK. 248171
R.C. No. 789/2023 Dated: 02.04.2025
PROCLAMATION OF SALE UNDER RULES 38, 52(2) OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS AND BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993
ICICI BANK LTD V/S M/S NAGPAL TRADERS & ORS.
To,
CD No. 1 M/s Nagpal Traders, Bareilly Road, Haldwani, Uttarakhand- 263139 (through its partners Defendant No.3 to 5 Ranbir Nagpal, Sarita Nagpal & Ankur Nagpal)
CD No. 2 M/s Nagpal Traders, Roof of Right of First Floor in Building No. 5-1048, Located at Plot No. 5/706, Janpath Market, Complex Village Gorakhpur Malla, Pargana Babarchai Khata, Tehsil Haldwani, District Nainital, Haldwani- 263139, Uttarakhand (Through its partner Defendant No. 3 to 5)
CD No. 3 Ranbir Nagpal S/o Sh. Damodar Das Nagpal, R/o Behind Nagpal Traders, Bareilly Road, District Nainital, Haldwani, Uttarakhand-263139.
CD No. 4 Sarita Nagpal W/o Sh. Ranbir Nagpal, R/o Behind Nagpal Traders, Bareilly Road, District Nainital, Haldwani, Uttarakhand-263139.
CD No. 5 Ankur Nagpal S/o Ranbir Kumar Nagpal, R/o Behind Nagpal Traders, Bareilly Road, District Nainital, Haldwani, Uttarakhand-263139.
CD No. 6 Sarita Nagpal W/o Sh. Ranbir Nagpal, Roof Right of First Floor in Building No. 5- 1048, Located at Plot No. 5/706, Janpath Market, Complex Village Gorakhpur Malla, Pargana Babarchai Khata, Tehsil Haldwani, District Nainital, Haldwani-263139, Uttarakhand.

Whereas a sum of Rs. 1,68,28,186.21/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Eight Lakhs Twenty Eight Thousands One Hundred Eighty Six And Paise Twenty One Only) along with pendente-lite and future interest @ 11.00% simple interest yearly w.e.f. 02/07/2020 till realization and costs of Rs. 1,80,000 in respect of Recovery Certificate in O.A. No. 224 of 2020 issued by the Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal, Dehradun in present matter is awarded against CDs. Whereas (C.D.) have failed to pay the dues of Rs. 2,48,99,095.39 (Rupees Two Crores Forty Eight Lakhs Ninety Nine Thousand Ninety Five Paise Thirty Nine Only) as on 30.09.2024 payable by (C.D) in respect of Certificate No. RC/789/2023. And whereas the undersigned has ordered the sale of property mentioned in the Schedule below in satisfaction of the said certificate. Notice is hereby given that in absence of any order of postponement, the said property shall be sold on 12.06.2025 between 11.00 A.M to 12.00 P.M (with extension of 5 minutes duration after 12.00 Noon, if required) by e-auction and bidding shall take place through "Online Electronic Bidding" through the website <https://drt.auctiontiger.net> of M/S E-procurement technologies ltd. For further detail contact: Mr Vishal Agarwal, Relationship Manager, ICICI Bank Ltd (Mobile: 9321276930). The sale will be of the property of the defendant above named as mentioned in the schedule below and the liabilities and claims attaching to the said property, so far as they have been ascertained, are those specified in the schedule against each lot. The particulars specified in the annexed schedule have been stated to be deposited after the date of EMD shall not be considered for participation in the e-auction.

- The reserve price below which the property mentioned below shall not be sold is Rs. 1,87,00,000/.
- The amount by which the biddings are to be increased shall be Rs. 5,00,000/- in the event of any dispute arising as to the amount of bid, or as to the bidder, the lot shall at once be again put up to auction.
- The highest bidder shall be declared to be the purchaser of any lot provided that further that the amount bid by him is not less than the reserve price. It shall be in the discretion of the undersigned to order or refuse to accept the highest bid when the price offered appears so clearly inadequate as to make it inadvisable to do so.
- EMD of Rs. 18,70,000/- shall be deposited positively by 09.06.2025 by way of DD in favour of Recovery Officer, DRT Dehradun to be deposited with Recovery Officer, DRT Dehradun and details of the property along with copy of PAN card, Address proof and identity proof, E-mail ID, Mobile No. and in case of the company or any other document confirming representation/attorney of the company and the receipt/counter file of such deposit in physical mode shall be submitted before the undersigned. EMD and Requisite documents as mentioned deposited after the date of EMD shall not be considered for participation in the e-auction.
- The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% of the sale proceeds after adjustment of EMD on being knocked down by next date i.e. 13.06.2025 by 3:00 P.M. through RTGS/NEFT/directly in to the Account No: 7360878086, Account Name: Recovery Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal Dehradun having IFSC Code No. IDIB000D557 or by way of DD in favour of Recovery Officer, DRT Dehradun to be deposited with Recovery Officer, DRT Dehradun. If the next day is Holiday or Sunday, then on next first office day.
- The purchaser shall deposit the balance 75% of the sale proceeds on or before 15th day of the date of sale of the property, exclusive of such day, or if the 15th day be Sunday or other Holiday, then on the first office day after the 15th day by prescribed mode through RTGS/NEFT/directly in to the Account No: 7360878086, Account Name: Recovery Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal Dehradun having IFSC Code No. IDIB000D557 or by way of DD in favour of Recovery Officer, DRT Dehradun to be deposited with Recovery Officer, DRT Dehradun. In addition to the above the purchaser shall also deposit 2% towards the cost of the property, DRT Dehradun @ 2% upto Rs.1,00,000/- and @ 1% of the excess of the said amount of Rs.1,00,000/- through DD in favour of Registrar, DRT Dehradun. In case of default of payment within the prescribed period, the deposit, after defraying the expenses of the sale, may, if the undersigned thinks fit, shall be forfeited to the Government and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may subsequently be sold. The property shall be resold, after the issue of fresh proclamation of sale. The property is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids if found unreasonable or postpone the auction at any time without assigning any reason.

| Lot No. | Description of property to be sold with the names of the other co-owner where the property belongs to the defaulter and any other person as co-owner. | Revenue assessed upon the property or any part thereof | Details of any other any, encumbrance to, which property is liable | Claims, if any, which have been put forward to the property, and any other known particulars bearing on its nature and value. |
|---------|---|--|--|---|
| 1. | Commercial Property having roof of upper ground floor of Building No. 5-1048 in Nagary No. 5/706 situated at Nagpal Polika, Haldwani, Nainital Road, Kathgodam, Uttarakhand (Property No. 5/706, Roof of upper Ground Floor, Janpath Market Complex, Village Gorakhpur Malla, Tehsil Haldwani, District Nainital, Uttarakhand) measuring of Rs.1,11.20 sq.mtr or 873.15 sq.ft vide sale deed bearing Serial No.-323 dated 12.01.2007. Butted and Bounded as under: East: Road West: Part of property North: Petrol Pump, South: Gali 14 wide. | Not Known | Not Known | Not Known |

Given under my hand and seal on this 02.04.2025. Recovery Officer DRT, Dehradun

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby notified to the general public that I have changed my name from Dabbal Singh Gusain to Dabbal Singh. In future I may be known as Dabbal Singh S/o. Chander Singh Gusain. Address - Nikleshwar Vihar, Ranjhawala, Raipur, Dehradun, Uttarakhand - 248008

The general public is informed that I have changed my name from MAMATA (old name) to MAMTA KINGER (new name). In future I should be known as Mamta Kinger w/o Shri Vinay Kinger resident of Rajrajeshwari Colony, Vidya Vihar, Dehradun

The general public is informed that I have changed my name from VINAY KUMAR (old name) to VINAY KINGER (new name). In future I should be known as Vinay Kinger s/o Late Jairam Das resident of Rajrajeshwari Colony, Vidya Vihar, Dehradun

In my all the documents my name is FATMA KHAN and in my daughter's educational documents my name is FATIMA RAIS. Both the names belong to me, the same person. In future I should be known as Fatma Khan w/o Rais Khan, resident of 355/2, Bada Bazaar, Khadi Line, Mallital, Nainital. My name is mentioned as Devendra in my educational documents and service book documents. Whereas the correct name is Devendra Singh Aswal. In the interest of justice, the name of the affiant should be mentioned as Devendra Singh Aswal in his service book documents and other form

मेरे पति के सैन्य अभिलेखों अनुसार, मेरा गलत नाम अंजना दर्ज है, सही नाम अंजना कुमारी आघार नं. 35742957510 W/o आर्मी नं. 15348971N हवलदार लखविर सिंह, गांव-सांचक (जोगिआन), पोस्ट-संसापुर, तह-दसूहा, जिला-होशियारपुर, पंजाब-144213 है।

मेरे पुत्र के सैन्य अभिलेखों अनुसार, मेरा गलत नाम व जन्मतिथि उगमा राम चौधरी-01.01.1959 दर्ज है, सही नाम व जन्मतिथि उगमा राम-01.01.1955 आर्मी नं. 264432009248 F/o आर्मी नं. 16022490F नायक शिवदयाल चौधरी, गांव व पोस्ट- रहलाना, तहसील- दूढ़, जिला-जयपुर, राजस्थान- 303008 है।

मेरे पुत्र के सैन्य अभिलेखों अनुसार, मेरा गलत नाम व जन्मतिथि गोहगा देवी-30.12.1958 दर्ज है, सही नाम व जन्मतिथि गोगा देवी - 01.01.1958 आघार नं. 740973433969 M/o आर्मी नं. 16022490F नायक शिवदयाल चौधरी, गांव व पोस्ट- रहलाना, तहसील- दूढ़, जिला- जयपुर, राजस्थान-303008 है।

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby informed that my Class 10th Certificate of the year 2018, Unique ID 6693188, obtained from Summer Valley School, Dalanwala, Dehradun, was destroyed due to a fire at my residence on 18.04.2023. Kshitz Bhandari, Son of Mr. Dinesh Bhandari, Resident of 98/5, Pragati Vihar, Haridwar Road, Dehradun.

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CM directs tightening of security at tourist, pilgrimage spots

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

Amid rising tension between India and Pakistan after the recent Pahalgam massacre of tourists by Pakistan sponsored terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand chief minister has directed the State administration to beef up security arrangements at the re-



ligious and tourist places in the State. He also directed that special focus should be laid on security arrangements in view of the Char Dham Yatra.

The CM gave the orders during a virtual meeting with all the district magistrates at his residence on Monday.

He said that immediate action should be taken against those who spread fake

news through various mediums during the Char Dham Yatra and in other important matters and DMs should ensure that correct information should be shared through various mediums.

He said that special attention should be paid to traffic management and the condition of roads during the Char Dham Yatra.

Dhami said that the cleanliness should be ensured along with availability of basic amenities for the devotees on the Char Dham Yatra route. To check overrating, the shopkeepers and vendors should compulsorily display the rate list of food items on the Yatra route, he said.

Dhami said that action should be taken against those who do not get their tenants verified in the State. Verification of road-side vendors and those living in slums should also be

done.

On a stern note, the CM said that strict action should also be taken against those who assist ineligible people in making ration cards, Aadhaar cards, electricity connections, Ayushman cards and other documents. Emphasising on the verification drives in the districts, the CM said that officers of all depart-

ments should be deployed in the drive.

He said that the DMs should also focus on forest fire management and strict action against those found involved in the incidents of forest fires in the State.

In the meeting the CM also directed the DMs to take necessary measures for effective control of dengue. He said that along with regular fogging, awareness campaigns should be organised to prevent spread of dengue.

The CM directed the officers not to roster electricity in hospitals and to maintain smooth supply of electricity and water in the State during the summer season.

He also instructed the DMs to conduct surprise inspections of various offices from time to time. This will keep the arrangements in order and the public problems will also be resolved quickly, he said.

Dhami said that multipurpose camps, tehsil day and BDC meetings should be held regularly. He said that the progress of installation of smart meters should be monitored regularly. The CM said that the tenders up to Rs 10 crore should be given to the local contractors only.

Principal secretaries RK Sudhanshu, R Meenakshi Sundaram, additional director general of police AP Anshuman, Garhwal commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey, Kumaon commissioner Deepak Rawat and all district magistrates were present in the meeting.

On a stern note, the CM said that strict action should also be taken against those who assist ineligible people in making ration cards, Aadhaar cards, electricity connections, Ayushman cards and other documents. Emphasising on the verification drives in the districts, the CM said that officers of all depart-

Pakistani flags flat on the roads as Indians vent ire after Pahalgam massacre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

In response to the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, some people in parts of Dehradun, Vikasnagar and Haridwar expressed their anger by painting and pasting images of the Pakistani flag on the roads. In Haridwar, several Pakistani flags were found painted near Bhagat Singh Chowk late on Sunday. Police officials reached the spot and attempted to scrub off the paint but were unable to remove it completely. Authorities said they will investigate the matter further.

Similar acts were noticed in the Herbertpur area of Vikasnagar, where painted Pakistani flags were seen on the streets early Monday morning. In Dehradun city, several posters bearing the Pakistani flag were also found pasted on the streets of Paltan Bazaar. Shopkeepers said that they were unaware of who had put up the posters, stating that they noticed them only after opening their shops in the morning. However, many speculated that these acts might have been carried out by groups that identify themselves as protectors of Hindus. A similar protest was observed earlier near the Clock Tower in Dehradun, where people pasted posters of Pakistani flags on streets and then trampled them to express their anger following the Pahalgam attack.



When this correspondent asked the Dehradun City Kotwali in-charge Chandrabhan Singh Adhikari about the incident, he stated that the police had not received any fresh report regarding posters being pasted in Paltan Bazaar. "It might be the old posters that were pasted during the earlier protest near Clock Tower. Some people had pasted those posters on the streets and

walked over them to show their anger after the Pahalgam attack. No new incident has been reported to us today," he said

Police ready to oversee Char Dham Yatra with dedicated control room

624 CCTV cameras installed on Char Dham routes and Dham premises

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

Police are gearing up to monitor the Char Dham Yatra, which is set to commence on April 30. For the first time, a dedicated State-level control room has been established in the Patel Bhawan in Dehradun to oversee every aspect of the annual pilgrimage. Multiple desks have been set up within the control room to address various recurring issues during the Yatra, including traffic management, parking and halting points, toll plaza and ANPR camera coordination, law and order, VVIP movements, stakeholder coordination, media relations, nodal officers communication and vehicle accident rescue operations. The Dehradun Superintendent of Police (Traffic) and in-charge of the control room Lokjeet Singh said that separate police officers have been assigned to each desk to ensure swift and effective resolution of issues, aiming for a smooth Char Dham experience for all devotees. The Char Dham circuit has been strategically divided into 15 super zones, 41 zones and 137 sectors, with each sector covering 10 kilometres and guarded by two constables around the clock. A deputy superintendent of police will be stationed at each of the four pilgrimage sites- Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath. The

security deployment for the Yatra will be extensive, comprising 24 DSPs, 66 inspectors, 366 sub-inspectors, 615 head constables, 1,222 constables, 208 female constables, 926 homeguards, 1,049 Prantiya Rakshak Dal personnel, nine companies of the Provincial Armed Constabulary and 26 teams from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF). Singh said that parking spaces near the Char Dham sites have been significantly expanded compared to last year to accommodate the influx of pilgrims. "To strengthen surveillance, authorities have installed a total of 624 CCTV cameras along the Char Dham routes and within the premises of each Dham. Of these, 567 cameras are operational along the routes, including 115 in Rudraprayag, 107 in Dehradun, 102 in Tehri, 85 in Haridwar, 79 in Chamoli, 44 in Pauri and 20 in Gangotri and 15 in Yamunotri areas of Uttarakashi district. An additional 57 cameras have been installed directly at the Dhams, with 24 in Gangotri, 12 in Yamunotri, 16 in Badrinath and five in Kedarnath," he said. He added that the police are committed to ensuring the safety, security and convenience of pilgrims in the Char Dham Yatra and necessary modifications will be made in the plans accordingly.

Over 10,000 pilgrims register offline on first day for Char Dham Yatra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

Over 10,000 pilgrims completed their offline registration for the Char Dham Yatra on Monday too. Over 1,700 pilgrims registered offline at the Rishikesh transit camp on Monday too. The Garhwal commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey and Garhwal IG Rajeev Swaroop inspected the transit camp in Rishikesh and reviewed the arrangements along with Dehradun district magistrate Savin Bansal and Dehradun SSP Ajai Singh. Pandey directed officials to ensure smooth registration and essential services for pilgrims. Bansal informed that offline registration will be accepted up to 48 hours before a scheduled visit to any Dham. Pilgrims must present their Aadhaar number for registration. He informed that 30 registration counters operating 24 hours have been established to manage the flow of pilgrims. Mobile teams have been deployed to Dharamshalas, hotels and buses to assist with the process. A total of 35 mobile teams will work during the day and 10 during the night to register incoming pilgrims, he said. He informed that authorities have set up 24 counters at the transit camp and 12 counters at ISBT



for the distribution of food, drinking water and other basic services. The DM instructed the incharge concerned that food provided must be fresh and not cooked more than four hours earlier. He also emphasised on maintaining continuous availability of drinking water, clean toilets, proper food distribution and organised parking. He also ordered that Dharamshala accommodation lists be displayed in each tent and broadcasted on LED screens. Police help centers and Yatri Mitra centres were also inspected to ensure all services are functioning properly.

It is pertinent to mention here that over 21.9 lakh people have registered for Char Dham Yatra so far.

Congress with Union Govt on stern action against terrorists: Arya

Party to demonstrate against Centre for 'weakening' the Constitution

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The leader of opposition (LoP) in Vidhan Sabha Yashpal Arya has averred that the Congress party stands firmly with the Union government for taking sternest action on the terrorists involved in the most heinous attack on the innocent tourists in Pahalgam area of Jammu and Kashmir, and their abettors. Interacting with The Pioneer at his official residence



on Monday, Arya said that the entire country is united in its resolve on action against the terrorists and terrorism.

On the other hand, he said that on the call given by the All India Congress Committee (AICC), the Con-

gress party will hold a Samvidhan Bachao rally in Rangers Ground on April 30. Arya said that efforts are being made by the ruling party to weaken the Constitution of India. The Union government is bent on degradation of all the constitutional bodies and is making use of investigation and other agencies to target and harass political opponents. He said that a large number of party leaders and workers will take part in the rally. Arya informed that the in-charge of the State Congress Kumari Selja, co-in charges Pargat Singh, Surendra Sharma, the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara, former chief minister Harish Rawat, former PCC presidents Pritam Singh and Ganesh Godiyal and all senior leaders of the party will take part in rally.

Arya said that the Char Dham Yatra is soon starting but the arrangements are not complete. The government lacks a roadmap for the smooth organisation of the Yatra. On the forest fires, the Congress leader said that the State government has not taken any lesson from the past experiences. Every year forest wealth worth crores of rupees is burnt in the fires. Arya said that the fact the forest department was not able to spend the budget allotted to it last year shows the complacency that has set in the department and the apathetic attitude of its officers.

Maharaj hospitalised at AIIMS, surgery advised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Tourism, Culture, Panchayati Raj, Public Works and Irrigation minister Satpal Maharaj was hospitalised at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Rishikesh on Monday. He is said to be suffering from a stomach ailment. The doctors treating him have advised a



surgery to resolve the issue. The chief public relations officer of AIIMS, Rishikesh Sandeep Kumar Singh told The Pioneer that Maharaj was admitted in the institute on Monday and he will undergo a surgery soon.

नगर पालिका परिषद, मुनिकीरेती-ढलवाला दिहरी गढ़वाल
पत्रांक 99/निविदा सूचना/2025-2026/ दिनांक 28.04.2025

संशोधित/शुद्धि पत्र निविदा सूचना

इस कार्यालय के कार्यालय पत्र संख्या-61/2025-26 दिनांक 21.04.2024 के द्वारा प्रधान टाईम्स व द पाईनर न्यूज पेपर में निर्माण कार्य से सम्बन्धित निविदा सूचना का विज्ञापन प्रकाशित किया गया था, किन्तु उक्त तिथि को प्रकाशित विज्ञापन को अपरिहार्य कारणों से निरस्त किया जाता है। सूचित होवे।

(अफिका जोशी) (नीलम बिजलवाण)
अधिसायी अधिकारी अध्यक्ष

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL DEHRADUN
Paras Tower, 2nd Floor, Majra Niranjanpur, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun

R.C. No. 356/2022 Date: 25.04.2025

Canara Bank Certificate Holder
Versus
Smt. Jyoti Bajpai & Ors Certificate Debtor

DEMAND NOTICE

TO,
CD No. 1. Smt. Jyoti Bajpai W/o Sh. Sandeep Bajpai, R/o H.No. 174, Rani Ghali, Bhatpatwala, Haridwar District- Haridwar, U.K. 249410
CD No. 2. Sh. Sandeep Bajpai, S/o Sh. Umakant Vajpai, R/O Shiv Nagar, Rani, Second Address: Vill Haripur Kalan, Tehsil- Rishikesh, District- Dehradun Uttarakhand.

In view of the Recovery Certificate issued in O.A. No. 55 of 2021 passed by the Presiding Officer, DRT, Dehradun an amount of **Rs. 39,46,344.40/- (Rupees Thirty Nine Lakhs Forty Six Thousands Three Hundred Forty Four And Paise Forty Only)** along with pendent-lite and future interest @ 11% simple interest yearly w.a.f. 25.01.2021 till realization and costs of **Rs.1,07,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Seven Thousand Only)** has become due against you (Jointly and severally).

You are hereby called upon to deposit the above sum within 15 days of the receipt of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made as per rules. Your are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on **09.06.2025** at 10.30 a.m. for further proceedings.

In addition to the sum aforesaid you will be liable to pay,
a. Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the execution proceedings.
b. All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and other process that may be taken for recovering the amount due.

Recovery Officer
Debts Recovery Tribunal Dehradun

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Home Finance Registered office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400051
Corporate Office: ICICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai - 400059
Branch Address: Plot No. 16/1 & 17/1, Ward No. 13, Shop no. 9, SD Complex, Nainital Road, Rudrapur - 263153.

The following borrower(s) have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ("ICICI HFC") and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ & Address | Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced | Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice | NPA Date |
|---------|--|---|---|------------|
| 1. | Vikrant Kumar Ghaghat (Borrower), Nirmala Devi (Co-Borrower), A 57 Divine Home Kiratpur Danpur U S Nagar Rudrapur Uttarakhand- 263153. LHRUD00001606873. | Plot S-4 Khata No 00858 Khasra No 119 Gram Kalara Tehsil Rudrapur Udhm Singh Nagar- 263153. Bounded By- North: Part Of Plot No. S4/ 60ft, South: Plot No. S-3 / 60ft, East: 30ft Wide Road / 15ft, West: Plot No. K-14/ 15ft. | 17-04-2025 Rs. 32,74,404/- | 05-04-2025 |
| 2. | Vikrant Kumar Ghaghat (Borrower), Nirmala Devi (Co-Borrower), A 57 Divine Home Kiratpur Danpur U S Nagar Rudrapur Uttarakhand- 263153. LHRUD00001606874. | Plot S-4 Khata No 00858 Khasra No 119 Gram Kalara Tehsil Rudrapur Udhm Singh Nagar- 263153. Bounded By- North: Part Of Plot No. S4 / 60ft, South: Plot No. S-3 / 60ft, East: 30ft Wide Road / 15ft, West: Plot No. K-14/ 15ft. | 17-04-2025 Rs. 96,598/- | 05-04-2025 |
| 3. | Jeetendra Gupta (Borrower), Sanjna Gupta (Co-Borrower), Raj Colony Rudrapur Udhm Singh Nagar Rudrapur Uttarakhand- 263153. LHRUD00001578218. | Land Bearing Khet No. 633 Ka Situated At Gram Simla Pistor Tehsil Rudrapur Udhm Singh Nagar Uttarakhand- 263148 Pistor, Tehsil Rudrapur, District U.S. Nagar Uttarakhand- 263148 Rudrapur- Kichha Uttarakhand- 263148. Bounded By- North: Seller's Remaining Land, South: Seller's Remaining Land, East: Seller's Remaining Land, West: Colony Road 6.09 M. | 17-04-2025 Rs. 29,70,584/- | 05-04-2025 |
| 4. | Jeetendra Gupta (Borrower), Sanjna Gupta (Co-Borrower), Raj Colony Rudrapur Udhm Singh Nagar Rudrapur Uttarakhand- 263153. LHRUD00001578219. | Land Bearing Khet No. 633 Ka Situated At Gram Simla Pistor Tehsil Rudrapur Udhm Singh Nagar Uttarakhand- 263148 Pistor, Tehsil Rudrapur, District U.S. Nagar Uttarakhand- 263148 Rudrapur- Kichha Uttarakhand- 263148. Bounded By- North: Seller's Remaining Land, South: Seller's Remaining Land, East: Seller's Remaining Land, West: Colony Road 6.09 M. | 17-04-2025 Rs. 84,744/- | 05-04-2025 |

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower(s) and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: April 29, 2025, Place: Rudrapur, Kichha Authorized Officer, ICICI Home Finance Company Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005

The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA). A Notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, at their last known addresses. However, it has not been served and are therefore being notified by way of this Public Notice.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Loan Account Number/ & Address | Description of Secured Asset to be enforced | Date of Notice sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice | NPA Date |
|---------|---|---|---|------------|
| 1. | Neelam Micheal/ Gabreal Michael (LBRUD00005689788) & Village Nayakgathi, Poornagiri Bihar, Tanakpur Uttarakhand Champawat- 262523 | Khet No 460 Min Khata No 00090 Vill Nayak Khera, Tanakpur Teh. Poornagiri District, Champawat, Uttarakhand, Rudrapur- 263153 | 24/03/2025 Rs. 8,49,299.94/- | 03/01/2025 |
| 2. | Neelam Micheal/ Gabreal Michael (LBRUD00005770059) & Village Nayakgathi, Poornagiri Bihar, Tanakpur Uttarakhand Champawat- 262523 | Khet No 460 Min Khata No 00090 Vill Nayak Khera, Tanakpur Teh. Poornagiri District, Champawat, Uttarakhand, Rudrapur- 263153 | 24/03/2025 Rs. 12,54,011.10/- | 03/01/2025 |
| 3. | Neelam Micheal/ Gabreal Michael (LBRUD00005770059) & Village Nayakgathi, Poornagiri Bihar, Tanakpur Uttarakhand Champawat- 262523 | Khet No 460 Min Khata No 00090 Vill Nayak Khera, Tanakpur Teh. Poornagiri District, Champawat, Uttarakhand, Rudrapur- 263153 | 24/03/2025 Rs. 34,419.82/- | 03/01/2025 |
| 4. | Brijbhan Singh/ Deep Lata (LBRUD00006199161) & Ward No-07 Sanjay Colony Haldwani, Nainital Uttarakhand Haldwani- 263139 | House Comprised Over Khasra No-179 N Min, Khata No 01543 (Fasli 1424- 1429), Vill- Mukhani, Pargana Bhawar Cha Khata, Tehsil Haldwani, Dist Nainital Uttarakhand-263141 | 07/04/2025 Rs. 38,10,453/- | 10/02/2025 |
| 5. | Brijbhan Singh/ Deep Lata (LBRUD00006199160) & Ward No-07 Sanjay Colony Haldwani, Nainital Uttarakhand Haldwani- 263139 | House Comprised Over Khasra No-179 N Min, Khata No 01543 (Fasli 1424- 1429), Vill- Mukhani, Pargana Bhawar Cha Khata, Tehsil Haldwani, Dist Nainital Uttarakhand-263141 | 07/04/2025 Rs. 16,01,411/- | 10/02/2025 |
| 6. | Brijbhan Singh/ Deep Lata (LBRUD00006217828) & Ward No-07 Sanjay Colony Haldwani, Nainital Uttarakhand Haldwani- 263139 | House Comprised Over Khasra No-179 N Min, Khata No 01543 (Fasli 1424- 1429), Vill- Mukhani, Pargana Bhawar Cha Khata, Tehsil Haldwani, Dist Nainital Uttarakhand-263141 | 07/04/2025 Rs. 59,917/- | 10/02/2025 |
| 7. | Supreet Singh/ Kavita Thankur (TBDEH00006714470) & Ward No.12, Ajeet Nagar, Vikas Nagar, Uttarakhand Dehradun- 248198 | Plot Bearing Abadi Khata Khatouni No.1489, Fasil Year (1416 To 1422), Khasra No.6449 Area 0.0025 Hectare, Khasra No.6450 Area 0.0100 Hectare, Situated At Mauza-Babugarh (Within The Nagar Palika Parishad)) Pargana-Pachwadoon, Tehsil-Vikas Nagar, District-Dehradun, Uttarakhand- 248001 | 07/04/2025 Rs. 19,99,076/- | 29/01/2025 |
| 8. | Sandeep Kumar/ Vimla Sharma/ Lalita (LBRUD0000547819) & 368, Goli No. 08, Ramnagar Roorkee, Uttarakhand Haridwar- 247667 | House Tax Sabik No.242, Situated At Mohalla-Ramnagar Colony, Pargana And Tehsil-Roorkee, District-Haridwar, Uttarakhand- 247667 | 07/04/2025 Rs. 10,69,762/- | 30/01/2025 |
| 9. | Mohd Umar/ Kamar Shahin (LBDEH00006937762) & Surya Nagar Colony, Salempur Mahdood, Uttarakhand Haridwar- 24940 | Plot No.39, Khasra No.778KH, Situated At Village-Salempur, Mehdood-I, Surya Nagar, Pargana-Roorkee, Tehsil & District-Haridwar, Uttarakhand- 249401 | 07/04/2025 Rs. 26,129/- | 06/01/2025 |
| 10. | Mohd Umar/ Kamar Shahin (TBDEH00006909119) & Surya Nagar Colony, Salempur Mahdood, Uttarakhand Haridwar- 24940 | Plot No.39, Khasra No.778KH, Situated At Village-Salempur, Mehdood-I, Surya Nagar, Pargana-roorkee, Tehsil & District-Haridwar, Uttarakhand- 249401 | 07/04/2025 Rs. 14,53,644/- | 06/01/2025 |

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower(s) and/or guarantor(s) (as applicable) is/are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: April 29, 2025, Place: Dehradun Sincerely, Authorised Signatory, For ICICI Bank Ltd



Uttarakhand yet to identify any illegal aliens, police continue drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

At a time when thousands of illegal Bangladeshi nationals and other alleged citizens of Pakistan and Myanmar have been identified in various States, the first State to implement the Uniform Civil Code has not identified any such illegal alien within its boundaries yet. Sources in the intelligence network state that there are many persons fit for deportation to Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar but the authorities have not been able to take concrete action yet. This situation is all the more concerning as Uttarakhand shared international borders with China (occupied Tibet) and Nepal. The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence is known to

the Uttarakhand Police is undertaking a drive to verify the identity of people in various parts of the State. As per the directions of the government, any person staying illegally in Uttarakhand will be identified and the necessary legal action will be taken in such a case, he said.

Meanwhile, sources in the intelligence network stated on condition of anonymity that there are many persons from other nations- specifically Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar, who are present in Uttarakhand. However, it is upto the local intelligence units of the police to identify them so that necessary action can be taken by the government, they claimed.



use the Nepal route for infiltration into India. Former Khanpur MLA Pranav Singh 'Champion' who had first raised the issue of infiltrators in Uttarakhand in the Vidhan Sabha five years ago, told The Pioneer that he is not aware of the latest data. However, he stressed that this is a matter of serious concern which should be investigated into. The inspector general (Law and Order) Nilesh Anand Bhanne said that

It is pertinent to mention here that the Uttarakhand government has been taking concrete action against what is termed as land and love Jihad. Many illegal religious constructions have been demolished and a strict law has been enforced against religious conversion. However, observers point out that the State needs to do more when it comes to foreigners from certain nations living in the State.

Club foot clinic now on in district hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

To enhance services, the club foot clinic was recently inaugurated at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay district hospital with support from the Anushka Foundation. Stating this, the medical superintendent of the hospital Dr VS Chauhan, said that some children are born with club foot issues. The hospital has seen a significant number of patients seeking treatment for this condition. He said that treatment for club foot typically includes physiotherapy, plaster casts and other interventions recommended by orthopedic surgeons. Given the increase in patients seeking care for this condition, the club foot clinic was established in collaboration with the Anushka Foundation, he said. Dr Chauhan further said that the newly opened club foot clinic will be available for patients on a regular schedule, similar to other outpatient departments, from 8 AM to 2 PM. He also added that two orthopedic surgeons have been assigned to this clinic. Treatment at the club foot clinic will be offered at no cost to patients. Club foot is more commonly observed in children than in adults, as it is a congenital condition. This condition occurs when an infant is born with one or both feet turned inward or downward. Early intervention increases the chances of correction.

Dr Chauhan said that while there is currently no special equipment available, the hospital administration will procure the necessary



tools from the hospital budget upon the request of the orthopedic surgeons for the club foot clinic.

It will be recalled that according to officials, services have been improving over time at the district hospital. The construction of the blood bank is currently in progress. Out of the planned two floors, one has already been completed and the entire project is expected to be finished within six months.

विदेशीय अल्पसंख्यक कल्याण, उत्तराखण्ड देहरादून
राष्ट्रीय अल्पसंख्यक कल्याण, उत्तराखण्ड देहरादून
फोन नं. 0135-2780122, Email: ukdirectorminority@gmail.com

पत्रिका 66/नि.अ.क./ई-24412/56 (2) बाल/2024-25 दिनांक 28 अप्रैल, 2025

विज्ञापित
कार्यालय प्रयोग हेतु किराये के वाहनों की आपूर्ति संबंधी निविदा सूचना

निदेशालय अल्पसंख्यक कल्याण, उत्तराखण्ड देहरादून हेतु जीजल/वेदोल/सी.एन.जी. भासिल वाहनों को मासिक/दैनिक किराये के आधार पर लेने हेतु देहरादून के अनुमती व पंजीकृत टैबल एजेंसियों/ट्रान्सपोर्टर्स से मोहकबन्द निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र एवं अन्य शर्तें निविदा प्रपत्र में उल्लिखित हैं। स्पष्ट रूप से भरे गये निविदा प्रपत्र कार्यालय में स्थापित सील बन्द निविदा बाक्स में दिनांक 13.05.2025 सायं 05:00 बजे तक जमा की जा सकती है। पंजीकृत वाहन/ड्राक से प्राप्त निविदाएं भी उक्त बाक्स में जमा की जायेंगी।

1. निविदा प्रपत्र विभागीय वेबसाइट पर प्रदर्शन की तिथि - 28.04.2025
2. निविदा प्रपत्र पूर्ण अतिरिक्तों के साथ कार्यालय में जमा किये जाने की तिथि 09.05.2025 (सायं 05:00 बजे तक) (कार्यालय में स्थापित निविदा बाक्स में)
3. निदेशालय विभागन दिनांक 25 मार्च 2025 के क्रम में जिन कर्मों द्वारा आवेदन किया गया है एसी कर्मों द्वारा पुनः निविदा आवेदन किया जाना होगा। कर्मों को परीहार राशि जमा किये जाने की छूट प्राप्त होगी।

आप निविदाओं को खोला जाना 13.05.2025 अथवा किसी भी कार्यदिन में (दूसरे संबंध में संबंधित कर्मों को सूचना वेबसाइट अथवा मोबाइल (Whatsapp No)- ई-मेल आईडी पर ही जायेंगी) प्राप्त निविदाएं समिति के सदस्यों की उपस्थिति में खोली जायेंगी निविदादाता उक्त केन्द्र में सम्मिलित हो सकते हैं। तकनीकी निविदा के परीक्षण के उपरान्त केवल तकनीकी रूप से अर्ह पाये गये निविदादाताओं की विवेचित निविदाएं समिति द्वारा खोली जायेंगी।

5. निविदा प्रपत्र विभागीय वेबसाइट के QR Code scan कर डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है।

(श्रीरा सिंह बसेड़ा) उपनिदेशक

Folk artists seek proper policy from Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The State government should establish regulations and implement a policy specifically for folk artists, the president of the Lok Kalakar Mahasangh Gopal Singh Chamyal said. He said this while providing an update on their pending demands. It will be recalled that recently, folk artists from Garhwal, Kumaon and Jaunsar regions assembled to protest outside the Culture Department office in Dehradun. Their demonstration began in the morning, during which they raised various slogans and expressed their demands, calling on officials to respond swiftly. Among their requests are timely compensation for their work and exemptions from GST, among other issues. In

response, Culture director general Yugal Kishor Pant assured them that action would be taken regarding their concerns within a month.

Chamyal informed about the current status of their demands, expressing appreciation for the director general's efforts. He said that the DG has established a committee to address the issue of GST exemptions. While this initiative is commendable, the folk artists remain dissatisfied, as they have not been informed about the committee's timeline for action. Chamyal emphasised that rather than forming a committee, authorities should have taken direct action. He also said that a committee has been formed for the

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून
(0135-2714074 फोन-0135-2851060 ई-मेल nagarnigam.ddn@gmail.com)

पत्रिका-200(H) ई-निविदा सूचना दिनांक 28.04.2025

वित्तीय वर्ष 2025-26 में नगर क्षेत्रान्तर्गत जी०वी०पी० वाइंट, रोड स्वीपिंग, नाले-नालियों की सफाई उपरान्त निकलने वाले कूड़े के उचित निस्तारण हेतु ट्रांसफर स्टेशन पहुँचाने के लिये प्राइवेट ट्रैक्टर-ट्राली किराये पर लेने हेतु निविदा आमंत्रित करने के सम्बन्ध में। ई-निविदा की समस्त जानकारी उत्तराखण्ड ई-निविदा पोर्टल www.uktenders.gov.in पर दिनांक 29.04.2025 से देखी जा सकती है। निविदादाता द्वारा निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक-19.05.2025 सायं 5:00 बजे तक जमा किये जा सकते हैं, जो समिति के समक्ष दिनांक :- 20.05.2025 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे अथवा उसके बाद खोली जाएगी। निर्धारित अवधि के उपरान्त किसी भी आवेदन पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।

नगर आयुक्त, नगर निगम, देहरादून

families in the event of their sudden passing. Additionally, he said that their longstanding payments for work have yet to be resolved.

Addressing the concerns of others, he expressed his worries about the auditions conducted by the department, stating that they do not comply with the established guidelines. He pointed out that the restrictions on free instruments apply only to scheduled castes, not to the general category of people, which is wrong. He advocated for a comprehensive folk artist policy by the state government, emphasising the need for clear guidelines that would connect this policy to employment, pensions and other benefits.

Additionally, he stressed that if their pending salary issue is not resolved within 15 days, they will once again organise a protest or demonstration to address the matter.

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No:- ITBP/21" Bn/E-II/COI/INSP(G.D) Sanjay Khali /2025 2081

Office of the Commandant, 21St Bn Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force Ministry of Home Affairs (G.O.I) P.O.- Panthachowk, Srinagar (J&K) NOTICE

Regimental No.070110773 INSP(GD) Sanjay Khali S/o Govind Prasad Khali, Vill-Khas Khal, P.O-Karan Prayag, P.S- Pokhri Dist-Chamoli, State-Uttarakhand is hereby informed that you are absenting from duty w.e.f. 09.03.25 (FN) without any pre intimation/ permission of competent authority. You were directed to report for duty vide 21st Bn Registered Office Memorandum No. 1662-64 dated 15.03.25, 2095-99 dated 26.03.25. But you have not reported so far. After which under the letter number 2346-54 dated 02.04.25. The District Magistrate of your home district, Senior Superintendent of police and the nearest police station in-charge have also been informed to arrest you and hand over you to the nearest I.T.B.P battalion/formation. A copy of said latter also send to your NOK Smt. Astha Semwal (Wife). After that You were declared "Deserter" w.e.f. 09.03.25(FN) vide 21 Bn order No.2807-18 dated 16.04.25 Now it is proposed to dismiss you from the service.

2. Regimental No.070110773 Insp (GD) Sanjay Khali S/o Shri Govind Prasad Khali is hereby directed again to report 21st Bn ITBP, Panthachowk, Srinagar (J&K) within 30 Days from the publication of this notice in newspaper failing which, it may be presumed that you are not interested to serve in ITBPF and order of Dismissal from service will be issued.

(Ajay Nirmalkar) Commandant
21st Bn I.T.B.P

CBC 19112/11/0010/2526

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Inviting Online Applications for National Entrance Test for Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Classes in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA (NETS))-2025

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has entrusted the responsibility of conducting National Entrance Test for Scheme for Residential Education for Students in Higher Classes in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA (NETS))- 2025. Scheme for Residential Education for Students in Higher Classes in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA) provides for high quality education for meritorious Scheduled Castes (SCs) students only, in CBSE-affiliated reputed residential schools. Approximately 3,000 seats would be provided in class 9th and 11th fully funded by the Central Government.

The National Entrance Test for SHRESHTA (NETS) will be conducted in offline mode by National Testing agency (NTA) towards the admission for class 9th and 11th for Schedule caste Students.

The schedule of Examination activities is as follows:

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|---|---|
| Submission of Application online | 15 April 2025 to 05 May 2025 (Upto 05:00 PM) |
| Correction in Particulars | 06 May 2025 to 07 May 2025 |
| Pattern of Test | Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) |
| Duration of Test | 03 Hours (180 minutes) |
| Mode of Test | Pen & Paper on the OMR |
| Question Paper Medium | Bilingual (Hindi and English) |
| Date of Examination | 01 st June 2025 (Sunday) |
| Exam Fee | NIL |
| Timing of Examination | 02.00 PM to 05.00 PM (3 Hours) |
| Downloading of Admit Cards from NTA website | 25th May 2025 |
| Website (s) | https://exams.nta.ac.in/SHRESHTA/ |
| Declaration of Result | With in 04 to 06 weeks after exam |

The candidates are requested to fill the application form carefully. Information about the eligibility, scheme of examination, examination centers, examination timings, procedure for applying etc. are contained in the Information Bulletin hosted on the website of NTA: <https://exams.nta.ac.in/SHRESHTA/>.

Candidates who are desirous of applying for the exam may go through the Information Bulletin and apply online at <https://exams.nta.ac.in/SHRESHTA/>, only during the period between **15.04.2025 to 05.05.2025**.

The candidates and their parents are advised to keep visiting the NTA website for latest updates.

For any queries or /clarifications, candidates can call NTA Help Desk at 011 40759000 (Call) or write to NTA at shreshta@nta.ac.in (Email).

CBC 38101/11/0003/2526

Jammu and Kashmir Assembly condemns Pahalgam attack

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Lashing out at the neighboring country for not understanding that it has once again 'murdered humanity' by launching a strike on the tourists, holidaying in Pahalgam, the President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Farooq Abdullah, has demanded 'stern' action against Pakistan to prevent similar attacks in the future.

On the other hand, the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly unanimously passed a resolution on Monday condemning the heinous, cowardly act that resulted in the loss of 26 innocent lives in Pahalgam on April 22.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also sent out a message of condemnation of the Pahalgam massacre and said that people across J&K are holding protests against the ghastly terror attack that claimed 26 lives on April 22.

Referring to his previous stand on holding a dialogue with Pakistan, Abdullah Monday told reporters outside the J&K Assembly, "I used to favour dialogue with Pakistan every time.

"How will we answer those who lost their loved ones? Are we doing justice? Not Balakot, today the nation wants such action to be taken so that these kinds of attacks never happen". Abdullah strongly criticised Pakistan's actions, stating that they have "murdered humanity" and should not expect India to compromise on its principles.

Targeting Pakistan further, the JKNC Chief emphasised India's unity, rejecting the two-nation theory and asserting that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians are all one. He assured that India will give a befitting reply to those responsible for the attack.

"We regret that our neighbour today also does not understand that it has murdered humanity. If they think that we will go with Pakistan by doing this, we should clear their misunderstanding. We did not go with them in 1947, so why will we go today? We threw the two-nation theory into the water at that time.

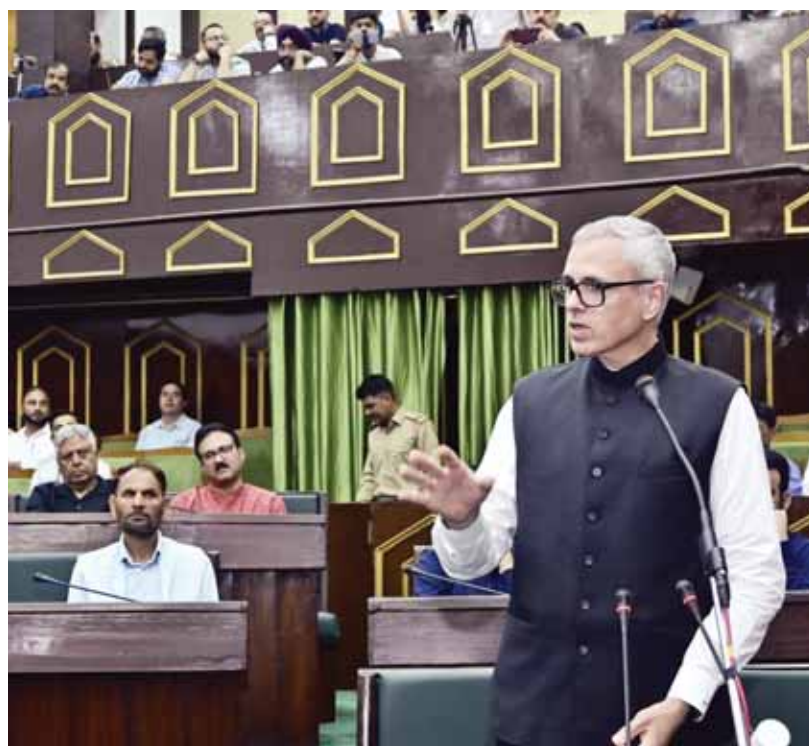
Today, we are also not ready to accept the two-nation theory. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian, we are all one. We will give a befitting reply to them," Farooq Abdullah said.

Meanwhile, the resolution, moved by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary during a special session of the Assembly, was passed by voice vote. At the beginning of the session, House members observed a two-minute silence to pay homage to the 26 people killed in the tragedy last week.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather condemned the killing of innocent tourists from various parts of the country.

"We pay homage to the victims and extend our condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones," he said.

"The Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir reaffirms its unwavering commitment to foster an environment of



President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Farooq Abdullah PIONEER PHOTO

peace, development, and inclusive prosperity for all its citizens, and to resolutely defeat the nefarious designs of those who seek to disturb the communal harmony and progress of the nation and of

Jammu and Kashmir," the resolution stated. Concluding a discussion on the resolution, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also holds the tourism portfolio, condemned the Pahalgam terror attack and

admitted that he had failed in his responsibility of ensuring a safe return for tourists. "None of us supports this. It has hollowed us from within. In 26 years, this is the first time I've seen people come out of their homes like this. From Kathua to Kupwara, there is hardly any town or village where people have not come out of their homes to condemn this attack," he said.

He added that an attack of such a large scale has been carried out after 21 years in Baisaran. "I did not know how to apologise to the families of the deceased... Being the host, I was responsible for sending the tourists back safely.

I couldn't do it. I do not have the words to seek an apology," the Chief Minister added. Among the 26 people who lost their lives was a young Navy officer, Lieutenant Vinay Narwal, who got married on April 16, just six days before the attack. His wife, Himanshi, stood beside his tricolour-draped coffin to bid him a final goodbye after his mortal remains arrived in Delhi.

Omar Abdullah, while mentioning the Navy officer's wife during his speech, said, "What should I tell the widow of the Navy officer who had got married just a few days ago? I have no words to console her. Many family members of the victims asked me what their crime was. I had no answer."

Further, he remembered the pony rider Syed Adil Hussain Shah, who died trying to save the tourists during the attack.

He was the only local and only Muslim who died in the dastardly attack in which terrorists singled out men, asked for their religious identity and shot dead Hindus. "Adil, without bothering about his life, saved many tourists. He laid down his life. Instead of fleeing, he decided to save them," Omar Abdullah said.

The Chief Minister further said that he would not use the situation in Pahalgam to demand statehood or Jammu and Kashmir from the central government.

"I won't demand statehood on the dead bodies. We will demand statehood on some other occasion," he said while speaking in the Assembly.

"My brand of politics is not so cheap that I would demand statehood at the cost of 26 lives," he said, asserting that politics must have its limits, especially when human lives are involved.

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, Sunil Sharma, said the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will not remain silent and will give a befitting reply to the deadly Pahalgam attack.

He also said that every single word in this special session of the House is being scrutinised as the eyes of the whole country are on us.

Addressing the Assembly, Sharma said Pakistan has been trying to keep its narrative alive through some miscreants, but the people after 35 years have given a strong reply by staying united and sending a message to the world that no ploys can divide them.

400 jobless Bengal school employees demand Mamata's intervention

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kolkata

Over 400 people, among the 25,753 teaching and non-teaching staff rendered jobless following the Supreme Court order on April 3, on Monday blocked the Hazra Crossing in south Kolkata demanding an audience with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Traffic came to a standstill for nearly an hour along the busy Asutosh Mukherjee Road-Hazra Road crossing as protesters voiced their anger at being labelled "tainted" despite qualifying in the 2016 WBSSC Recruitment Test. They demanded to be reinstated or at least allowed to work until December 31, following the court's directive that allowed some teachers to continue temporarily.

As police tried to stop them from moving towards the CM's official residence in Kalighat area, around one km away, the protesters scuffled with police and squatted in the middle of the road.

Some of them were forced to board



United Teaching and Non-Teaching Forum members, sit on the road after police stopped them marching towards WB CM Mamata Banerjee's residence in Kolkata on Monday PTI

waiting police vehicles, while others were persuaded to move to the side of road.

One protester, a woman lying in the middle of the road, refused to budge even after a senior police officer folded his hands and pleaded with her to move aside.

Another protester, holding up a photo of her OMR sheet, accused the SSC of playing a "divisive game" by excluding her name from the list of "not specifically tainted" candidates submitted to the district inspector of schools in Cooch Behar. "We are facing social humiliation despite clearing the SSC exams fairly before 2016," said one teacher, who did not want to be named.

"If the Supreme Court itself said it couldn't distinguish between tainted and untainted candidates due to the corruption in the recruitment process, why is the state government isolating us?"

Bipul Jana, a former non-teaching staff member from a South 24 Parganas school, added, "While the SSC has sent

lists of untainted teachers to respective DI offices in every region, no thought has been spared for the Group C and D staff. We earned our jobs in a fair way in 2016, but we are staring at an uncertain future because of the large-scale irregularities committed by a section of the ruling party and government officials at that time."

He also criticised the Chief Minister's announcement of a temporary allowance, saying, "The ₹25,000 monthly allowance for Group C and ₹20,000 for Group D employees until December 31 is simply not enough."

The blockade, organised by the United Teaching and Non-Teaching Employees Forum, lasted around 40 minutes before police managed to clear the area.

The Supreme Court has scrapped the entire 2016 WBSSC recruitment panel, resulting in 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff losing their jobs.

The court later allowed "untainted" teachers to continue until December 31, but this relief was not extended to Group C and Group D staff.

Kharge slams PM Modi for skipping Pahalgam terror meet



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with party leader and former Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot during a rally in Jaipur PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jaipur

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi for skipping the all-party meeting called to discuss the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 people dead.

"It is the misfortune of the country that when the pride of the country was hurt, you (PM Modi) were giving an election speech in Bihar," he said addressing the 'Samvidhan Bachao' rally here.

"Leaders of all parties attended the all-party meeting, but it is sad that PM Modi did not come to that meeting. Was Bihar far away?"

"The PM should have come to the all-party meeting and explained the plan. What help does he need from us?" he said. Further attacking the Prime Minister, he said, "Modi gave inflation and unemployment.

Such people weaken the country. The 56-inch chest has shrunked."

In the run up to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, Modi had said that it takes a 56-inch chest to convert Uttar Pradesh into Gujarat in terms of development. Kharge said Congress leaders had decided that it will support the government in its action as the country is supreme.

"Country is supreme, then come parties, religion. Everyone should be united for country," he said.

He said the Congress talks about unity but the BJP talks of breaking it.

"In this country, the Constitution is supreme and our democracy runs under the Constitution," he said.

Attacking the government over alleged misuse of investigative agencies and raids on Congress leaders, he said, "Whenever Congress grows, these people try to suppress it. We are not the ones to be suppressed."

He alleged that BJP leaders are trying to weaken everyone but they cannot weaken democracy by filing "false" cases against people.

Encroachments on India-Nepal border removed

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

In a determined move to safeguard national security and preserve government land holdings, the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government has initiated a robust campaign to remove illegal encroachments and shut down unauthorised madrasas operating within close proximity to the India-Nepal international border.

A special operation conducted between April 25 and April 27 witnessed significant action across several border districts, where longstanding illegal occupations and unrecognised religious establishments had proliferated.

In Bahraich district, a comprehensive survey in Nanpara tehsil — covering the critical 0 to 10-kilometre stretch along the international boundary — identified 227 instances of unauthorised encroachment on government land.

Prior to the special operation, 63 illegal structures had already been dismantled. During the three-day drive, authorities succeeded in removing an additional 26 encroachments. Consequently, government land occupied by a total of

89 illegal settlers has now been reclaimed.

Notably, officials reported that none of the sites cleared during this phase involved madrasas or educational structures, offering a degree of administrative relief. The district of Shravasti saw a focused effort to curb the operation of unrecognised madrasas. In Jamunha tehsil, seven madrasas, and in Bhinga tehsil, ten madrasas were found operating without requisite documentation and official sanction. As a result, all 17 institutions were ordered to cease operations immediately. Simultaneously, within a 0 to 15-kilometre radius along the Nepal border, proceedings have been initiated under Section 67 of the Uttar Pradesh Revenue Code in 119 cases involving temporary and permanent illegal encroachments. Investigations in Siddharthnagar district's Naugarh tehsil confirmed the construction of five madrasas and mosques without legal authorisation within the 10-kilometre border zone.

Pursuant to directives from senior administrative authorities, inquiries and subsequent legal actions are underway. In Shohratgarh tehsil, six addition-

al sites of unlawful construction have been identified.

Meanwhile, in Maharajganj district, government land encroachments were detected at three locations in Pharenda tehsil, ten in Nautanva tehsil and six in Nichlaur tehsil. While one matter remains sub judice, eviction and demolition activities under Section 67(1) of the Revenue Code are actively progressing in all other instances. In Balrampur district, officials have recorded seven cases of illegal occupation — five in Balrampur tehsil and two in Tulsipur tehsil. Following identification, two encroachers voluntarily vacated the premises, while eviction proceedings continue against the remaining individuals. The Uttar Pradesh government has reiterated its uncompromising stance against any form of illegal encroachment or unauthorised madrasa activity within 10 kilometres of the Nepal border.

All district administrations have been instructed to expedite eviction processes, ensure the demolition of unlawful structures, and maintain continuous surveillance along the international boundary to prevent future violations.

SP MP Suman demands Z-category security

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Agra

Samajwadi Party (SP) Rajya Sabha member Ramji Lal Suman has alleged a conspiracy to assassinate him, blaming the state government after his convoy was attacked at the Gabhana toll plaza in Aligarh district.

During the attack, the windows of his vehicle were smashed. The MP later returned safely to Agra under police protection.

Addressing a press conference at his residence in Sanjay Place, Agra, Suman said the attack appeared to be a meticulously planned ambush intended to eliminate him.

"The way the attackers targeted my vehicle clearly shows that my murder is being orchestrated by the government. This was not an accident but a deliberate and deadly conspiracy," he stated.

Suman pointed out that this was not the first attempt on his life. Recalling a previous incident, he said, "On March 26, members of the Karni Sena attacked my residence.

Despite two FIRs being registered in connection with that attack, no arrests have been made till date.

This shows the level of protection the attackers are receiving from the police



Samajwadi Party (SP) Rajya Sabha member Ramji Lal Suman FILE PHOTO

and the government." He further alleged that on April 12, Karni Sena activists organised a protest at Garhi Rami, openly brandishing swords and firearms.

"Even during that incident, police and administrative officials chose to turn a blind eye. Their inaction reflects a deliberate strategy to let such elements operate fearlessly under state patronage," he charged.

Warning the government, Suman said, "Today it is an MP under attack. If such incidents continue unchecked,

it raises serious questions about the safety of ordinary citizens. Should anything happen to me, the government will be solely responsible." Following the attack, senior SP leaders rallied behind Suman, strongly condemning the incident and demanding immediate action.

SP district president Shri Krishna Verma and city president Chaudhary Wajid Nisar stated, "In a government where elected representatives are unsafe, the security of the common man becomes a farce."

SP leader Shabbir Abbas demanded that Ramji Lal Suman be provided with Z-category security, citing the repeated threats and attacks on him.

Several other SP members, including MP representative Dharmendra Yadav, Salim Shah, Muin Babu, Rajpal Yadav, Mamta Taploo, Rahul Bharti, Santosh Jatav, Laxmi Dhangar and Diwakar Gurjar, also condemned the attack and expressed solidarity with Suman.

Party leaders have warned of statewide protests if immediate security measures are not taken and the culprits are not apprehended.

Meanwhile, the local police have initiated an investigation into the incident, but no arrests have been reported so far.

MP MLAs to receive Apple iPads

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

In a significant move towards modernising legislative functioning, all 230 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Madhya Pradesh will soon be provided with Apple iPads under the ambitious e-Vidhan initiative.

The process of completing formalities is in its final stage, with a unanimous consensus reached among all members.

Official sources said that three meetings in this regard have been convened in this regard in past two months. In the meetings, members emphasised the necessity of equipping legislators with secure and efficient devices, considering the evolving demands of legislative and constituency work and the critical need for robust data protection.

The consensus to provide Apple iPads — known for their high security standards and performance — reflects a broader national trend where several state assemblies have opted for Apple devices for their legislators.

The National Informatics Centre (NIC) will play a pivotal role in finalising the distribution process.

Once deployed, the e-Vidhan system will enable MLAs to access legislative documents, reference materials, and constituency data digitally, thereby enhancing legislative functioning and reducing dependency on paper-based processes.

Principal Secretary of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, AP Singh, told *The Pioneer* that the process of laying lines has begun within the State Assembly premises.

The Public Works Department (PWD) of Madhya Pradesh is overseeing the execution of this work, while the procurement of iPads has been entrusted to the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

He informed that the cost of procuring the iPads will be shared between the Central and State Governments, with the Centre bearing 60 percent and the Madhya Pradesh Government covering the remaining 40 percent.

This approach is consistent with the Centre's push to promote digital governance under the broader framework of Digital India.

Notably, the move towards digitisation had been initiated earlier. On March 1, 2023, while presenting the State Budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, Finance Minister Jagdish Devda had earmarked ₹5 lakh per legislator for setting up e-office infrastructure.

The provision was made under the Madhya Pradesh Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2005, signaling a long-term vision to reduce physical paperwork and enhance administrative efficiency.

Once the e-Vidhan system is operational, Madhya Pradesh will join the league of 19 other Indian states that have already implemented similar initiatives.

The platform is expected to not only make Assembly proceedings more transparent and efficient but also significantly cut costs — saving crores of rupees annually that are currently spent on printing and distributing legislative documents.

Assembly Principal Secretary AP Singh expressed optimism that the distribution of iPads would be completed soon with NIC's assistance.

He further highlighted that moving to a fully digital platform will allow members to access all legislative material with just a click, facilitate real-time referencing during debates and foster inter-state innovation exchange by connecting all Assemblies through a unified digital system.

Editor's TAKE

Sweltering heat grips northern India

IMD issues advisories as vast swathes of the country brace for even hotter days ahead

As April nears its end, large parts of northern and central India are already in the grip of a blistering heatwave, with temperatures soaring well beyond seasonal norms. Delhi, the national capital, has touched 42°C — an ominous marker considering that the hottest months of May and June still lie ahead.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has sounded a yellow alert for the city, warning that maximum temperatures could touch 43°C in the coming days, a full 3-4 degrees above the usual average for this time of year. This unrelenting heat has not spared other parts of the country either. States across north, central, and eastern India — including Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal — are witnessing an early and intense summer. In parts of Jharkhand, temperatures have already breached the 43°C mark, prompting fresh warnings and health advisories from the IMD. The early arrival of such extreme heat is no longer an anomaly, but rather an indication of broader climatic shift.

Meteorologists have attributed this current spell to a combination of local and global factors. Dry and hot westerly winds continue to sweep across the northern plains, preventing any cloud development and keeping the heat trapped at the surface. A Western Disturbance — an upper air system that usually brings brief relief in the form of rain and cooler winds — is active, but its influence has largely remained confined to the Himalayan region, failing to bring much respite to the plains.

Additionally, global climate patterns such as the El Niño phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean are likely playing a role in distorting India's seasonal cycles. These disruptions are contributing to the growing unpredictability of weather, often resulting in prolonged dry spells, delayed monsoons, or early heatwaves. While temperatures have been climbing steadily, the IMD has made it clear that the coming days will be particularly challenging. The capital region is under a yellow alert, with authorities advising people to avoid stepping out during peak afternoon hours between 11 AM and 3 PM. Precautions such as staying hydrated, using umbrellas or hats, and wearing light, breathable clothing have been strongly recommended. The consequences of such extreme weather go far beyond mere discomfort. Public health experts warn of increased risks of heatstroke, dehydration, and respiratory illnesses.

For vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, outdoor laborers, and those with pre-existing conditions, the risk is especially high. There are also growing concerns about the strain on infrastructure, particularly in terms of water and electricity. With power demand peaking due to widespread use of fans and air conditioning, there is a very real danger of grid overloads and outages.

Water reservoirs, already under stress in several regions, are likely to see further depletion as evaporation rates surge. Simultaneously, the contrast in regional weather patterns continues to widen. While the north and central parts of the country reel under extreme heat, the northeastern states are bracing for heavy rainfall. The IMD has forecast widespread showers accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and strong winds — particularly over Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Tripura.

This rainfall, expected between April 25 and 29, offers a stark reminder of India's increasingly uneven climate patterns — with floods and droughts occurring side by side in different corners of the nation. Further south, states such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and coastal Andhra Pradesh are dealing with a different but equally taxing weather pattern — hot and humid conditions that pose their own set of challenges, particularly for urban populations. This spell of early heat serves as yet another warning about the growing impact of climate change.

Once considered rare, heatwaves are now more frequent, more intense, and longer-lasting. Their consequences — on health, livelihoods, agriculture, and infrastructure — are already being felt and will likely worsen in the absence of strong mitigation and adaptation measures.

As India heads into what could be one of its hottest summers on record, it is clear that the time for reactive measures is over. Urban planning must prioritise heat-resilient infrastructure, public awareness campaigns must be ramped up, and long-term policies addressing climate adaptation need urgent attention.

The sweltering temperatures of April may just be the beginning. What lies ahead could be far more testing.

UCC on the horizon

As the BJP frames the Uniform Civil Code as a step toward national integration and gender justice, critics warn of growing unrest and constitutional challenges ahead

After the controversial passage of the Waqf Bill, the Modi Government plans to implement the equally or even more contentious Uniform Civil Code (UCC) passed last year.

This raises the question of whether it is the right time to push for the UCC amid ongoing protests against the Waqf Bill, which began after the UCC was approved in Parliament last year.

The BJP has released a video recently on the achievements of Modi's first year in his third term and is preparing for the UCC implementation. The video, titled 'Big Moves Under Modi 3.0 — The Journey Has Just Begun...', suggests prioritising the UCC. The video presents it as an important step towards national integration and gender equality.

Despite being proposed and withdrawn twice in 2019 and 2020, the UCC bill was eventually approved by Parliament last year. For the BJP, the UCC is a crucial part of its political agenda, alongside the completion of the Ayodhya temple and the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. The UCC is a complex issue.

It has several angles, such as political, legal, legislative, religious, gender, and Constitutional perspectives. The country witnessed angry agitations even during the passage of the law. Just as the Waqf Act creates unrest, the UCC is bound to trigger nationwide agitations.

It is worth noting that while many countries like France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia have a UCC, others like Kenya, Pakistan, Italy, South Africa, Nigeria, and Greece do not.

Prime Minister Modi defended the implementation of the UCC in Lok Sabha in December last year, stating that the Constituent Assembly, which drafted the Indian Constitution, wanted the Uniform Civil Code to be enacted by an elected Government.

He also highlighted that BR Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, strongly advocated for a uniform civil code preventing one-sided claims.

The Apex Court also emphasised the need for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in 1985 to maintain national unity and recommended a single law for all citizens in 1995. In 2019, the Modi Government reaffirmed its commitment to the UCC.

The Court had also declared Triple Talaq unconstitutional, promoting gender justice. Minority groups feel that personal laws are vital to cultural and religious identities, and implementing a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) could infringe on religious freedom



under Article 25 of the Constitution. India currently has separate personal laws for various religious communities, including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Parsis, which govern issues like marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The UCC supporters argue for one law for all citizens.



KALYANI SHANKAR

Moreover, experts warn that the UCC could overstep state legislative authority, challenging the principles of cooperative federalism. The Portuguese Civil Code, introduced in the 19th century, is still in effect in Goa and has not been replaced since the state's liberation.

Early this year, Uttarakhand implemented the UCC for the state. Other BJP-ruled states like Assam and Maharashtra want to push it through.

The BJP may want to replicate this in different states. The challenges of implementing the UCC are many.

While supporters argue for a UCC implementation, others caution against it, citing the need to respect religious and cultural diversity. The lack of consensus among political parties presents a formidable challenge. Many opposition parties and even some NDA allies, and some communities like the Muslims, have strongly opposed it. Ensuring effective implementation across the vast and diverse India is formidable, as it requires preparations for administration, infrastructure, resources, and significant public awareness and education about the UCC. Implementing the UCC brings up concerns about religious freedom and cultural identity.

While the Supreme Court upholds the constitutional validity of the Uniform Civil Code, implementing it remains a contentious issue in Indian society and politics. It is a highly sensitive issue in India, with diverse cultures.

Many minority communities are concerned about the potential risks to their religious liberties, highlighting the complexity of the issue.

The Modi Government claims that the

Uniform Civil Code (UCC) will secure equal property rights for women, ensuring fair distribution of a deceased person's assets among the spouse, children, and parents. Previously, only mothers inherited the property.

Both parties need to give grounds for divorce. Some communities, like Muslims, are apprehensive that a UCC could undermine this and the protections that the Constitution has provided. Implementing a UCC due to concerns about losing their cultural identity or traditional practices is a key fear. It will be prudent to address the complexities of the implementation before pushing it through, mainly to avoid law and order agitations at the ground level.

There are already demonstrations against the Waqf Bill, and the intention to implement the UCC will only add to the unrest. Therefore, a balanced approach, ensuring the rights of all communities, is the only way forward apart from mobilising a political consensus.

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

Rekindling spirituality in public service

SECOND Opinion

BY KANISHK

Spirituality in public service is a quiet force — a subtle, transformative presence that elevates action beyond duty and policy. It is not dramatic or ceremonial; rather, it is the silent essence that gives meaning to governance. Without it, public service risks becoming mechanical, devoid of soul. With it, even routine work becomes an act of purpose, a service imbued with deeper intent.

At its heart, public service is a commitment to something larger than the self. It seeks to uplift the vulnerable, amplify the voices of the unheard, and bring dignity to the weary. This service calls for more than expertise or efficiency — it requires a vision born from character, moral clarity, and spiritual depth. True public service is not confined to a role or title.

It manifests in the policymaker, the volunteer, the social worker, the diplomat — all united by a common purpose: the greater good. Leadership, in this realm, cannot rely on knowledge alone. Knowledge is inert until shaped by reflection, compassion, and inner values. Spiritual wisdom breathes life into decisions, offering clarity and courage when doubt or fatigue sets in. Without this grounding, even the most brilliant minds may falter — confusion creeps in, cynicism sets root, and leadership loses its compass. Leadership today is often misunderstood as a position of authority, but real leadership stems from

authenticity. It is not found in designations but discovered in one's depth of conviction and steadiness of spirit. Authority may be granted by position, but legitimacy is earned through inner alignment. Spiritually grounded leaders do not chase applause — they pursue truth and inspire through vision and integrity. They don't act from ambition, but from an attunement to the pulse of humanity. Such leadership stirs hope, cuts through cynicism, and dissolves indifference.

These leaders don't rebel against tradition for the sake of it; instead, they bring discernment and evolution. Their compass is conscience, not ideology. In moments of crisis, they offer stability. Their ethics are not performance, but an extension of their being. They see not division, but interconnectedness — as if all lives are branches of a single sacred tree. This worldview fosters institutions where dignity becomes a right, not a privilege.

Compassion becomes inclusive, not selective. Governance finds rhythm not in control, but in care. Here, spirituality is not religious dogma but a deep connection to something timeless and meaningful. Today, the world seeks not just knowledge or efficiency, but meaning.

A quiet spiritual awakening is unfolding. This awakening isn't about IQ or even EQ, but a higher dimension — Spiritual Quotient (SQ): the ability to see beyond the immediate, to act with purpose and compassion. Without SQ, institutions crumble under their own weight; fatigue replaces idealism, and burnout overtakes brilliance. When a leader is spiritually aligned, their institutions reflect that purpose. This generates "spiritual capital" — the shared conscience of a community

that guides its ethos. When such spiritual clarity guides governance, it becomes more than administration — it becomes dharma in action. The ancient Indian ideal of Ram Rajya embodied this: a just society led by humility, where governance was sacred, and transformation flowed from values, not mandates. Great nations and institutions outlive their founders when their leaders' spiritual fire seeps into collective consciousness.

It becomes legacy, not just memory. This is no idealistic dream — it is rooted in India's own civilisational wisdom. Indian governance was never purely utilitarian. It emerged from Vedantic insight, where action and spirit were inseparable. Chanakya's Yogakshema envisioned a state that nourished holistic well-being, and his Rajirshi — the philosopher-king — was a leader who blended contemplation with action. Colonial rule, however, severed governance from spirituality. Administration became technical, education lost its soul, and systems bred compliance over conscience.

That legacy still lingers in our institutions today. But the spiritual embers remain — and they hold the promise of renewal. From the mystical Nasadiya Sukta to the Bhagavad Gita's call to duty, India's heritage calls us to see leadership as sacred service. Let service be a quiet prayer. Let leadership be a steady flame. Let us rekindle, through stillness, a public life that is once again filled with soul.

(The writer is a Central Government Officer, presently serving in the Ministry of Home Affairs. Views are personal)

Leaderspeak



In this war against terrorism, the unity of the country, the solidarity of 140 crore Indians is our biggest strength. We have to strengthen our resolve to face this challenge that has appeared before the country. We have to demonstrate strong willpower as a nation. Today, the world is watching, after this terrorist attack, the whole country is speaking in one voice.

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

Letters to the Editor

Indo-Pak staff is ominous

Madam — While the United Nations and world leaders, including the United States, have condemned the Pahalgam massacre, no nation has actively engaged in mediation talks, treating the matter as a bilateral affair. Meanwhile, in response to India's diplomatic measures and warnings to Pakistan over its alleged role in the incident, Pakistan is scrambling to bolster its operational readiness.

It has launched a three-day air warfare exercise, Zarbe-Haideri, along its borders, deploying PL-15 Chinese missiles with a range of 200 km for the first time in its southern sector.

Additionally, Pakistan has positioned fifth-generation fighter aircraft such as the J-10, JF-17, and F-15C, capable of striking targets up to 290 km away, along with long-range anti — ship precision missiles to protect the Karachi harbour area.

The situation risks escalating into a standoff reminiscent of 'Operation Parakram' more than two decades ago. Pakistan should know that India is fully prepared to respond firmly to any Pakistani misadventure with anger held in abeyance as added strength hence should resort to diplomatic talks showing evidence of its non involvement in the massacre and help India in destroying terrorism jointly to diffuse the situation.

RS NARULA | PATIALA

International Dance Day

Madam — April 29 is the "International Dance Day" celebrated annually all over the world. The International Theatre Institute, ITI has established the day in 1982 and recognised by UNESCO to highlight the amazing diversity and talent of dancers all over the globe. April 29 marks the birth anniversary of renowned dancer Jean Georges Noverre.

Evidence of dance has been found dating back 9000 years and it has been growing fast into a worldwide phenomenon. This day provides an annual opportunity to unite dancers and enthusiasts in the joy of movement. Dance transcends cultural boundaries and connects people across the globe. It's a day to honour the beauty, passion, and expression that dance brings to our lives. Dance is healthy for the body, mind, heart, and soul and has been established as a form of happiness in many people's lives. Dance is an outlet of expression and communication of emotion, it helps in releasing powerful feelings into the environment to feel less overwhelmed.

One of the key aims of this day is to persuade governments and political bodies to recognise the importance of dance and remove obstacles to participation. Let's organise a professional dance performance, recognise the popular dancers, promote dance form in educational institutions, seek government support, financial help to dancers and dance trainers, erase the stigma about any form of dance, and exhibit the cultural importance of dance.

DR B MADHUSUDHAN REDDY | KARIMNAGAR

Houses of alleged terrorists demolished

Madam — Authorities here have demolished the houses of three alleged active terrorists in Bandipora, Pulwama and Shopian districts of Jammu and Kashmir as security forces continued their crackdown on the terror ecosystem following the Pahalgam terror attack. With this, nine houses of suspected terrorists and overground workers of terror outfits have been razed so far since the April 22 attack in the lush meadows of Baisaran that killed 26 people and left the nation grief-stricken and fuming.

As part of the anti-terror crackdown, that picked up more steam after the Pahalgam tragedy, security forces have raided more than 500 locations in the Valley in just five days and grilled hundreds of suspects. Political parties have urged the Centre to ensure that innocent people are not targeted while it goes after terrorists. Following the Pahalgam terror attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged to hunt down the killers "to the ends of the earth" as his government linked the dastardly attack to Pakistan. Since then New Delhi has announced a raft of retaliatory steps, including the cancellation of visas and suspension of the 1960s Indus Water Treaty, and Islamabad hitting back with a string of tit-for-tat measures, that included putting the 1972 Shimla Agreement in abeyance. Pakistan has warned that if India actually goes through with diverting or blocking the Indus water flow, Islamabad would see it as an "act of war".

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

TEACH PAKISTAN A LESSON BUT WITH CAUTION

The content of the article, 'No Indus water to Pak...' (284-285), though carries some emotional touch, will be endorsed by many. It is true, Pandit Nehru was gentle enough and stood firm on international norms, a humane approach and tried to live up to the theory of Love thy Neighbour. The recipient not reciprocating the best of sentiments and gestures demonstrated by the Indus Water Treaty is a fallout of the misplaced priority of focusing more on communal agenda than on developing the country. India has waited enough and suspension of the treaty should sensitise the ruling dispensation to shun its communal agenda and focus on peoples' welfare besides establishing peace with all. Pakistan is falling in debt trap besides living with the menace of terrorism. All these make clear that the leadership in Pakistan is not prepared to change its course. India's decision to deprive Indus water, which is a lifeline for Pakistan, suits the situation of this day. However, it is to be kept in mind that there

is possibility of our action becoming a precedent that turns against us as we have China on the other side with a major river flowing through its soil into India. Basic fact Pakistan needs to understand is that it has wasted decades in pursuing communal agenda in the process of which it has lagged far behind India in every aspect, besides living with the pains inflicted by terrorism.

In spite of attacks and constant irritants from Pakistan India is growing in many spheres whereas Pakistan is sinking under debt and lack of development, which should open its eyes. Using hate towards India to make its failures and misdeeds may work for sometime but not for all the time. It should remember the poetic justice which says "those who take sword will perish by sword". It is also time for the Union government to spare some time and energy to settle all the disputes over sharing of water among the States, keeping all political considerations aside.

AG RAJMOHAN I ANANTPUR

India's grand rewrite of communication order

The WAVES summit will drive the country's creative economy through intellectual property creation and develop its M&E infrastructure. It will also help build the industry's capacity to create a skilled workforce for global needs

FIRST Column

As the final countdown to the WAVES Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit draws near, the moot question remains: how will the global communication ecosystem respond to the vision, challenges, and opportunities unleashed by the four-day summit in Mumbai from 1 May?

More than just another gathering, WAVES is a seismic shift. It promises to reorient the way we understand, design, and deliver the future of media and entertainment (M&E). With an architecture built around inclusivity, imagination, and integrated diplomacy, the summit is poised to be a landmark "Communication Moment" for the world.

Through its immersive curation of threads, themes, ideas, and tools, WAVES will redraw the boundaries of what M&E can mean in an era marked by disruption and reinvention.

At the heart of this transformation lies a compelling proposition: that the summit is not merely about showcasing creativity — it is about systematising it. The real takeaway from WAVES 2025 is not just the exchange of ideas, but the articulation of a futuristic communication order — one that interweaves Commerce, Creativity, Content, and Culture into a coherent, collaborative, and globally relevant vision.

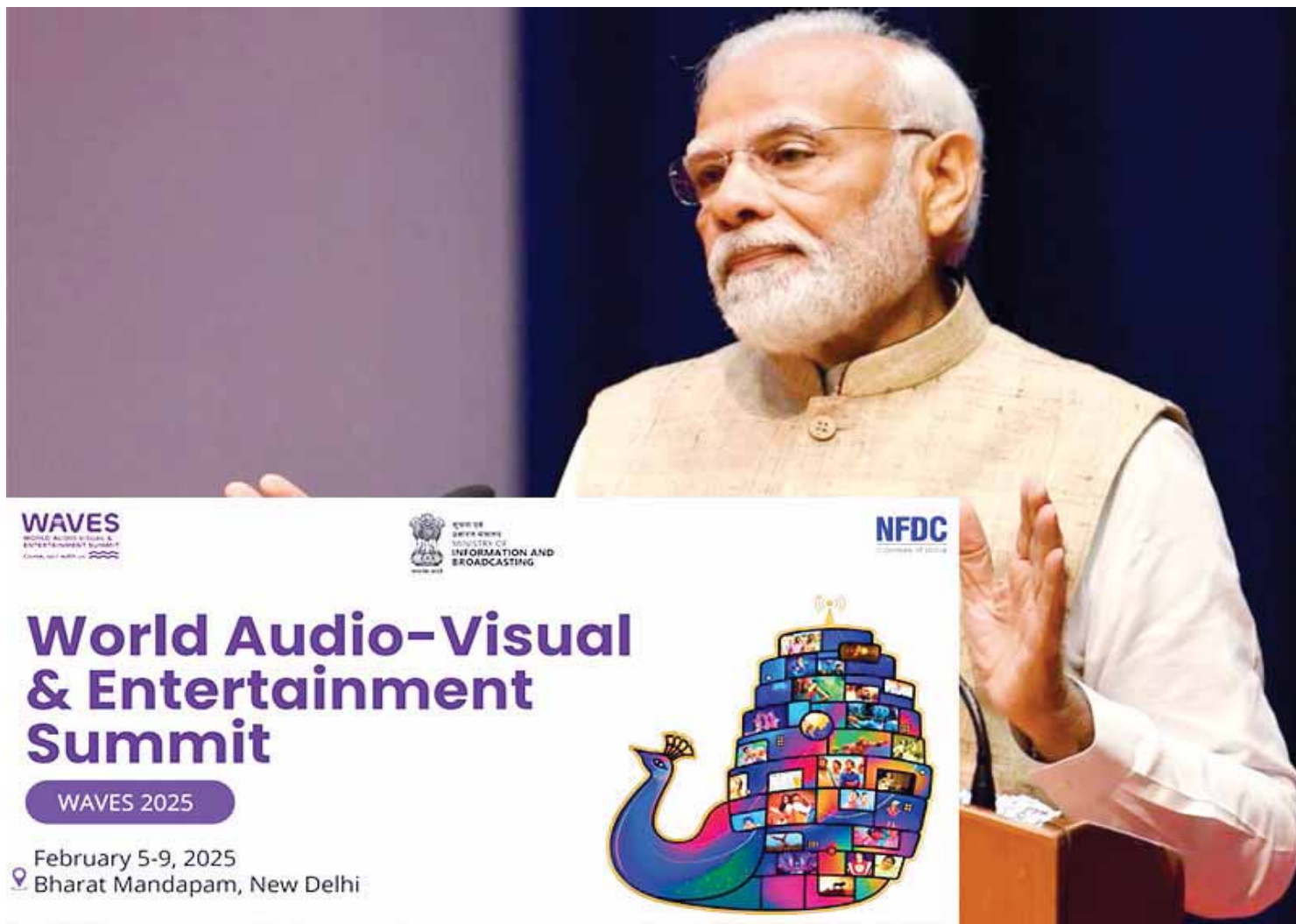
From the outset, WAVES has been propelled by an unflinching commitment to innovation and ideation. As the inaugural edition, it places "Communication First" not just as a slogan but as an organising principle. For perhaps the first time, a summit in the M&E space has been imagined as a "Communication Mahakumbh", where continuity meets disruption, and heritage is re-engineered through innovation.

The four identified pillars of WAVES — Broadcast & Infotainment, AVGC-XR, Digital Media, and Films — each distinct in their scope, nevertheless converge powerfully in intent and deliverables. Together, they represent a conscious synthesis of old and new, traditional mediums and emerging technologies, global ambitions and local identities.

What sets WAVES apart is its ability to harmonise these forces into a dynamic, composite framework. In doing so, it sketches the contours of a new communication order — one led by India, but built for the world. The catalytic force behind this vision has been the launch of Create in India: Season I, an initiative that has electrified the industry with its participatory energy and collaborative ethos.

It has thrown open the doors to storytellers, technologists, investors, and policymakers, crafting a rich ecosystem of engagement that mirrors the complexity of the M&E sector itself.

The themes and templates curated under this banner are refreshingly forward — looking. They tackle not just today's industry pain points but anticipate tomorrow's cultural, economic, and technological shifts. From decentralisation of nar-



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

ratives and platform-neutral storytelling to immersive formats and multilingual access, WAVES has laid down a clear thesis: the future belongs to those who dare to reimagine.

In doing so, it positions India as the Content Hub of the World, a nation not just exporting stories, but shaping the very grammar of global storytelling. The commercial vision that undergirds this ambition is bold and aspirational, showcasing India's intent to lead not only through scale, but through thought leadership.

WAVES 2025 emerges at a moment when the

“Creator Economy” is reshaping global production — consumption cycles. Here, India is not a passive participant but a proactive architect; fusing its demographic dividend, cultural wealth, and technological prowess into an unbeatable formula for soft power.

WAVES is the conduit through which this soft power is being systematised, internationalised, and strategically leveraged.

It is not just a summit. It is a signal — a signal that India is ready to anchor the future of M&E diplomacy through stories, ideas, and innovations that resonate across borders.

The kinetic current of visibility, opportunity, collaboration, and growth generated by WAVES is designed to have a lasting ripple effect, influencing how future summits around the world are conceived, especially in terms of fostering international tie — ups, cinematic synergies, and media-tech alliances.

THE FOUR IDENTIFIED PILLARS OF WAVES — BROADCAST & INFOTAINMENT, AVGC-XR, DIGITAL MEDIA, AND FILMS EACH DISTINCT IN THEIR SCOPE, NEVERTHELESS CONVERGE POWERFULLY IN INTENT AND DELIVERABLES.

At its core, WAVES is a think tank in motion — where storytelling meets strategy, policy meets participation, and art meets action. By blurring the lines between entertainment and engagement, it reminds the world that M&E is no longer a side-show to diplomacy. It is diplomacy. In an increasingly multipolar world, cultural influence is power. And the medium through which that power is asserted is communication — fluid, visual, participatory.

Through M&E, nations now shape perceptions, steer conversations, and signal intent. WAVES situates India's M&E industry squarely within this strategic frame, projecting it as a potent tool of statecraft and global engagement. The brilliance of WAVES lies in its refusal to chase uniformity. It understands that the future of M&E is not about amplifying one dominant voice but about curating a chorus of perspectives.

As the world negotiates climate shifts, social transformations, digital disruptions, and identity politics, storytelling must evolve — from monologue to mosaic.

India, with its plurality of languages, genres, and formats, offers a compelling framework for this evolution. WAVES is a celebration of that plurality. It is a staging ground for narratives that are rooted in tradition but responsive to the future — narratives that can travel far, yet stay authentic. In a time where content is everywhere, WAVES is a reminder that context is king.

And in this context, India leads not just as a creator, but as a curator of meaning in a fragmented world. To conclude, one of the key objectives of the summit is to have global M&E leaders invest in India.

A lot of hard work and thought has gone into WAVES and officials are upbeat about its success. Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, I&B Ministry, said WAVES would be the first-ever global summit covering the entire gamut of the M&E industry.

The most promising aspect of WAVES is the interest it has generated across the globe. The international outreach of the summit is evident by a line-up that boasts Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen, YouTube CEO Neal Mohan, Instagram Head Adam Mosseri, Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos, marketing agency WPP's CEO Mark Read, Spotify's Chief Public Affairs Officer Dustee Jenkins, and NVIDIA's Vice President Richard Karris — all of them will be part of the programming roster.

The Ministry hopes that the summit will promote India as a "one-stop destination" for content creation, drive the country's creative economy through intellectual property creation and develop its M&E infrastructure, as also build the industry's capacity to create a skilled workforce for global needs.

(The writer is a former civil servant and writes on cinema and strategic communication. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavie Srinivasan. Views are personal)

Why a new linguistic survey is crucial for cooperative India

A comprehensive linguistic survey is not just about collecting data; it is a transformative step toward building inclusive cooperative frameworks that truly reflect the voices of every Indian

In the land where the echoes of countless languages have woven a timeless cultural tapestry, India stands as a testament to resilience and diversity. Our linguistic heritage has not only shaped our folklore and traditions but also nurtured the roots of cooperative living.

From the ancient guilds of traders and craftsmen to the community — driven farming practices of our villages, collaboration has always been the essence of our economic framework. However, as we move towards the ambitious goal of Viksit Bharat @2047, it is alarming that we are yet to fully understand the linguistic landscape that underpins the cooperative spirit of this nation.

A comprehensive linguistic survey is not a luxury — it is a necessity. It is the compass that will guide policymakers to ensure that cooperative reforms are inclusive and effective.

Without accurate data on the languages spoken across regions, our policy interventions remain shallow, and our efforts to strengthen the cooperative economic framework risk becoming fragmented.

The Government's vision of the PACS-to-APEX approach — empowering primary agricultural credit societies to function cohesively with apex institutions — cannot materialise without understanding the linguistic and cultural nuances of local communities. Physiological density data and linguistic insights will ensure that financial services, credit schemes, and agricultural innovations reach the last mile.

Ironically, the most extensive linguistic survey of India was conducted not for the welfare of its people but for colonial administrative control.

The Linguistic Survey of India, initiated by Sir George Grierson during the British era between 1898 and 1928, documented Indian languages primarily to serve the colonial interest of consolidating power. The British viewed linguistic diversity as a tool to deepen divisions and enforce policies of divide and rule.

This colonial baggage still weighs heavily on our administrative systems. Despite over seven decades of independence, we have done little to refine or update this foundational linguistic knowledge.

Adding to this disparity is the fact that, while the private sector has astutely recognised the importance of linguistic insights, development practitioners and policymakers often lag. Rural marketing practitioners in corporate houses possess extensive data on regional languages, dialects, and consumer behaviour.

Using this intelligence, they successfully penetrate rural markets, build brand loyalty, and tailor communication strategies that resonate with



BINOD ANAND

local communities.

In stark contrast, Government initiatives aimed at development and economic upliftment continue to operate with outdated linguistic data or delegate language considerations entirely to state Governments.

The result is a fragmented approach that fails to execute cooperative economic frameworks effectively. Consider this: a rural marketing executive knows

precisely how to communicate with farmers in their dialect to sell fertilisers or machinery, but a Government financial literacy campaign in the same village may miss its mark simply because it

is not available in the local language. This gap in understanding not only undermines the potential of Government schemes like PM-KISAN and FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations) but also impedes the inclusive growth of cooperatives.

By conducting a fresh linguistic survey, policymakers can bridge this knowledge gap, making public-sector interventions as impactful and relatable as their private-sector counterparts.

A renewed linguistic survey will empower cooperatives to function as truly participatory institutions. It will facilitate the creation of multilingual financial literacy programmes, region — specific agricultural advisories, and cooperative training modules.

Further, the promotion of Indigenous languages will encourage knowledge sharing of traditional farming techniques, watershed

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AIMED AT DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT CONTINUE TO OPERATE WITH OUTDATED LINGUISTIC DATA OR DELEGATE LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS ENTIRELY TO STATE GOVERNMENTS

management practices, and sustainable agriculture. With more accurate linguistic and physiological density data, policymakers can design hyper-localised interventions that cater to each region's unique challenges.

Moreover, respecting linguistic diversity fosters social cohesion and national unity.

By acknowledging and celebrating our people's rich linguistic heritage, we send a powerful message that every voice matters. The cooperative economic framework, founded on the principles of collective growth and mutual benefit, can only thrive when communication barriers are dismantled.

To achieve Viksit Bharat @2047, we must acknowledge that economic empowerment is incomplete without linguistic inclusion. Every cooperative, from the grassroots PACS to the apex-level institutions, must reflect the diverse voices of its members.

It is time for policymakers to embrace the richness of India's linguistic heritage and weave it into the fabric of cooperative governance. Only then can we build an equitable economic framework that uplifts every community, leaving no one behind. The call for a linguistic survey is not just a call for data — it is a call to honour the soul of our nation.

To realise the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, India must prioritise linguistic inclusion as a cornerstone of cooperative growth. Our diverse languages are more than cultural artefacts — they are vital tools for empowerment, communication, and social cohesion.

Without updated and comprehensive linguistic data, policy interventions risk alienating the very communities they aim to support.

A new linguistic survey will bridge the gap between Government initiatives and grassroots realities, enabling cooperatives to function with greater participation, relevance, and impact.

It will foster multilingual literacy programmes, amplify Indigenous knowledge systems, and ensure that no voice is left unheard. As private enterprises leverage language to drive market success, so too must policymakers harness it for national development.

Recognising the role of language is not merely about effective governance — it is about honouring India's pluralism and building an inclusive, equitable economy. The time to act is now; the call for a linguistic survey is a call to unify and uplift.

(The writer is member of the PM MSP Committee and Agricultural Reforms. Views are personal)

Death toll in Iran port explosion reaches 46

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

The death toll from a huge explosion that rocked one of Iran's main ports rose Monday to 46 people killed, authorities said.

Iranian State television offered the toll from the blast at Shahid Rajaei port near Bandar Abbas, citing local officials.

A fire still burned at the site, some two days after the initial explosion Saturday, just as Iran began a third round of negotiations with the United States over its rapidly advancing nuclear program. Over 1,000 people suffered injuries in the blast.

Authorities still haven't offered an explanation for the explosion.

Private security firm Ambrey says the port received missile fuel chemical in March. It was 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 Iranian military denied receiving the chemical shipment. Social media footage of the explosion saw reddish-hued

smoke rising from the fire just before the detonation.

That suggests a chemical compound being involved in the blast, like in the 2020 Beirut port explosion.

New York protests against the Pahalgam attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New York

Members of the Indian diaspora gathered outside the Pakistan Consulate and at Times Square here to protest against the Pahalgam terror attacks.

The protestors waved the Indian tricolour and held banners that read 'Declare Islamic Republic of Pakistan a Terrorist State — Pahalgam Hindu massacre'.

They also held a long banner that had the photos of the 26 victims of the terror attack, with the caption 'CNN, NBC, NYT, WAPO, UN - Please share their names, show their faces' along with the hashtag 'Hindu Lives Matter', 'End Terrorism Now', 'Islamic Terror - End Today', 'Enough is Enough'.

The protests were held on April 27 and an interfaith-vigil against Jihadist terror was also held outside the Pakistani Consulate in New York, where members from diaspora communities waved the Indian and Israeli flags, jointly condemning terrorism and calling on the world to send a strong message to collectively combat terrorism.

A Hindu priest chanted prayers of peace for the victims of the attack and community members at the vigil held a one minute silence to pay their respects

to those killed and injured in the Pahalgam attack.

In a post on X The Consulate General of India shared the photos from the protest and said "Condolences and Protest at Times Square, NY."

The protestors waved the Indian tricolour and held banners that read 'Declare Islamic Republic of Pakistan a Terrorist State - Pahalgam Hindu massacre'

"A large number of Indian community members and friends of India gathered at Times Square to express their deep sorrow and condemnation over the terrorist attack in Pahalgam. The gathering paid tribute to the victims, and extended condolences to their families," the post said.

In another post, the Indian Consulate said "The Dawoodi Bohra community in Queens, New York, held a heartfelt prayer meeting in solidarity with the victims of the tragic Pahalgam Terror Attack in Jammu and Kashmir."

The April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam killed 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen. The victims were mostly tourists from

all across India. Following the terror attack, India highlighted "the cross-border linkages of the terrorist attack" and announced a slew of measures including putting the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 in "abeyance with immediate effect", until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India will identify, track and punish every terrorist, their handlers and their backers.

"We will pursue them to the ends of the earth. India's spirit will never be broken by terrorism. Terrorism will not go unpunished," he said.

Messages of solidarity and support for India continued to flow from global leaders.

FBI Director Kash Patel said in a post on X that the agency sends its condolences to all the victims of the recent terrorist attack in Kashmir — and will continue offering our full support to the Indian Government.

"This is a reminder of the constant threats our world faces from the evils of terrorism. Pray for those affected."

"Thank you to the men and women of law enforcement who answer the call in moments like these," FBI Director Kash Patel said.

US airstrike kills 68 African migrants: Houthi rebels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

Yemen's Houthi rebels on Monday alleged a US airstrike hit a prison holding African migrants, killing at least 68 people and wounding 47 others. The US military had no immediate comment. The strike in Yemen's Saada governorate, a stronghold for the Houthis, is the latest incident in the country's decade-long war to kill African migrants from Ethiopia and other nations who risk crossing the nation for a chance to work in neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

It also likely will renew questions from activists about the American campaign, known as "Operation Rough Rider," which has been targeting the rebels as the Trump administration negotiates with their main benefactor, Iran, over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program.

The US military's Central Command, in a statement early Monday before news of the alleged strike broke, sought to defend its policy of offering no specific details of its extensive airstrike campaign. The strikes have drawn controversy in America over Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's use of the unclassified Signal messaging app to post sensitive details about the attacks.

"To preserve operational security, we have intentionally limited disclosing details of our ongoing or future operations," Central Command said. "We are very deliberate in our operational approach, but will not reveal specifics about what we've done or what we will do."

It did not immediately respond to questions from The Associated Press about the alleged strike in Saada.

Graphic footage aired by the Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel showed what appeared to be dead bodies and others wounded at the site. The Houthi-run Interior Ministry said some 115 migrants had been detained at the site. The rebels' Civil Defense organisation said at least 68 people had been killed and 47 others wounded in the attack.

Footage from the site analysed by the AP suggested some kind of explosion took place there, with its cement walls seemingly peppered by debris fragments and the wounds suffered by those there.

A woman's voice, soft in the footage, can be heard repeating the start of a prayer in Arabic: "In the name of God." An occasional gunshot rang out as medics sought to help those wounded.

Ethiopians and other African migrants for years have landed in Yemen, braving the war-torn nation to try and reach Saudi Arabia for work. The Houthi rebels allegedly make tens of thousands of dollars a week smuggling migrants over the border. Migrants from Ethiopia have found themselves detained, abused and even killed in Saudi Arabia and Yemen during the war. An Oct. 3, 2022, letter to the kingdom from the UN said its investigators "received concerning allegations of cross-border artillery shelling and small arms fire allegedly by Saudi security forces, causing the deaths of up to 430

and injuring 650 migrants." Monday's alleged strike recalled a similar strike by a Saudi-led coalition battling the Houthis back in 2022 on the same compound, which caused a collapse killing 66 detainees and wounding 113 others, a United Nations report later said.

The Houthis shot dead 16 detainees who fled after the strike and wounded another 50, the UN said. The Saudi-led coalition sought to justify the strike by saying the Houthis built and launched drones there, but the UN said it was known to be a detention facility.

"The coalition should have avoided any attack on that facility," the UN report added. That 2022 attack was one of the deadliest single attacks in the years-long war between the coalition and the Houthi rebels and came after the Houthis struck inside the UAE twice with missiles and drones, killing three in a strike near Abu Dhabi's international airport.

Meanwhile, US airstrikes overnight targeting Yemen's capital killed at least eight people, the Houthis said. The American military acknowledged carrying out over 800 individual strikes in their monthlong campaign. The overnight statement from Central Command also said "Operation Rough Rider" had "killed hundreds of Houthi fighters and numerous Houthi leaders," including those associated with its missile and drone program. It did not identify any of those officials. "Iran undoubtedly continues to provide support to the Houthis," the statement said.

"The Houthis can only continue to attack our forces with the backing of the Iranian regime." "We will continue to ratchet up the pressure until the objective is met, which remains the restoration of freedom of navigation and American deterrence in the region," it added.

The US is targeting the Houthis because of the group's attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, a crucial global trade route, and on Israel. The Houthis are also the last militant group in Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" that is capable of regularly attacking Israel.

The US is conducting strikes on Yemen from its two aircraft carriers in the region - the USS Harry S. Truman in the Red Sea and the USS Carl Vinson in the Arabian Sea. On April 18, an American strike on the Ras Isa fuel port killed at least 74 people and wounded 171 others in the deadliest-known attack of the American campaign. Central Command on Monday offered an explanation for why it hit the port. "US strikes destroyed the ability of Ras Isa Port to accept fuel, which will begin to impact Houthi ability to not only conduct operations, but also to generate millions of dollars in revenue for their terror activities," it said.

Meanwhile, the Houthis have increasingly sought to control the flow of information from the territory they hold to the outside world. It issued a notice Sunday that all those holding Starlink satellite internet receivers should "quickly hand over" the devices to authorities.

Singapore: condolences offered to victims of Pahalgam attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Singapore

Condolences were offered on Monday at the inaugural India-Singapore Futures Forum to the families of the 26 people killed by terrorists in Kashmir's Pahalgam.

India's High Commissioner to Singapore Dr Shilpak Ambule informed forum delegates of the "unfortunate and tragic" manner of the killings by terrorists last Tuesday.

"The manner of killing by identifying the religion (of the victims) was something unprecedented," said the envoy.

Joining Ambule in condemning the attack, keynote speaker and Singapore Ambassador at Large Professor Tommy Koh said, "Singapore stands with India in fighting the scourge of terrorism." Last week, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said, "Singapore strongly condemns the terror attacks in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on Apr 22, 2025, which have claimed many lives."

In his keynote, Professor Koh highlighted the strength of Singapore-India bilateral relations. He also noted a messy transition globally, moving away from free trade and open economics and shifting towards protectionism and economic nationalism.

"Global cooperation is giving way to growing competition and distrust," he said.

"In the face of such upheavals and chal-

lenges, we need like-minded and trusted friends such as India and Singapore. Together, we will seek shelter from the storms ahead and seek opportunities in the midst of adversity," Prof Koh told the forum, pointing to the high level of comfort and mutual trust between the leaders of the two countries.

High Commissioner Ambule also spoke about the growing bilateral relations and the process of expanding cooperation into new areas including advanced technologies and manufacturing.

Meanwhile, forum speakers discussed and addressed opportunities and challenges in four critical areas between the two countries. They discussed artificial intelligence, semiconductors, fintech and space. In 2024, India and Singapore signed a memorandum of understanding on Digital Technologies which provides a comprehensive blueprint for joint AI development, emphasising ethical governance, talent exchange and scalable solutions for global challenges.

"India's vast data resources, technical talent pool and thriving startup ecosystem align seamlessly with Singapore's strengths in governance frameworks, research infrastructure and global market connectivity," said Prof Iqbal Singh Sevak, director of the Institute of South Asian Studies, a think-tank at the National University of Singapore which organised the inaugural forum.

Minister Piyush Goyal arrives in London to begin UK, tour



Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal

FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal arrived in London on Monday morning at the start of a five-day three-city tour, also covering Oslo and Brussels, to drive forward trade and investment dialogues with the UK and Europe.

The minister, who is accompanied by a business delegation of leading Indian companies, is expected to hold a series of high-level talks with UK Government ministers and officials. During a meeting with his UK counterpart, Jonathan Reynolds, the duo are scheduled to take stock of the ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, believed to be approaching their final stages.

"This Government is committed to doing the right deal with India which will improve access for UK businesses, cut tariffs, and make trade cheaper and easier," a UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT) spokesperson said ahead of the ministerial meeting.

"Talks have been ongoing since they were relaunched in February, and we will only sign a deal that is in the best interests of the British people and drives growth across the UK," the spokesperson

said. The relaunch of the negotiations, following a hiatus for general elections in both countries last year, is aimed at clinching an agreement that is expected to significantly enhance the estimated GBP 41 billion a year India-UK trade partnership.

Goyal's visit comes soon after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's London visit earlier this month, when she had highlighted a "great sense of positivity and also eagerness and a dedication" to have the FTA conclude "sooner rather than later". According to officials close to the discussions, the talks have been progressing at speed with some of the remaining issues expected to be ironed out at the ministerial level.

From the UK, Goyal is scheduled to leave for Oslo where he is expected to review progress of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) signed with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members which include Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland besides Norway.

For the final leg of his Europe tour, the minister is scheduled for meetings in Brussels, expected to revolve around ongoing trade negotiations with the 27-member EU.

China calls for 'swift and fair investigation' into Pahalgam attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Beijing

China has called for a "swift and fair investigation" into the Pahalgam terror attack and expressed support for its all-weather ally Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty and security interests amid Islamabad's rising tensions with India. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Sunday held a telephonic conversation with Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, State-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Dar briefed Wang — also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee — on the latest tensions between Pakistan and India "following a terrorist attack in the Kashmir region," it said in the report.

For his part, Wang said China was closely following the developments, stressing

that combating terrorism was a shared responsibility of the entire world while reaffirming Beijing's consistent support for Pakistan's firm counterterrorism efforts, it added.

"As an ironclad friend and an all-weather strategic cooperative partner, China fully understands Pakistan's legitimate security concerns and supports Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty and security interests," the report quoted Wang as saying.

"China advocates for a swift and fair investigation and believes that conflict does not serve the fundamental interests of either India or Pakistan, nor does it benefit regional peace and stability," Wang noted.

China hopes both sides will remain restrained, move toward each other, and work together to de-escalate the situation,

he added. Dar emphasised that Pakistan had consistently and firmly fought terrorism and was against any actions that could lead to an escalation of the situation, according to the report.

Pakistan is committed to managing the situation in a mature manner and will maintain communication with China and the international community, Dar said, the news agency reported.

On April 23, China "strongly condemned" the brutal terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

"We strongly condemn the attack. China firmly opposes all forms of terrorism," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun had told a media briefing. "We mourn for the lives lost and express sincere sympathies to the bereaved families and the injured," he had said.

Rare exposition of sacred Buddha tooth relic ends

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Colombo

The rare exposition of the sacred tooth relic of Lord Buddha has been concluded in Sri Lanka's central town of Kandy, according to an official statement. The exposition began on April 18 and concluded on Sunday.

The chief monks, in a joint statement, said the exposition was the largest gathering in a single place in the entire history of the island.

The tooth relic holds special spiritual, historical and cultural significance for the 74 per cent Sinhala Buddhist majority in the island nation of 21 million people.

Hundreds of thousands of Buddhist devotees attended the 10-day exposition, the first since 2009.

The organisers had planned the event for nearly 2 million devotees, however, the officials believed only a less than half of that number attended as the authorities stopped the entry when it seemed they were going out of control in providing basic sanitary facilities for such a large turnout.

"We are so pleased that it has come to an end. But we are left with the bigger task of removing various temporary structures



put up in the town," Indika Kumari, the Municipal Commissioner of Kandy, told reporters.

She said the cleaning operations commenced last night itself.

"We are currently in the process of segmenting the garbage.

Non-perishable garbage is estimated to be about 10 tonnes. We believe that 300 tonnes of rubbish have been piled up," Kumari said.

The exposition came at the request of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake. The Opposition charged that it was a political move by Dissanayake to gain support from the Buddhist majority in the local council election scheduled for May 6.

According to historical records, the tooth relic, which came to Kandy in 1590, came to symbolise Buddhist holiness, becoming Sri Lanka's most treasured possession and the seal of sovereignty.

Seven killed, Nine injured in bomb blast in northwest Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Peshawar

At least seven people were killed and nine injured on Monday after a powerful bomb blast ripped through the office of a peace committee in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said.

The bomb blast occurred at the office of a local peace committee in Wana, headquarters of South Waziristan district, police said. According to hospital administration, 16 injured people were brought to the hospital after the explosion, of which seven succumbed to their injuries.

So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the blast.

The police stated that the explosion was so severe that it destroyed the building of the peace committee's office, trapping several people under the debris.

Rescue teams and locals reached the site upon receiving the information and started an operation to retrieve the injured from the rubble.

The injured were transferred to a nearby hospital, where they are receiving treatment.

The bomb blast occurred at the office of a local peace committee in Wana, headquarters of South Waziristan district

According to the hospital administration, some of those injured are reportedly critical.

So far, no official statement has been released about the nature or motives behind the explosion.

However, police and security agencies have cordoned off the area and launched an investigation.

Officials have said that evidence is being collected from the scene and different aspects are being examined to trace those responsible for the blast.

India to be competitive on many products: Scindia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The current global tariff environment notwithstanding, India is expected to stay competitive due to its vast domestic market, scale advantages, and focus on innovation, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has said, asserting that seen even from the lens of a comparative matrix of tariffs vis-a-vis other nations, India holds a more favourable position.

In a recent interview to media, Scindia — who is the Minister for Communications as well as Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) — noted that given that other nations too face varying levels of tariffs, India will likely emerge "fiercely and much more competitive" across numerous products than before. The lucrative domestic market has drawn global multinational companies to set up a significant presence here, he said and cited the strong pace of India's economic growth and New Delhi's policy push on manufacturing and innovation.

"So I do believe that irrespective of the prevailing environment of tariffs, India will continue to be competitive because she has economies of scale behind her because innovation comes along with that economies of scale to be able to cater to such a large market. And therefore, even in comparison with other nations, India will remain to be competitive," the minister said.

To a question on how he sees the US tariff situation playing out, the Minister said



that the whole question of tariffs has to be seen from a comparative matrix point of view. "So if you're a country that I used to compete with and the tariffs that have been put on you are possibly today double of what mine are. Where I used to be uncompetitive vis-a-vis you, I now become competitive. So, I think it is important to look at it not only from purely India-centric point of view but from a comparative matrix point of view," Scindia said.

The Minister expressed confidence that for many products in many areas, India will emerge fiercely and much more competitive than prior to the tariffs being in place. India has transformed itself from an

infrastructure standpoint, and from an exporting nation standpoint as well, he said terming it "a monumental change".

"...You have to understand where we stand as an economy... Today, India stands very tall... We're today going to become the third-largest economy by 2028. We're today at almost a \$4 trillion economy, \$5 trillion by 2028, close to \$6 trillion by 2030," the minister said. From a country that used to import an overwhelming majority of its mobile phone requirement and produced merely 5 crore units, India is producing over 35 to 40 crore mobile phones, today. "Our exports are over ₹1,75,000 crore purely on mobiles," he said.

Bullet train to be operational by 2028: Devendra Fadnavis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

The \$15 billion Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project being built in collaboration with Japan will be operational by 2028, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Monday.

Fadnavis also said the state is looking to raise \$50 billion from international financiers for infrastructure development in the state, and announcements for the same will be done in four months.

Without naming Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray, Fadnavis said the bullet train project suffered during a two-year rule until 2022, but now the work is on in full swing.

"By 2028, we will be able to travel in the bullet train," Fadnavis said, conceding that neighbouring state Gujarat is ahead of Maharashtra on the project development.

Fadnavis said creating infrastructure is very important to achieve the goal of \$1 trillion GSDP, and that \$30 billion was invested in infrastructure creation during his first stint as the chief minister between 2014-19, and more money is being put into important projects now. Speaking at an event on the India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) project organized by VRF here, he said the Vadnavan port will be operational in the next 3-4 years.

He said the port, being built on reclaimed land, will help reduce the cost of logistics, pointing out that the turnaround time at JNPA, India's largest container port located nearby, is higher.

The Vadnavan port will also have an adjoining airport which will be built through land reclamation on the sea, Fadnavis said, adding that many major cities in the world have such airports.

It will also have a halt for the bullet train, Fadnavis said.

The Chief Minister said Maharashtra is building a highway from Nashik to Vadnavan port which will ensure that 17 districts of the state get connected with the modern port.

Without naming Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray, Fadnavis said the bullet train project suffered during a two-year rule until 2022, but now the work is on in full swing

The state is building the Shaktipeeth highway to connect Nagpur with Goa, Fadnavis said, adding that this road project passing through the backward regions will also help boost the economic growth.

He said Mumbai and Maharashtra will play an important role in the IMEEC, and assured that the state will create the facilitating ecosystem for the project to be a success.

Speaking at the same event, Sanjeev Krishan, the country chairperson of consulting firm PwC said the corridor, when combined with existing trade routes, will have a multiplier effect on the global economy.

'Adding 50-GW renewable energy yearly can end coal imports by 2029'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

If India adds 50 gigawatts of renewable energy every year, it could completely stop importing thermal coal by 2029 and save about \$66 billion in foreign exchange between 2025 and 2029, according to a new report published on Monday. The total savings could be at least \$173 billion from 2025 to 2034, the report prepared by think tank Climate Risks Horizon said.

The climate and energy think tank said the country's electricity sector remains heavily dependent on coal imports, with around 20 per cent or 206 million tonnes of thermal coal imported in 2023-24 at a cost of \$21 billion.

Thermal coal imports have risen by 58 per cent between 2013 and 2023, but the value of these imports has increased by 124 per cent due to volatile global prices and a weakening rupee, it added.

The report said imports surge during the summer months, when cooling demand pushes up electricity consumption. Over the said period (2013 to 2023), India imported around 2,128 million tonnes of coal, mostly thermal coal used for power generation. The import of thermal coal has been increasing steadily at 3.7 per cent annually and has gone up to 40 per cent since 2013. The think tank said India's dependency on imported coal poses both physical and financial risks. Physical risks arise with any disruption in the supply of imported coal, either due to unforeseen political changes or natural disasters.

Attari-Wagah closure likely to hit dry fruit imports from Afghanistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India's imports of dry fruits, including almonds, raisins, dried apricots, and pistachios, from Afghanistan are expected to be impacted due to the closure of the land borders amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack, which is expected to push domestic prices of these commodities, according to exporters.

Following the terror attack in Pahalgam, which killed 26 people, mostly tourists, India took a series of measures, including immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit post, used for movement of certain kinds of goods.

In retaliation, Pakistan also announced that all trade with India, including to and from any third country through Pakistan, is suspended forthwith. This move may affect India's exports to Afghanistan.

The exporters said that Afghanistan is a key exporter of these dry fruits into India. New Delhi also imports these goods from Islamabad. At present, India is trading with Afghanistan via the Attari-Wagah border and Pakistan's suspension of trade will impact domestic exports and imports to Kabul. In 2024-25 (April-January), India's exports to Afghanistan were \$264.15 million, while imports stood at \$591.49 million. Out of this, India's inbound shipments of dry fruits stood at \$358 million.

During this period, India's fruits and nuts import from Pakistan was \$0.08 million. The main goods imported from Afghanistan through the land route included dried figs, asafoetida, saffron, dried apricots, pistachios, and raisins.

Attari is near Amritsar in Punjab. A Delhi-based importer said that the closure of the land route will definitely impact imports of dry fruits from both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"Though immediate there is no impact as goods are in transit, but after ten days the imports will be stopped completely. After that the prices would go up to 20 per cent in the national capital," Rajiv Batra, president, Khari Baoli Traders' Association, said. He added, "We will get the nuts but it would come from countries like UAE, Iran, and Iraq as these would act as an alternate route for Afghan dry fruits".

Sensex jumps 1,006 points, foreign fund inflows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Benchmark BSE Sensex soared by 1,006 points to close above 80,000 level on Monday as a sharp rally in Reliance Industries and private banks, and foreign fund inflows helped stock markets cut short two days of fall amid India-Pakistan border tensions.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,005.84 points or 1.27 per cent to settle at 80,218.37 with 23 of its constituents ending with gains and seven in the red. During the day, it surged 1,109.35 points or 1.40 per cent to 80,321.88. The NSE Nifty rallied 289.15 points or 1.20 per cent to close at 24,328.50. All key sectors, barring IT, participated in the rally, with pharma, energy, and auto emerging as the top gainers. Reliance Industries surged by 5.27 per cent to emerge as the biggest gainer among Sensex stocks.

The oil-to-retail behemoth reported a 2.4 per cent rise in March quarter net profit beating street estimates. Mahindra & Mahindra spurted 2.29 per cent after the auto major announced a ₹555-crore acquisition of SML Isuzu and said that the buying was a strong strategic fit for the company that would put it in a strong position. SML Isuzu Ltd shares, on the other hand, tanked 10 per cent. Sun Pharma, Tata Steel, State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro and ICICI Bank were also among the Sensex gainers.

HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement, Nestle

and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,952.33 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Foreign investors have infused Rs 17,425 crore in the country's equity markets last week, supported by a combination of favourable global cues and strong domestic macroeconomic fundamentals. This came following a net investment of ₹8,500 crore in the preceding holiday-truncated week ended April 18.

"The domestic market recouped from the losses incurred during the last two days of the previous week, which stemmed from the border tensions. "While sustained buying from FIIs and better results from RIL also boosted the investor sentiment. A weakening dollar and inflationary pressure in the US may attract FIIs into the domestic market," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. The BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.34 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.39 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, energy jumped 3.02 per cent, oil & gas (2.90 per cent), capital goods (1.93 per cent), healthcare (1.60 per cent), metal (1.59 per cent), bankex (1.53 per cent) and realty (1.41 per cent).

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi index and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 settled in the positive territory while Shanghai SSE Composite and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower.

New study finds Apple App Store in India facilitated ₹44,447 crore in 2024

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Apple on Monday released a new study saying that the App Store ecosystem in India facilitated ₹44,447 crore (\$5.31 billion) in developer billings and sales in 2024. The study — conducted by Professor Viswanath Pingali from the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad — showed that more than 94 per cent of that revenue accrued solely to developers and businesses, without any commission paid to Apple.

The study showed that over the last five years, the global earnings of India-based developers have tripled, highlighting the tremendous business opportunity and global reach the App Store provides.

"The App Store has been an economic miracle for developers in India and all around the world, and we're thrilled to support their work," Tim Cook, Apple's CEO said in a release. This study underlines the power of India's incredibly vibrant app economy, he added.

"And we're committed to keep investing in the success of developers of all sizes as they build apps that make an important impact and enrich people's lives," according to him. The study from Professor Pingali took a close look at the key drivers shaping the App Store ecosystem in India, including increased app usage in sectors like food delivery, travel, gaming, and entertainment. In 2024



alone, it found that App Store developers generated ₹38,906 crore (\$4.65 billion) in total billings and sales from the sale of physical goods and services, ₹3,014 crore (\$352.9 million) from in-app advertising, and ₹2,527 crore (\$302 million) from digital goods and services.

Since its launch more than fifteen years ago, developers have more ways than ever to monetise their apps and build successful businesses on the App Store, resulting in a healthy and dynamic ecosystem. In 2024, developers active in India have been successful across a diverse range of app categories such as games, health, and fit-

ness, lifestyle and utilities, as per the study. The App Store's ecosystem of innovation provides Apple developers around the world with a global distribution platform across 175 storefronts.

In 2024, close to 80 per cent of India-based developers' App Store earnings came from users outside of the country, and 87 per cent of developers were active on multiple storefronts.

Moreover, throughout the same year, users from all over the world downloaded apps from developers in India more than 755 million times through the App Store, twice as many as five years ago.

UP aims to triple exports in five years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh is working on a policy to promote exports and triple the outbound shipment from the state to over ₹ five lakh crore in the next five years by tapping new markets and products.

To achieve the target, the state government is working on a new export policy for 2025-30 which is expected to be approved soon.

The thrust of the new policy would be to increase exports three times by 2030 from ₹1.7 lakh crore in 2023-24 through host of measures including capital subsidy and sops for exporters, UP Minister for Industrial Development and Export

Promotion Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi said.

"We have extensively studied export policies of various governments across the country and have incorporated best practices in the draft policy. Our aim is to increase UP's contribution in the country's overall exports substantially and the proposed policy will be a step in that direction," he said.

The new policy also seeks to provide sops like capital subsidy to investors for developing export infrastructure and proposes setting up a one-stop digital information hub which may provide all relevant information to exporters.

For example, he said, the proposed policy seeks to provide up to ₹10 crore as cap-

ital subsidy to investors to build export infrastructure.

A dedicated export promotion fund will be set up, which will be used for promoting Brand UP at global conferences and will also provide aid of up to ₹5 lakh to exporters towards payment of yearly premium under Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC), he said.

It also plans to increase aid to each exporting unit to ₹ 25 lakh every year as against ₹ 16 lakh in the current policy. The new policy is expected to incentivise exporters by up to ₹ 30 lakh every year towards transport of goods to gateway port.

During 2023-24, UP's share in the country's total export was 4.71 per cent.

IN BRIEF

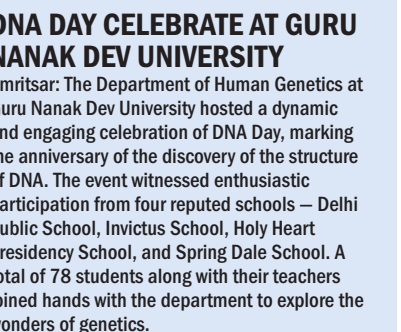
GNDU CELEBRATES EARTH DAY

Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar celebrated Earth Day under the guidance of Vice-Chancellor Professor Karamjeet Singh with great zeal and environmental consciousness. The event was jointly organised by the College Development Council and the NSS unit of GNDU. The Earth Day rally was flagged off by Registrar, KS Chahal, Dean Student Welfare, HS Saini and Saroj Arora, Dean College Development Council.



DNA DAY CELEBRATE AT GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY

Amritsar: The Department of Human Genetics at Guru Nanak Dev University hosted a dynamic and engaging celebration of DNA Day, marking the anniversary of the discovery of the structure of DNA. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from four reputed schools — Delhi Public School, Invictus School, Holy Heart Presidency School, and Spring Dale School. A total of 78 students along with their teachers joined hands with the department to explore the wonders of genetics.



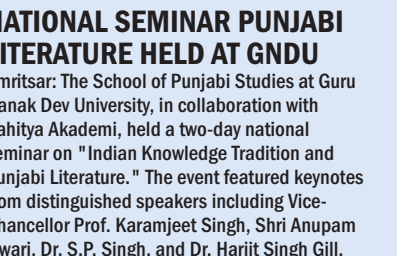
VEDANTA LEVERAGES AI TO TRANSFORM SAFETY

New Delhi: On World Day for Safety and Health at Work, Vedanta reaffirmed its safety commitment, leveraging AI, drones, and smart systems. Innovations like VR training simulators and AI-based monitoring enhance safety. The company also focuses on employee health, with initiatives including wellness programs, mental health support, and community safety training.



NATIONAL SEMINAR PUNJABI LITERATURE HELD AT GNDU

Amritsar: The School of Punjabi Studies at Guru Nanak Dev University, in collaboration with Sahitya Akademi, held a two-day national seminar on "Indian Knowledge Tradition and Punjabi Literature." The event featured keynotes from distinguished speakers including Vice-Chancellor Prof. Karamjeet Singh, Shri Anupam Tiwari, Dr. S.P. Singh, and Dr. Harjit Singh Gill.



Gold declines ₹1,000 to ₹98,400/10 gm amid weak global trend

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Gold prices declined ₹1,000 to ₹98,400 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid weak global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹99,400 per 10 grams on Thursday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated ₹1,000 to ₹97,900 per 10 grams against the previous close of ₹98,900 per 10 grams.

"Gold prices continued to decline as easing US-China trade tensions boosted investors' risk appetite, reducing demand for safe-haven assets like bullion while a stronger dollar added downward pressure on gold," Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta said.

On Friday, China announced it would exempt some US imports from its steep 125 per cent tariffs, though it denied that

any formal trade talks were underway. Meanwhile, the US Federal Reserve officials signalled that they see no immediate need to adjust monetary policy, choosing instead to monitor the economic impact of the Trump administration's tariffs.

This hawkish stance suggests that interest rate cuts may not materialise in the near term, further weighing on gold, which typically loses appeal as a non-yielding asset when interest rates stay elevated. Mehta further said, "Rising geopolitical tensions could limit gold's downside. As war risks escalate and new conflicts emerge, investors are likely to seek refuge in gold."

"With tensions brewing among major powers, and regional strains like the growing friction between India and Pakistan, demand for gold as a safe-haven asset is expected to rise, making it a preferred hedge against market

Gold prices continued to decline as easing US-China trade tensions boosted investors' risk appetite, reducing demand for safe-haven assets like bullion while a stronger dollar added downward pressure on gold

volatility and uncertainty," he added. The local bullion markets were closed on Friday due to traders' protest against the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam.

Additionally, silver prices also plunged ₹1,400 to ₹98,500 per kg on Monday. The white metal had settled at ₹99,900 per kg in the previous session.

On the global front, spot gold fell nearly one per cent to trade at \$3,291.04 per ounce. "Gold traded weak amid the US

opening tariff talks with multiple nations and growing expectations of a possible China-US trade agreement according to US President Donald Trump. Additionally, optimism around a potential Russia-Ukraine peace deal further weighed on safe-haven demand for gold." Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said. Spot silver in the Asian market hours traded 0.2 per cent lower at \$33.05 per ounce.

According to HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saumil Gandhi said this week traders expect the spotlight will be mostly on tariff-related developments.

On the macroeconomic front, US data release such as manufacturing PMI data for April, GDP data, and, most importantly, US non-farm payrolls and unemployment rates will impact the bullion market, Gandhi said.

Liverpool wins Premier League

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Liverpool

A selfie with Mohamed Salah. An impromptu sing-along with Arne Slot. Fireworks and flares. It was party time at Anfield on Sunday as Liverpool sealed the Premier League title in style.

The 5-1 rout of Tottenham was almost a side issue as a record-equaling 20th English league championship was confirmed — matching the achievement of Liverpool's great rival Manchester United.

"Everyone was sitting on the bus saying there is no way we are going to lose the game," said Slot, standing in the middle of the field after being doused in champagne by his players.

Fans had turned up long before kick-off, lining the streets around the stadium in anticipation of a title celebration. And despite going behind to an early goal from Dominic Solanke, Liverpool did not let them down — racing to a 3-1 lead by half-time to effectively ensure there would be no further delay to a title victory that has looked likely for much of the season.

CLUB GREATS

The smell of sulfur filled the air early in the day as red smoke canisters were let off outside the famous stadium that has been home to so many championship-winning Liverpool teams. Flags were hung from nearby houses.

Inside the ground, giant banners floated across the stands, celebrating icons past and present. Slot has joined that list of club greats in only his first season after replacing Jurgen Klopp. He also joins a select group of managers by winning the title in his first year in the Premier League — following Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti, Manuel Pellegrini and Antonio Conte.

He has managed it with plenty to spare, with Liverpool 15 points ahead of second-placed Arsenal with four rounds of the season to go.



TRIBUTE TO KLOPP

Slot is also the first Dutch coach to win the Premier League, which is some feat considering serial trophy winners like Louis van Gaal, Guus Hiddink and Erik ten Hag have all managed in English soccer's top flight.

"It's always special to win something. It's even more special if you're the first one, and even more special at a club where it's not common that you win the league every year," said Slot, who paid tribute to his predecessor by singing Klopp's name to fans after the final whistle.

Klopp had led Liverpool to a full set of trophies in more than eight years in charge, including the Champions League and that long-awaited Premier League. Few could have expected Slot to have such an instant impact in his first year in a new country — halting Manchester City's dominance of English soccer at the first attempt. Slot thanked Liverpool's owners

for their faith in hiring him from Dutch team Feyenoord last year.

City manager Pep Guardiola was quick to congratulate Slot on a "well deserved" victory.

SPECIAL DAY

This was Liverpool's second title in five years, having ended a 30-year wait to be champion in 2020. But this time there was a crucial difference as the triumph was shared with supporters.

Five years ago Liverpool had to finish off the season behind closed doors as the UK Face lockdown restrictions because of the COVID pandemic. Now there was a packed stadium to erupt at the final whistle and watch as the players danced and embraced on field.

Throughout the match a packed Anfield crowd had been in rapturous voice, singing the club's anthem "You'll Never Walk Alone" in the final moments.

It was reprised later as Slot and his players stood facing the famed Kop stand to be serenaded by fans.

Having spent 206 days at the top of the standings, Liverpool only needed one more point to be confirmed champion.

For a brief moment Solanke's 12th-minute header had threatened to spoil the party, but the home team powered back with strikes from Luis Diaz, Alexis Mac Allister and Cody Gakpo before halftime. Salah added another after the break and Destiny Udogie's own-goal rounded off the rout.

In the end, the victory was so comfortable that Salah even had time to pose for a selfie in front of the crowd after scoring his 33rd goal of the season in all competitions.

Rasmus Hojlund scored in added time to salvage a 1-1 draw for Manchester United at Bournemouth in the other Premier League game on Sunday.

Manchester City beats Forest 2-0 to reach FA Cup final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

Even Manchester City's worst season under Pep Guardiola could still end with a trophy.

On the day it was officially deposed as Premier League champion, City reached the FA Cup final for the third year in a row by beating Nottingham Forest 2-0 at Wembley Stadium to maintain a chance of salvaging something from a dismal campaign. City scored early Sunday in each half as Rico Lewis put his team ahead in just the second minute and defender Josko Gvardiol doubled the lead in the 51st with a header from a corner.

Forest hit the woodwork three times after that but could not get a consolation goal in its first FA Cup semifinal since 1991. The win gives Pep Guardiola's team a chance to salvage something from a disappointing campaign where its hopes of a fifth straight Premier League title disappeared early and it failed to even reach the round of 16 in the Champions League.

City will play Crystal Palace in the final on May 17. "Unfortunately, the season has not been as we wanted, but we are still in another FA Cup final," said City midfielder Mateo Kovacic, who set up the opening goal. "So it's good that we want to finish it in a strong way." Liverpool clinched the Premier League title at the same time as City was playing, and even an FA Cup title would be a mere consolation for a club that has dominated English soccer under Guardiola. Even Guardiola made it clear that winning the cup would not make this a successful season.

"Noooo," the Spaniard said emphatically. "The season has not been good. We are a thousand million points behind Liverpool. But of course the damage will be (smaller)." That's currently 21 points behind Liverpool for the record, but City still has work to do just to secure a Champions League spot for next season.

Forest is one of the teams trying to finish above City, meaning there's little time to dwell on this loss.

"Tomorrow we will wake up and see that we have a lot to fight for," Forest manager Nuno Espirito Santo said.

EMPTY SEATS

The jaded feeling among City fans was made evident by the 5,000 or so empty seats at Wembley in the sky blue half but the supporters who did make the trip had reason to celebrate early.

Lewis scored with his team's first chance when he was teed up by Kovacic just outside the area, turned to face the goal and hit a low shot inside the left post.

Forest hardly had a whiff at goal in the first half but had a chance to get right back in the game just after the restart. Halftime substitute Anthony Elanga almost scored with his first touch when Callum Hudson-Odoi picked him out with a low cross into the area, but the Swede put his effort wide.

Instead, City made it 2-0 minutes later. A chaotic sequence where Forest goalkeeper Matz Sels made three saves in quick succession ended in a corner after City had a strong appeal for handball waved away. Any debate about whether it should have been a penalty ended when Gvardiol rose unchallenged to head home the corner from close range.

Morgan Gibbs-White then hit the woodwork twice, first blasting a volley against the crossbar and later hitting the post from a tight angle after he pounced on a poor back pass and rounded goalkeeper Stefan Ortega.

Taiwo Awoniyi also hit the post in the 79th and Ortega kept out Gibbs-White's effort from the rebound as Forest just couldn't find a breakthrough.

"It's devastating. ... I hold my hand up and apologise. I should have scored at least one of them," Gibbs-White said about his chances.



India face Indonesia in BWF Sudirman Cup Final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Xiamen (China)

Faced with a herculean task to trump a formidable Indonesia and stay afloat in the competition, an under-strength India will need its struggling singles stars to deliver the goods in a must-win Group D contest at the BWF Sudirman Cup Finals here on Tuesday.

India's campaign began on a disastrous start on Sunday with a 1-4 defeat to Denmark, a result that put their qualification for the knockout stage in serious jeopardy. With only two teams progressing from Group D, India must secure a win against Indonesia to keep their hopes alive otherwise, their third and final group match against England will be reduced to just a formality.

The poor form of their star singles players — Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, and PV Sindhu has not helped the team.

However, there is some hope for India. Lakshya has defeated Indonesia's top men's singles player Jonatan Christie in their last two encounters — at the Paris Olympics and the All England Championships.

In the women's singles, with Indonesia's top player Gregoria Mariska Tunjung pulling out, Sindhu will face world No. 11 Putri Kusuma Wardani, a player she has beaten twice before.

Despite this, Indonesia boast a strong contingent of doubles players, including Fajar Alfian, Muhammad Rian Ardianto, Leo Rolly Carnando, Muhammad Shohibul Fikri, and Daniel Marthin — all

ranked among the world's top 10.

With India's top men's doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty absent, the inexperienced pairing of Hariharan Amsakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi will face an uphill battle in what is likely to be a tough contest.

In the women's doubles, Febriana Dwiwijanti Kusuma and Amalia Cahaya Pratiwi are ranked world No. 8, and without Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, Tanisha Crasto and Shruti Mishra will be hoping to build on their encouraging performance against Denmark, which was the lone bright spot for India in their opening match.

In the mixed doubles, India's Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha will face the challenge of overcoming world No. 21 Rinov Rivaldy and Pitha Haningtyas Mentari of Indonesia.

Back in February, India had suffered a setback at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship, where they were eliminated in the quarterfinals in Qingdao, despite fielding a strong squad and they would like to avoid a league stage exit here.

India's best-ever performance at the Sudirman Cup has been two quarterfinal finishes: in 2011 and 2017.

While India has made significant progress in recent years — highlighted by their historic Thomas Cup win in 2022 and the Badminton Asia Women's Team Championships title in 2024 — the absence of key doubles pairs has dampened their prospects in the ongoing Sudirman Cup.

Marseille beat Brest 4-1 to reclaim second place in Ligue 1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Paris

Amine Gouiri scored with a stunning overhead kick on his way to a hat trick as Marseille beat Brest 4-1 to reclaim second place in Ligue 1, strengthening its chances of qualifying automatically for next season's Champions League.

Marseille is two points ahead of third-placed Lille and three ahead of fourth-placed Monaco with three games left.

Lyon, Nice and Strasbourg are one point behind Monaco and separated on goal difference in what promises to be a hectic race to the line for a place in Europe's elite club competition. Paris Saint-Germain had already clinched a record-extending 13th Ligue 1 crown. The top three sides in France qualify automatically for the Champions League, with the side finishing fourth entering qualifying.

Gouiri has earned a reputation as one of the most skillful yet inconsistent forwards in French soccer but he is changing that this season with a highlight-reel collection of goals.

After he put Marseille ahead in the eighth minute with a fine angled drive from the right of the penalty area, sloppy defending allowed Brest striker Abdallah Sima to equalise in the 26th.

Marseille regained the lead in the 37th when club top scorer Mason Greenwood's deflected strike wrong-footed the goalkeeper. Then came Gouiri's wonder goal just before halftime.

Marseille regained the lead in the 37 minute, when club top scorer Mason Greenwood's deflected strike wrong-footed the goalkeeper

He positioned himself near the penalty spot to control Greenwood's cross from the right on his chest, and then shifted his body to score with an overhead shot with his right foot.

Two months ago Marseille coach Roberto De Zerbi said the 25-year-old Gouiri has the potential to become one

of the best strikers in Europe, after he scored two outstanding goals when Marseille routed Saint-Etienne 5-1.

Gouiri completed his hat trick against Brest in the 63rd, beating the offside trap to latch onto France midfielder Adrien Rabiot's pass and calmly slotting the ball into the bottom corner.

Gouiri, who joined from Rennes for 22 million euros (\$23 million) in the January transfer window, received an ovation at Stade Velodrome when he was taken off after his third goal.

LILLE GAINS MOMENTUM

Earlier Sunday, Lille kept up its push for an automatic spot with a 2-0 win at Angers for its third straight victory.

Brazilian defender Alessandro put Lille ahead in first-half stoppage time when he headed in Hakon Haraldsson's free kick from the right.

Haraldsson doubled Lille's lead shortly after halftime when he was set up by striker Chuba Akpom.

Monaco dropped points on Saturday following a 1-1 draw at lowly Le Havre,

while Lyon, Nice and Strasbourg all won their games.

NANTES CLOSER TO SAFETY

Nantes picked up a useful point in its fight to avoid relegation following a 0-0 draw with Toulouse.

Toulouse held on despite having French striker Noah Edjouma sent off late in the first half and avoided a sixth straight loss. But Nantes striker Mostafa Mohamed fluffed a golden chance from three meters out midway through the second half.

Nantes is in 14th place and four points clear of Le Havre in 16th and the relegation-promotion playoff spot.

OTHER MATCHES

Rock-bottom Montpellier was already relegated on Saturday because of Le Havre's draw but at least stopped a 12th consecutive defeat with a 0-0 home draw with Reims. Also, midtable Auxerre romped to a 4-0 win at Lens with two goals from striker Ado Onaiwu and one each from forward Gaëtan Perrin and Dutch defender Ki-Jana Hoever.

Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr dominating in Asian Champions League Elite

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jeddah

Big-spending Saudi clubs including Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr are dominating the Asian Champions League Elite, accounting for all but one of the semifinalists in action this week.

In three quarterfinals played on the weekend, the three Saudi Pro League teams won with a combined scoreline of 14-1. At least one is guaranteed a place in the final on May 3 as four-time champion Al-Hilal meets two-time finalist Al-Ahli in the first of the two semis at Jeddah.

On Wednesday, Al-Nassr takes on Japan's Kawasaki Frontale, the only non-Saudi club still in contention for the continental title. Kawasaki edged 2011 champion Al Sadd of Qatar 3-2 after extra time on Sunday to advance to the semifinals for the first time.

With all playoff games taking place in Jeddah, there is home advantage and big crowds supporting the three domestic clubs that are laden with high-profile

international stars. In the summer transfer window of 2023, Saudi clubs spent almost \$1 billion and it's making a difference in Asian competition.

Al-Nassr thumped last season's runner-up Yokohama F.Marinos of Japan 4-1 on Saturday, with goals coming from Ronaldo, former Liverpool star Sadio Mane and two from Jhon Duran, who signed from Premier League club Aston Villa in January in a deal reportedly worth more than \$80 million.

"When you come here, the teams are playing Premier League-level football," Yokohama's interim coach Patrick Kisnorbo said. "I don't think it's a technical issue but sometimes these things happen. We have to move forward."

The journey to Jeddah was also a punishing one for teams in the middle of domestic seasons in East Asia.

"Our local league is our priority," Buriram United coach Osmar Loss said after his Thai club lost 3-0 to Al-Ahli on Saturday. "It's a long trip to Jeddah and

back and I needed to protect our main players." In the most lopsided of the quarterfinals, South Korean club Gwangju FC, making its first appearance in the tournament, was thrashed 7-0 by Al-Hilal on Friday.

Al-Hilal now faces Jeddah club Al-Ahli on Tuesday in a bid to reach its 10th title match in the Asian competition. Al-Ahli, fourth in the domestic league, had a 3-2 win over Al-Hilal in February with all three goals scored by England striker Ivan Toney. With other former Premier League stars such as Riyad Mahrez and Roberto Firmino in the scoresheet against Buriram United, coach Matthias Jaissle believes Al-Ahli is well placed to advance to a third final and then to capture a first title.

"I congratulated the players for making it to the semifinals but from now on, they have to focus on what's best — rehabilitate, rest, and get back to the best physical level to perform against Al Hilal," Jaissle said.

Scott McTominay two goals helps Napoli defeat Torino 2-0 in Serie A

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Rome

There are still streamers and banners hanging over the city's streets and piazzas celebrating Napoli's Serie A title two seasons ago.

Now there might be another championship to celebrate.

Scott McTominay scored two first-half goals and Napoli beat Torino 2-0 on Sunday to move three points clear of Inter Milan with four rounds remaining in the Italian league.

Inter lost 1-0 at home to Roma earlier for its third consecutive defeat.

Despite losing Victor Osimhen in September and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia in January, Napoli is in position to claim its second title in three seasons. That's a shorter span than the two championships in

four seasons with Diego Maradona in 1987 and 1990. McTominay has scored five goals in three matches.

"Obviously we're now leading the race. But for us it's keep calm, keep everything relaxed and go game by game, because this game's not important unless we win the next one and the next one after that," McTominay said. "So for us it's calm and see where that gets us."

The Scotland international put Napoli ahead seven minutes in at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona after redirecting a pass from Andre-Frank Anguissa. Then he doubled the advantage shortly before halftime with a similar goal, redirecting a cross amid four defenders.

With 11 league goals, McTominay set the record for a Scottish player in Serie A, overtaking Denis Law, who had 10 with



Torino in 1961-62.

Philip Billing nearly made it 3-0 for Napoli when his header hit the crossbar in the second half.

Napoli hadn't had sole possession of the lead since February.

INTER MISSING THURAM

Marcus Thuram has missed three matches and Inter has lost all three without scoring a single goal.

Roma's attacking midfielder Matias Soule scored midway through the first half in Milan by redirecting a deflection as the Giallorossi produced one chance after another.

For Inter, the defeat followed a 1-0 loss at Bologna in the league a week ago and a 3-0 midweek loss to AC Milan in an Italian Cup semifinal derby.

Theegala, Rai finish 18th in Zurich Classic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Avondale

Indian-origin golfers Sahithi Theegala and Aaron Rai finished a creditable tied 18th after turning in one-under 71 in the final round of the Zurich Classic here.

The pair signed off with a total of 21-under 267 as old friends Andrew Novak and Ben Griffin combined to win the title, which was the first PGA Tour win for both. They totalled 28-under 260. Danish identical twins, Nicolai and Rasmus Hojgaard, narrowly missed out their first PGA Tour win and finished second just a stroke adrift after carding 68 in the final round.

The tournament featured 80 teams of two which faced off over four rounds played in four-ball and foursome format alternately. Defending champion team of Masters winner Rory McIlroy and fellow Irishman Shane Lowry was in contention through 12 holes but ultimately scored even-par 72 in the final round to aggregate 22-under and finish tied 12th.

Theegala, who has been having a modest season, and Rai had two birdies against a bogey in the final round. Theegala, who is now being sponsored by the Hero group, has played 13 events and made the cut in 12. However, he has finished in the top-25 only twice.

In the world rankings, another Indian-American Akshay Bhatia was placed 26th, followed by Rai (27th) and Theegala (28th) at the beginning of the week ahead of Zurich Classic.

In terms of FedEx Cup rankings, Bhatia is 30th and Rai is 42nd and Theegala is lying 95th with a good part of the season, including three Majors, still ahead of them.

Griffin drained a clutch birdie putt from nearly 35 feet on the 17th hole, and the tandem combined for a one-under 71 in alternate-shot play Sunday to become first-time PGA TOUR winners.

IPL: Delhi Capitals eye comeback against KKR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Delhi Capitals (DC) would aim for an improved batting effort in the middle overs when they face a struggling Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in their Indian Premier League match here on Tuesday.

DC have suffered two defeats in their last four matches, including a loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Sunday, and will look to avoid any hiccups at the business end of the tournament.

Abhishek Porel has batted with plenty of aggressive intent at the top of the order but veteran Faf du Plessis will quickly need to get used to the slow nature of surface at Kotla after struggling in his comeback game. KL Rahul has been DC's leading run-getter this season but could not accelerate against the spinners on Sunday night. He would back himself to take on the likes of Sunil Narine and Varun Chakaravathy.

With quality spinners in their ranks, KKR could pose a stiff challenge for the home. The Ajinkya Rahane led-side is slightly low on confidence after a tough outing against Punjab Kings in a rain-hit match.

A solid innings is expected from Karun Nair to ensure Rahul isn't left to shoulder the burden alone in the middle-order.

In the bowling department, DC skipper Axar Patel led from the front with two wickets but found little support from others. Star pacer Mitchell Starc, who went wicketless against RCB, will look to exploit the weaknesses in his former team, while Kuldeep Yadav, with his deceptive googlies, remains a threat in the middle overs.

DC's fielding has also left much to be desired against RCB, with Porel dropping a crucial catch of Krunal Pandya on Sunday night.

KKR, meanwhile, have managed just seven points so far and are placed seventh in the standings, having failed to collect any



points from their last three matches, including two losses and a no-result.

Rahane will be desperate to arrest the slide and keep their playoff hopes alive, with another defeat making the task tougher. Issues have cropped up across departments for KKR.

Their batting lacks a settled look, with Quinton de Kock and Rahmanullah Gurbaz being rotated in the opening slot alongside Narine, while the side has relied heavily on Rahane and youngster Angkrish Raghuvanshi to score runs. The middle-order trio of Venkatesh Iyer, Andre Russell, Rinku Singh and Ramandeep Singh has struggled to make a significant impact.

Bowling has been another area of concern, with KKR failing to break opening stands, allowing teams to post big totals — as seen in the last game where PBKS added 120 for the opening wicket. While KKR managed to pull things back at the death, it will require a collective effort from Chakaravathy, Vaibhav Arora, and Harshit

Rana to stem the flow of runs against DC.

Teams

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

Kolkata Knight Riders: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Rinku Singh, Quinton de Kock (wk), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Rovman Powell, Manish Pandey, Luvnith Sisodia, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Moen Ali, Ramandeep Singh, Andre Russell, Anrich Nortje, Vaibhav Arora, Mayank Markande, Spencer Johnson, Harshit Rana, Sunil Narine, Varun Chakaravathy, Chetan Sakariya.

People are forgetting importance of partnerships: Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Indian superstar Virat Kohli has underlined the importance of stitching partnerships in T20 cricket, especially on wickets where heaving the willow from the word go is not possible.

The pitches in the IPL thus far have been on the slower side, not allowing the batters to go hammer and tongs from ball one. However, the likes of Kohli and K L Rahul have flourished in challenging batting conditions.

Kohli collected his sixth half-century in 10 IPL innings against Delhi Capitals on Sunday, helping RCB maintain their unbeaten run away from home.

"It was a top win, especially looking at the surface. We saw a few games here and this wicket played out differently compared to those. Whenever there's a chase on, I keep checking with the dugout, whether we're on course," Kohli, who played a second-fiddle to Krunal Pandya, said after the win.

Kohli elaborated on his batting methodology, saying he analyses the conditions and changes his style of play accordingly. "What the total (is) on the board. What the conditions are like. Who are the bowlers that are due to bowl. Who are the bowlers that are going to be hard to get away," Kohli explained when asked how he plans the chase.

"I try and make sure my singles and doubles don't stop so that the game doesn't get stagnant. People are forgetting the importance of partnerships and that's



coming to the fore in this tournament to try and dominate the bowlers through partnerships and professionalism."

Krunal, who struggled initially to get going, eventually hit his first fifty in IPL in nine years.

"Krunal was outstanding, he can make an impact and it was just about time. We've communicated beautifully, Krunal kept telling me to stay while he took his chances," said Kohli.

After Kohli's dismissal, Tim David smashed 19 runs off just five balls to knock off the winning runs.

Talking about the finishers, Kohli said: "We have the extra power in Tim David,

petitive total and rued the missed chances on the field after the six-wicket loss to RCB. "I thought in the first innings, the wicket was a bit tough but due to dew, it eased out in the second innings. We don't think anything we could have done different. If a batter could have accelerated, we could have got 10-15 runs extra."

"KL was batting well so I wanted him at number four. One side of the ground was shorter as well so we sent him at number four."

Adjudged the Player of the Match for his all-round show, Krunal, who took one wicket along with his unbeaten 73, said he was happy to perform for his new team.

"It is always good to see the results. Sometimes when you have put the hard work behind the scenes and feels good when it comes off. It is quite satisfying," he said. "My role was clear. If we lose three early wickets, I can go and make sure we stitch a partnership. We have such great power hitters — David, Jitesh and Shepherd. We can take down the bowling. Glad that I fulfilled my role."

"When Virat is at the other end, it is quite easy. First 20 balls, it is scratchy for me. But he kept backing me. Then I got his mojo. So, a lot of credit to Virat."

On his bowling, Krunal said: "I have always been an economical bowler. As a bowler, I have always wanted to be one step ahead. I have worked on my bowling. So, if you see the variations in speed."

"Knowing the batsmen's strength, I am trying to use it to my advantage. Glad it is using my favour."

Sunil Joshi biggest name in contention for spin coach's role at BCCI's COE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Former India left-arm spinner Sunil Joshi has thrown his hat in the ring for the post of spin bowling coach at BCCI's Centre of Excellence (COE) that was vacated by Sairaj Bahutule earlier this year. The COE was earlier known as the National Cricket Academy when it was based out of the Chinmaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. It remains in the city but is now operational from a new location after BCCI purchased land to build a more expansive facility.

Bahutule resigned to become an assistant coach in IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals. The 54-year-old Joshi, who played 15 Tests and 69 ODIs for India between 1996 and 2002, is currently working with Ricky Ponting in the Punjab Kings IPL team and has also coached Uttar Pradesh during the domestic season.

He has also worked with Bangladesh's national men's team as its spin bowling consultant.

According to sources in the BCCI, Joshi appeared for his interview online in front of a three-member panel comprising COE's Head of Cricket VVS Laxman, chairman of men's selection committee Ajit Agarkar and General Manager (Cricket Operations) Abbey Kuruvilla.

There were four others, who appeared for the interview in person, including India U-19 women's team coach Nooshin Al Khadeer, who was an off-spinner during her playing days.

She represented the country in five Tests and 78 WODIs and has been working in the erstwhile NCA setup for some years now. Another strong candidate is believed to be Rakesh Dhruv, a former Gujarat and Saurashtra left-arm spinner. Veteran off-spinner Pritam Gandhe, a domestic doyen from Vidarbha, has also been interviewed for the post.

When a senior BCCI official was asked about the interviews for the position, he said: "Obviously, Sunil Joshi has the best CV out of all the other candidates. In case

of Nooshin, the BCCI is also going to have an elaborate women's wing with dedicated staff for international, national and domestic age-group women's cricketers."

"While playing elite level does embellish the CV and Sunil is the only (men's) Test cricketer among those who appeared for interview, his biggest plus is considerable experience in elite level coaching."

"He has coached multiple first-class teams, has been a part of IPL coaching set-up and also coached senior men's international team. And do not forget, he is from Bengaluru, which makes a lot of sense logistically," he said.

But even Dhruv cannot be ruled out as he has played a lot of cricket for Saurashtra and Gujarat. Most of the candidates were asked about their vision for the role.

The chosen candidate will be expected to not just provide technical insight to international stars like Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav or Washington Sundar but also work with a host of India A, India U-19 and top domestic performers.

Women's tri-series: India to face South Africa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Colombo

Their campaign off to a dominant start, a confident India will look to maintain momentum when they face South Africa in their second match of the women's tri-series here on Tuesday.

The Indian team extended its winning streak in ODIs to seven matches with a comprehensive nine-wicket victory over hosts Sri Lanka in the tournament opener on Sunday.

The 'Women in Blue' excelled across all three departments. The bowlers, led by the spinners Sneha Rana, Deepti Sharma and Shree Charani, restricted Sri Lanka to a sub-par total, while the top three — Pratika Rawal, Smriti Mandhana, and Harleen Deol — played fluent innings with the bat.

Their fielding was razor-sharp as well, and they will be confident of producing a similar performance against a South African side they haven't lost to in this format since March 2022.

India had beaten South Africa 3-0 the last time the two teams met in a 50-over series. The Indian players have also enjoyed recent game time in the Women's Premier League, adding to the squad's match readiness.

Spinners are once again expected to play a crucial role. However, the Indian team will continue to closely monitor the performance of its pacers in the absence of key

players as it looks to identify a core group ahead of the 50-over World Cup, to be held at home later this year.

Meanwhile, South Africa, who open their campaign on Tuesday, are trying to find their rhythm under new coach Mandla Mashimbyi, who was appointed last year.

The 44-year-old, however, has no prior coaching experience in women's cricket.

South Africa will be without senior all-rounder Marizanne Kapp, who has been rested for the series, but they will lean on the in-form Sune Luus, Laura Wolvaardt, Nadine de Klerk, and Chloe Tryon. Masabata Klaas, along with allrounders Annerie Dercksen and de Klerk, will shoulder the pace duties.

Teams

India: Pratika Rawal, Smriti Mandhana, Harleen Deol, Harmanpreet Kaur(c), Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh(w), Deepti Sharma, Kashvee Gautam, Arundhati Reddy, Sneha Rana, Nallapureddy Charani, Yastika Bhatia, Amanjot Kaur, Tejal Hasabnis, Shuchi Upadhyay.

South Africa: Laura Wolvaardt(c), Tazmin Brits, Sune Luus, Annerie Dercksen, Lara Goodall, Nadine de Klerk, Chloe Tryon, Sinalo Jafta(w), Nonkululeko Mlaba, Masabata Klaas, Ayabonga Khaka, Karabo Meso, Miane Smit, Nondumiso Shangase, Seshnie Naidoo.

Twelve teams to compete in Arjan Singh Memorial hockey tournament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chandigarh

Twelve teams will compete in the sixth edition of the Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh Memorial hockey tournament to be held here from April 29 to May 6. Air Force Hockey team from Bangladesh will be one of the 12 sides taking part in the tournament, Air Marshal S Sivakumar said on Monday.

The other participating teams include Indian Air Force, Chandigarh XI, Punjab & Sind Bank, Central Industrial Security Force, Army XI, Indian Navy, Indian Railways and Rail Coach Factory.

The tournament winning team will get a prize money of ₹three lakh while the runners-up side will pocket ₹two lakh. Man of the match for each match will get Rs 10,000 while the player of the tournament will pocket ₹25,000.

The matches will be played at Raghbir Singh Bhola Hockey Ground, 3 Base Repair Depot, Air Force Station here on

league-cum-knockout basis.

Air Force Sports Control Board has been organising the prestigious hockey tournament in the memory of legendary late Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh at 3 BRD, Air Force Station, Chandigarh since 2018.

To promote hockey, the game in which our country has excelled for so many years in the international arena and to bring back its glory

— YS PANGHAL, ORGANISING SECRETARY

"Considering the eminence of the tournament in the Indian hockey scenario and the initiatives being taken by the Air Force Sports Control Board to encourage hockey at all levels, an all out effort is being made to promote the event," Sivakumar said.

Sivakumar said the organisers are hoping participation of more overseas

teams, including from the UK, in next year's edition.

The organisers also plan to hold the event alternately in Chandigarh and Bengaluru beginning next year, he said. Group Captain Y S Panghal, Organising Secretary of the event, briefed about the tournament.

"Our air warriors have toiled hard and proved their mettle at all competitive levels and have brought laurels to the country as well as the Indian Air Force," Panghal said. "To promote hockey, the game in which our country has excelled for so many years in the international arena and to bring back its glory, it is strongly felt that there should be quality tournaments in the country where emerging talent competes and gets exposure to the fast pace game."

"This has resulted in the evolution of the Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh Memorial Hockey tournament since 2018," Panghal said.

KL Rahul should bat at four for India in next year's T20 World Cup: Kevin Pietersen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

KL Rahul is best placed to bat at number four and keep wickets for India in next year's T20 World Cup, believes Delhi Capitals (DC) mentor Kevin Pietersen.

With his intent in the shortest format being questioned in the past, Rahul has tweaked his approach to be the leading run-getter for Delhi Capitals this season.

The competition for the wicket-keeper-batter's slot in the national team is stiff with Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Dhruv Jurel and Ishan Kishan being the other options for the selectors.

Rahul has not been a part of India's T20 setup since the 2022 World Cup but Pietersen reckons not only has he done enough to warrant a comeback, he is best suited for the wicket-keeper-batter's role.

"I'd bat KL at four for India in T20 cricket. I think you guys have got plenty of opening batters."

"But the way KL Rahul is playing cricket now, he would be my first choice to bat at four, and keep wickets for India," said Pietersen in response to a query after DC's loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Sunday night.

At the start of the season, Rahul himself had talked about his renewed approach towards the T20 format.

Besides the stellar show in IPL, it was Rahul's recent performances for India in ODI cricket that left a huge impression on Pietersen, one of the best batters to have played for England.

"KL has been playing in a very positive manner since. Mid to late last year. We saw how he finished off a couple of the games for India and almost sealed the deal in the Champions Trophy in Dubai."

"I've had a lot of incredibly brilliant conversations with him about batting, a lot of deep and meaningful conversations because when you grow up as a youngster like he did, you get taught defence, elbow up, play in the V," he explained.

The big-hitter said it is not easy to change that approach after hitting the thirties. "You've got to change it and you've got to become a different kind of player for a different format which is evolving all the time. "It's very, very difficult. So the way that he has accepted that he's needed to change, the way that he has changed is of great, great credit to the person that he is," said Pietersen.

The next T20 World Cup will be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

Fine with tough batting surfaces in T20s Scores in the range of 250 were a common occurrence last IPL but the slower nature of pitches has made batting tougher this season. Pietersen has no issues with



that. "On wickets like these (the one at Feroz Shah Kotla), you've got to be methodical, you've got to find rhythm. Virat (Kohli) found rhythm this evening. KL got rhythm," he said.

"And I think that's where you see the true batter. The real batter that can come out there, and sort of monitor the situation, and it looks effortless... Is it good for T20 cricket to have the occasional wick-

et like this? I do not think it's a bad thing," he added.

Pietersen was not in favour of bowlers "just being served up into the stands every single ball". "...I don't think every night peo-

ple want to see that. I don't really want to see it every night," Pietersen said.

Foundations can be laid in IPL

He has played in the IPL and more recently been a part of the commentary panel. This season, he is back in the dugout as a member of DC support staff. The 44-year-old spoke about his role in the team.

"I always knew that when I was playing franchise cricket, that no particular coach could change you over that four to six week period, or eight week period," he conceded.

However, he cited his interactions with Abhishek Porel to stress that changes introduced during the tournament can become permanent if persisted with over a period of time.

"Last night I was working on something. We are five weeks into the tournament, we have only got three or four weeks left of the tournament. And I said to him, I said, 'Abhi, this is not going to work for you tomorrow'."

"It might not work for you the next week. But if you keep working on it, in the next month, two months, three months, four months, I promise you this is going to help your game. And it's going to take you to a level where you're going to become a more destructive batter."