



INDIA SWINGS INTO ACTION AGAINST PAKISTAN

Demolition of terror factories in Kashmir commences

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

As tensions between India and Pakistan are gradually peaking in the aftermath of the horrific killing of tourists in Pahalagam, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi Friday visited the Kashmir valley and took stock of the 'operational' readiness of the troops and ongoing anti-terror operations launched to hunt down the perpetrators behind the massacre.

The visit of the Army Chief assumed significance as it was taking place after the recent meeting of the cabinet committee on Security, where a series of extraordinary retaliatory measures against Pakistan were announced. Ahead of the visit of the Army Chief in the valley, the Pakistan army late Thursday night activated the Line of Control (LoC) at various locations by resorting to 'unprovoked' ceasefire violations. According to ground reports, these ceasefire violations

were reported from the North Kashmir area of Uri to the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch in the Jammu region. Rattled by India's tough posturing, the Pakistan army was probably assessing the ground situation and the preparedness of the neighbouring country. On his arrival in Srinagar, the Army Chief was briefed by the senior officers of the Northern Command headquarters in the presence of Lt-Gen MV Suchindra Kumar.

The Army Chief also reviewed the progress of the anti-terror operation launched to hunt down the perpetrators behind the Pahalagam terror attack.

The security forces are searching for a group of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) terrorists, including four foreign and three locals, responsible for the Pahalagam attack. At least half a dozen anti-terror operations were also being conducted at multiple locations across Jammu and Kashmir.

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Identification of Pakistanis across the country announced

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Government is working on a strategy to ensure that not a single drop of water flows from India into Pakistan, Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil asserted on Friday following a high-level meeting chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah. Paatil said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has issued a slew of directives, and the meeting was held to follow up on them and Shah made several suggestions at the meeting for their effective implementation. Earlier on the day Shah called up all Chief Ministers and asked them to ensure that no Pakistani stays in India beyond the deadline set for leaving the country.

Talking to media, Jal Shakti Minister Paatil said "we will ensure that not a single drop of water flows into Pakistan from India." Government is working on a long-term plan to ensure the effective implementation of its decisions. Shah held the meeting to discuss the future course of action on the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 with Pakistan, which has been kept in abeyance following Tuesday's Pahalagam terror attack in which 26 people were killed. India has already informed Pakistan of its decision to keep the treaty in abeyance with immediate effect, as the neighbouring country has breached its conditions by targeting Jammu and Kashmir with sustained cross-border terrorism. Paatil said India has sent a strong message to Pakistan that it will not tolerate terrorism at all.

India on Thursday announced revoking all visas issued to Pakistani nationals from April 27 and advised Indian nationals residing in Pakistan to return home at the earliest, as tensions between the two countries escalated over the Pahalagam terror attack that killed 26 people, mostly tourists, on Tuesday.

The Home Minister in the morning called up the Chief Ministers of all the States and asked them to ensure that no Pakistani stays in India beyond the deadline. The Chief Ministers were also told to identify the Pakistani nationals staying in their respective areas and ensure their deportation, the sources said.

The Indus Water Treaty brokered by the World Bank has governed the distribution and use of the Indus river and its tributaries between India and Pakistan since 1960

The revocation of visas does not apply to the long-term visas already issued to Hindu Pakistani nationals, which "remain valid". Government has also formally issued a notification to suspend the Indus Water Treaty. The treaty brokered by the World Bank has governed the distribution and use of the Indus river and its tributaries between India and Pakistan since 1960. The Indus river system comprises the main river, the Indus, and its tributaries. The Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, Jhelum and Chenab are its left-bank tributaries, while the Kabul river, a right-bank tributary, does not flow through Indian territory.

The Ravi, Beas and Sutlej are collectively referred to as the eastern rivers, while the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab are known as the western rivers. The water of this river system are crucial to both India and Pakistan.

At the time of Independence, the boundary demarcation between the two newly-formed nations — India and Pakistan — cut through the Indus Basin.

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UP Government serves eviction notices to Pakis

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

In a swift and sweeping response to the deadly terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalagam, which claimed 26 innocent lives, the Central Government has cancelled all visas issued to Pakistani nationals currently staying in India. This decision, aimed at tightening security, has cast a shadow of grief and helplessness over more than 1,500 Pakistani citizens residing in Uttar Pradesh.

Across cities such as Bareilly, Varanasi, and Rampur, Pakistani women can be seen with tearful eyes and packed bags, standing in queues at district administration offices or Foreigners Registration Offices (FROs), waiting for instructions on how and when to leave. Many had come to India for family functions, to meet ageing parents, or to celebrate weddings and births — never expecting their joyful visits would be cut short by violence they had no part in.

"I came to see my daughter who gave birth to a baby boy just last month," said 62-year-old Shabana Parveen from Karachi, holding her grandson in her arms outside an FRO in Bareilly. "I had planned to stay for two more months. Now I must leave in two days — how do I even say goodbye?"

The Ministry of Home Affairs has directed that all Pakistani nationals in India must return home by April 27, with a slight extension granted to those on medical visas until April 29. In Uttar Pradesh, DGP Prashant Kumar has issued orders to district officials to ensure the repatriation process is smooth and timely.

"All concerned district authorities have been directed to complete documentation and facilitate the return of Pakistani citizens by April 27. Those who are in

India on medical visas will be allowed time until April 29," DGP Kumar said. Senior police officials are coordinating closely with local intelligence units to ensure that all foreign nationals are accounted for and that there are no overstays or violations of visa norms. "This is a proactive measure. We are working in coordination with Central agencies to ensure safety and adherence to international protocols," said a senior official from the State Home Department.

This move is likely to have diplomatic implications, though the Centre has maintained that it is a security-driven decision in response to credible threats.

Security has been tightened across UP, especially in areas with a history of communal tension. CM Yogi has ordered increased surveillance ahead of Friday prayers

The Ministry of External Affairs is expected to issue a formal statement soon regarding the broader implications of the visa cancellations.

The abrupt decision follows the Pahalagam terror attack, which Indian intelligence agencies believe was planned by Pakistan-based terror groups. In response, security has been tightened across UP, especially in areas with a history of communal tension. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath chaired a late-night high-level meeting to review security arrangements and ordered increased drone surveillance and foot patrolling ahead of Friday prayers.

While security officials stress that the move is purely precautionary, the emotional fallout is undeniable.

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Debris of the house of LeT terrorist Adil Hussain Thokar, which was destroyed after an explosion, in Bijbehara, Kashmir. PTI

The Bystander



Delhi shuts down in solidarity with Pahalagam

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

Delhi downed its shutters to protest against the Pahalagam killings and Shahi Imam of historic Jama Masjid Syed Ahmed Bukhar said terrorists claim to be Muslims but have acted in a manner that is utterly "un-Islamic." He made this assertion in his address during Friday prayers. People gathered for Friday prayers also staged a protest at the mosque's stairs, raising slogans against terrorism and expressing their anger over the killing of 26 people, most of them tourists, at Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalagam on Tuesday. Traders' bodies also took out an anti-terrorist march organised by Delhi Hindustani Mercantile Association, the apex body of cloth traders during the shutdown. The traders had also taken out a candle march in Connaught Place to express solidarity with the victims.

According to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), several of Delhi's busiest commercial hubs, including Connaught Place, Sadar Bazar and Chandni Chowk, were bereft of their usual hubbub on Friday as over 900 markets and 8 lakh shops downed its shutters, to an estimated trade loss of around ₹1,500 crore for the day. Shops across key sectors such as groceries, dry fruits, chemicals, grains, iron, bullion, stationery, electrical goods, textiles, spices, utensils, and bullion also joined the shutdown.

Sadar Bazar, one of Delhi's most promi-



A poster put up in Janpath, Delhi, paying tributes to victims of the Pahalagam terror attack during a bandh called by city traders against the attack. PTI

nent markets, usually bustling with activity, wore a deserted look on Friday as even vegetable vendors did not turn up, a member of the traders' association said. Paramjeet Singh Pamma, Chairperson of the Federation of Sadar Bazar, said by shutting down our shops today, we are urging the Prime Minister to ensure that justice is delivered to the victims and their families.

Asia's largest wholesale readymade garment market in Gandhinagar remained completely shut, said a statement issued by the market association. "The shutdown was

held to demand justice for the tourist who was killed and to stand united against terrorism," it said. Kashmeri Gate, Asia's largest spare parts market wore a deserted look. Traders say, most of the markets including Sadar Bazaar, Bhagirath Place, Gandhinagar, Naya Bazar, Khari Baoli, Chawri Bazar, Chandni Chowk, Dariba Kalan, Kashmeri Gate, Kamla Nagar, Jama Masjid, and Hauz Qazi, Karol Bagh, Malviya Nagar, INA Market wore a deserted look on Friday.

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Law made by Parliament, can't be stayed: Centre to SC on Waqf

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Centre on Friday sought the Supreme Court to dismiss the pleas challenging validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 and said there cannot be a "blanket stay" on the law as there was a "presumption of its Constitutionality". In a 1,332-page preliminary counter affidavit, the Centre defended the contentious law saying that "shockingly" after 2013, there were an addition of over 20 lakh hectare (precisely 20,92,072.536) in Waqf land.

"Right before even Mughal era, pre-independence era and post-independence era, the total of Waqfs created was 18,29,163.896 acres of land in India," the affidavit said. It claimed "reported misuse" of earlier provisions to encroach upon private and Government properties. The affidavit was filed by Shersha C Shaik Mohiddin, joint secretary in the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

"The settled position in law that constitutional courts would not stay a statutory provision either directly or indirectly will decide the matter finally. There is a presumption of constitutionality that applies to laws made by Parliament," it added.

The Centre went on, "While this court would examine these challenges when the cases are heard, a blanket stay (or a partial stay) without being aware of the adverse consequences of such an order in a gener-

ality of cases (even on members of the Muslim community itself) were the petitions to be unsuccessful would, it is submitted, be uncalled for, especially in the context of the presumption of validity of such laws." The affidavit said the pleas challenging the Act proceeded on false premise that amendments take away fundamental rights of religious freedom. It said the court can review a law on the grounds of legislative competence and violation of fundamental rights under Article 32 of the Constitution.

The Government said the amendments were undertaken after a very comprehensive, in-depth and analytical study by a Parliamentary panel having members from major political parties. "Parliament has acted within its domain to ensure that religious endowments like waqfs are managed in a manner that upholds the trust reposed in them by the faithful and the society at large, without trespassing on religious autonomy," it said. The law, the Centre said, was valid and result of a lawful exercise of legislative power.

The affidavit said replacing legislative regime, enacted by the legislature, was impermissible. On April 17, the Centre had assured the top court that it would neither denotify waqf properties, including "waqf by user", nor make any appointments to the central waqf council and boards till May 5. A bench headed by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna is slated to hear the matter on May 5.

Former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan passes away

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday condoled the demise of former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan and remembered him for playing a stellar role in the evolution of India's space programme. Kasturirangan (84) passed away in Bengaluru on Friday.

He was conferred with Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan. He headed ISRO between 1994 and August 27, 2003. Kasturirangan was also a nominated member of Rajya Sabha. He was born on October 24, 1940 at Ernakulam in Kerala to C M Krishnaswamy Iyer and Visalakshi. Having origins in Tamil Nadu, his family had settled at Chalakudy in Thrissur district. His mother was hailing from Palakkad Iyer family.

He steered the Indian space programme gloriously for more than nine years as the chief of the ISRO, head of the Space Commission and secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Space, before laying down his office on August 27, 2003. He was the project director for India's first two experimental earth observation satellites — BHASKARA-I and II — and subsequently, was also responsible for the overall direction of the first operational Indian remote-sensing satellite, IRS-1A.

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India's martyrs to be immortalised in Delhi's metro stations

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), in a unique gesture to honour Param Veer Chakra (PVC) awardees, has dedicated an entire platform wall at the Sir M Vishveshwaraiah Moti Bagh Metro station on the Pink Line. PVC is the highest gallantry medal.

"The artwork, meticulously crafted by a team of talented artists, features vivid and lifelike depictions of the Param Veer Chakra awardees, capturing their indomitable spirit and unwavering courage in the face of adversity. Each portrait is accompanied by a brief about them," said DMRC spokesperson Anuj Dayal.

Param Veer Chakra translates to "Wheel of the Ultimate Brave". It has been awarded a total of 21 times. Of those 21 awards, 14 were posthumous. This is India's highest military decoration, awarded for the most conspicuous bravery in the presence of the enemy, regardless of rank or branch of service.

"In a move that reflects the Delhi Metro's deep commitment to honouring the sacrifices made by our valiant soldiers, the platform walls of the station have been transformed into a breath-taking gallery

showcasing the portraits of these gallant warriors. The Delhi Metro has thereby created a unique space that fosters national pride and inspires a sense of gratitude among its commuters. This thoughtful integration within one of India's busiest metro networks highlights how infrastructure can be leveraged for cultural appreciation while enhancing community engagement through meaningful interactions with history," the Delhi Metro said.

"These heroes have received the highest military honour to protect our nation and serve as a poignant reminder of the immense sacrifices made by our armed forces in the defence of our motherland. DMRC invites the commuters to take a moment to pause and reflect on the lives of these remarkable individuals and to draw inspiration from their selfless dedication to the cause of our nation," Dayal said.

He said this art installation is not just a tribute to the heroes, but also a testament to the resilience and strength of the Indian spirit, and a celebration of the values of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism that define us as a people.

"Delhi Metro has always endeavoured to utilise its premises to pay respect to the



courage and valour of our armed forces. Delhi Metro has honoured the legacy of distinguished heroes by naming select stations after them, such as Major Mohit Sharma Rajendra Nagar Station, Arjan

Garh, and Brigadier Hoshiar Singh Station, among others," Dayal said. In addition, a unique permanent exhibition dedicated to the Gallantry award recipients of the Indian Armed Forces has

been curated at the Rajouri Garden Metro station. This unique exhibition titled "Veerta Aur Vikas" is a tribute to the gallantry award recipients of the Indian Armed Forces who have shown exemplary courage to preserve the sovereignty and dignity of the nation.

Earlier, the Modi government has 21 largest unnamed islands of Andaman & Nicobar Islands after 21 Param Veer Chakra awardees in 2023. These islands have been named after the 21 Param Veer Chakra awardees, viz. Major Somnath Sharma; Subedar and Hony Captain (then Lance Naik) Karam Singh, MM; 2nd Lt. Rama Raghoba Rane; Nayak Jadunath Singh; Company Havildar Major Puru Singh; Capt GS Salaria; Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Dhan Singh Thapa; Subedar Joginder Singh; Major Shaitan Singh; CQMh. Abdul Hamid; Lt Col Ardesahir Burzorji Tarapore; Lance Naik Albert Ekka; Major Hoshiar Singh; 2nd Lt. Arun Khetrapal; Flying Officer Nirmaljit Singh Sekhon; Major Ramaswamy Parameswaran; Naib Subedar Bana Singh; Captain Vikram Batra; Lt Manoj Kumar Pandey; Subedar Major (then Rifleman) Sanjay Kumar; and Subedar Major Retd (Hony Captain) Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav.

CM calls for madrasa reforms, proposes modernisation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

In a strong push for reforms in Uttar Pradesh's madrasa education system, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath highlighted the need for strict compliance with infrastructural standards before granting official recognition to any madrasa in the state, and emphasised the need for standardising and modernising the curriculum.

Chairing a high-level meeting on Friday to review the current state of madrasa education, the chief minister underlined the importance of ensuring that madrasas do not remain limited to religious teachings alone. Highlighting the government's vision, the chief minister said, "Students studying in madrasas should have access to the full spectrum of modern education."

The chief minister said that the objective of the government was to bring reforms and to bring madrasa education into the mainstream through innovation and inclusiveness, so that every section of the society could get equal opportunities and quality education. He emphasised the need to make madrasa education transparent, quality-driven and employment-

focused. The government prioritises ensuring that every student has access to a bright and promising future, he added.

He pointed out the challenges that have emerged following the Supreme Court's declaration of the Kamil (graduate) and Fazil (post-graduate) degrees of the Madrasa Board as unconstitutional. He further stressed the importance of aligning the recognition standards and requirements of madrasas with those of regular schools managed by the Education Department.

"There is a need to bring changes in the madrasa curriculum in line with the National Education Policy 2020. It is also necessary to update the eligibility criteria for teachers and non-teaching staff in accordance with the curriculum. The teacher selection process must be made fair and transparent. The current system of appointing teachers in madrasas also needs to be reviewed," he added.

In this regard, the chief minister proposed forming a committee under the chairmanship of the director of Minority Welfare, Uttar Pradesh. The committee will include special secretaries from the Basic Education, Secondary Education, Finance,

Law and Minority Welfare departments. This committee will recommend necessary reforms for the smooth functioning of madrasas, job security for teachers and a better future for the students.

Earlier in the meeting, the Minority Welfare and Waqf Department gave a detailed presentation about the current status of madrasas, the main challenges they face and future plans. The chief minister was informed that there are currently 13,329 recognised madrasas running in the state, where 12,35,400 students are studying. Out of these, 9,979 madrasas are at the primary and upper primary levels (Classes 1 to 8), and 3,350 are at the secondary and higher secondary levels (Classes 9 to 12).

Among them, 561 madrasas receive government grants, and they have a total of 2,31,806 registered students. These grant-aided madrasas have 9,889 teachers and 8,367 non-teaching staff, all of whom have been receiving salaries and allowances as per the 7th Pay Commission's recommendations since January 1, 2016.

The chief minister was informed that the Madrasa portal was launched in August 2017, which made all the functions of the Madrasa Education Council online. A total

of 19,123 madrasas are registered on the portal, out of which 13,329 have been verified and locked. Through this portal, systems like online exams, certificates, verification and integration with the U-DISE code have been implemented, ensuring transparency and accountability. However, the number of students appearing in board exams has steadily declined over the years. In 2016, 4,22,627 students appeared, but by 2025, this number dropped to only 88,082. The chief minister called this a serious concern and said that there was a need for improvement.

Officials also informed that the Madrasa Education Council now conducts exams only at the Maulvi/Munshi (secondary) and Alim (senior secondary) levels. To improve the quality of education, the SCERT curriculum has been implemented and fully enforced from the academic year 2025-26. Efforts are also underway to align the curriculum for Classes 9 to 12 with the UP Secondary Education Council. The curriculum now includes not only religious subjects like theology, Arabic, and Persian, but also modern subjects such as mathematics, science, social science, Hindi and English.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paying floral tributes to former chief minister Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna on his birth anniversary in Lucknow on Friday.

CM Yogi pays floral tribute Bahuguna

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, On Friday, paid his heartfelt tribute to late Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna on the birth anniversary of the former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, remembering him as a valiant freedom fighter who made significant contributions to India's independence struggle.

Speaking on the occasion at Yojana Bhawan, Chief Minister Yogi recalled Bahuguna's unwavering courage and sacrifices during the Quit India Movement, underscoring his pivotal role in the country's struggle for independence.

Chief Minister Yogi emphasised Bahuguna's remarkable political journey, noting his first election to the Uttar Pradesh legislative assembly in 1952. Throughout his illustrious career, he held

key positions, including minister in the state government, chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, and Union minister, where he exhibited exceptional leadership and made lasting contributions to the progress of both the state and the nation.

Chief Minister Yogi also shared that Bahuguna, born in Uttarakhand, received his early education in his native village before relocating to Prayagraj for higher studies. It was there that he became deeply committed to the freedom struggle. "The contribution he made to the development of the state and the country is being continuously honoured and carried forward by the government," the chief minister added.

The event was also attended by former MP Rita Bahuguna Joshi, MLA Dr Neeraj Bora, Bharatiya Janata Party leader Avinash Trivedi, and other dignitaries.

Elopement embarrasses minister as locals protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kannauj

Uttar Pradesh minister Asim Arun faced strong protests from BJP members belonging to the Lodhi community who were incensed by the elopement of a woman from their community with a Dalit youth here in Kannauj Nagar.

The incident took place at a public function at Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Medical College in Tirwa on Thursday when the BJP office-bearers and workers shouted "murdabad" slogans against Arun, the UP minister of state for social welfare (independent charge), while he was addressing a gathering.

BJP district secretary Ajay Verma, who belongs to the Lodhi community, said the woman's father and family had approached Arun, who is a Scheduled Caste MLA from Kannauj Sadar, seeking help in recovering their daughter and demanding action against the youth.

According to eyewitnesses, the family's plea reportedly angered Arun, who allegedly said, "Is this the only work left for me now?"

Sources indicate that these remarks incensed the Lodhi community, leading to the protest during the minister's address at the medical college.

As soon as Arun began speaking, BJP workers present in the auditorium started shouting slogans such as "Minister, your dictatorship will not work" and "Asim Arun Murdabad". The event, which got disrupted, was abruptly ended.

Minister-in-charge of Kannauj Rajni Tiwari, former MP Subrat Pathak, Tirwa MLA Kailash Rajput and BJP district president Veer Singh Bhadauria were also present on the stage during the protest. Heated arguments reportedly ensued between the police and the protesting workers, who climbed on chairs while demonstrating against Arun.

Responding to the controversy on Friday, Arun took to social media platform Facebook, and said, "Yesterday, a few people were saying all kinds of things about indiscipline in Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Medical College. In such a situation, it is important that the whole matter be clarified and all doubts be removed."

The minister explained his stance, saying when the case of the elopement was brought to his attention, "the police had already filed an FIR and the girl's statement had been recorded before the magistrate. The girl had gone with the youth of her own free will."

भारतीय प्रबन्धन संस्थान, राँची
Indian Institute of Management, Ranchi

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IIM Ranchi, invites applications for the position of **Corporate Relation Manager at IIM Ranchi**. For further details regarding eligibility and application process please visit the **website** - <https://iimranchi.ac.in/>. Last date for receiving online application is **01 May 2025**.

MALARIA DAY

Lucknow: The RDSO Hospital observed World Malaria Day on Friday by organising an awareness event aimed at educating the people and reaffirming hospital's commitment to the fight against malaria. The event aligned with this year's global theme: "Malaria Ends With Us: Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite", which emphasises the need for renewed commitment, innovation and collaboration to eliminate malaria worldwide.

CLASSIFIED

सूचना

मेरी सम्पत्ति आराजी स० 235 का जुजु भाग 150 वर्गमज के मूल दस्तावेज जिल्द सं. 8100 क्रमांक सं० 3636 जो कि कहीं गिर गये हैं। जिसका कोई अवैधानिक इस्तेमाल करता है तो वह स्वयं जिम्मेदार होगा। (सुधा सिंह पत्नी अनिरुद्ध सिंह न्यू एलआईडी- 2, बरौ -7, कानपुर नगर।)

NOTICE

I have changed my son's name from Mohd. Akib Saudagar to Mohammad Akib. Mohd. Akib Saudagar & Mohammad Akib s/o Mohammad Rabi r/o 66 Para Ojha, Tikrauli, Hamirpur is same and one person.

NOTICE

I Vijay Devi Pandey w/o kamal kishor Pandey and mother of Shiv Nandan resident of vill & post premdhar Patti Pratargarh Uttar Pradesh have changed my name from Vijay Kumari to Vijay Devi Pandey vide affidavit dated 17/03/2025 before court at Ayodhya

NOTICE

I Kawaljeet Singh S/o Harjinder Singh R/o 119/160, Om Nagar Gumbi No.5, R.K.Nagar Kanpur 208012 have changed my name to Kawaljeet Singh Saluja for all future purposes

NOTICE

I have changed Son's name Kartik Singh To Advik Singh Sengar for all future purposes, Shivendra Singh Sengar R/o 128/832-Y-Block, Kidwai Nagar Kanpur

NOTICE

My Original allotment letter for house no. 108 S/S, KDA Colony Delhi Sujjanpur Kanpur has been lost, which is issued in favour of Suddik Ansari on 30.12.1987. Kindly contact below if documents found. Brij Kishore Pandey S/o Gaya Prasad Pandey Mob.9569591082

NOTICE

It is hereby bought to the knowledge of Public at large that property being House No. 15/150 Old No. 18/111 admeasuring 92.84 Square Meters situated at Mohalla Jagmukheda Shuklaganj Unnau was under the ownership of Shri Santosh Kumar, Shri Pradeep Kumar, Shri Manish Kumar, Smt. Pushpa Devi, Shri Sumit Bhasker & Shri Akash Bhasker and is not mortgage with any Bank or Financial Institutions. The said property is being mortgage by Shri Ravi Kumar Gautam in favour of IDFC First Bank Limited. If any reason has any claim over the said property should contact the under signed within seven days failing which, no claim shall be entertained.

Mrinal Lalchandani Advocate
Chamber No. 14 (1 Floor) Moti Lal Advhivakta Bhawan, Civil Court, Kanpur-200001, Mobile No:- 9919606060

Villagers kill criminal, aide arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

A criminal carrying a cash reward of Rs 25,000 on his arrest in a murder case, was shot dead in Meerut's Jani police station area.

The killing took place as he entered Panchli village on Thursday evening with his partner to commit another murder and opened indiscriminate fire. When the locals raised an alarm, the crowd surrounded both the criminals and killed Rinku by beating him and later also shooting him in the head. After the incident, the angry crowd also burnt the criminals' Pulsar bike.

Interestingly, on arrival of the police, the crowd claimed that Rinku died due to a bullet fired by his colleague. Rinku's colleague saved his life by entering the house of the for-

mer Pradhan and has been arrested by the police. The entire case is being investigated.

Rinku Gurjar, a resident of Panchli Khurd village, was a notorious criminal. He had recently come out on bail after spending 10 years in jail on murder charges. As soon as he came out, Rinku shot dead village resident Imran and his two brothers on February 8 night this year. Since then, Rinku was absconding and the police had announced a reward of 25,000 on his arrest. Rinku was continuously demanding extortion from traders and farmers of the village and had threatened to kill some of them. Rinku had also threatened to kill Rahul, a resident of the village.

Reports said that on Thursday evening, Rinku was roaming in the village on a bike with his partner.

The villagers suspected that Rinku had

come to kill someone. On the other hand, Rahul was also alert.

At around 7 pm, Rinku and his partner entered Rahul's house and opened fire. Rinku shot Rahul's brother Azad alias Gullu in the leg. When the firing took place, the villagers got alarmed. The crowd surrounded the miscreants and attacked them. Both the miscreants ran away firing in different directions to save their lives. Rinku entered Chaman's house in the village while the other miscreant hid in the house of former Pradhan Bhopal. The crowd surrounded Rinku and beat him badly. During this, Rinku was shot in the head and he died on the spot.

On receiving information of Rinku's death, the police rushed to the spot. Police has arrested Rinku's partner Sachin, a resident of Hastinapur, and he is being interrogated.

Chain-snatcher, accomplice nabbed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

A gangster, alongwith his juvenile aide, were arrested on Friday for looting gold chains from three women, in three different incidents of chain snatching, in Jankipuram police station area.

The accused, identified as Kallu aka Raju of Dubagga, works as a scrap dealer.

According to police, Kallu was mainly involved in chain snatching and had executed three such incidents on Thursday.

ADCP North Jitendra Kumar Dubey said Kallu used the juvenile offender as a 'shield' to avoid police checking.

He said that prime accused Kallu was a seasoned criminal and had as many as 13 cases of chain snatching and loot lodged against him at different police stations, including the Dubagga police station.

The police recovered looted gold chains, Rs 3,100 in cash and a motorcycle from the accused. The ADCP said one Reena Saini, of Jankipuram Vistar, Mridula Agarwal, of Jankipuram, and Shipra Rai, also of Jankipuram, had lodged complaints of their chains being looted on Thursday.

The women in their FIR had stated that the crime was executed by a man and his juve-

nilie aide, riding a motorcycle.

On this information, the team started gathering information about a gang which constituted a man and a juvenile riding pillion of a motorcycle and also scanned the CCTV footage.

The ADCP said a joint team consisting of policemen from Surveillance/Crime Team and Jankipuram police station were pressed into the job to nab the miscreants.

The teams checked the CCTV footage and zeroed in on accused Kallu. During quizzing, Kallu disclosed the name of his juvenile aide, who also was detained later. The accused disclosed that he used to tag the juvenile offender along with him to avoid police checking.

During interrogation, Kallu also owned that he had committed a chain snatching crime 10 days ago in Dubagga police station area.

MAN ATTEMPTS SUICIDE

Piqued over discord with his wife, whom he suspected to having an extra marital relationship, a Sitapur man tried to commit suicide by pouring inflammable substance on himself and setting himself ablaze outside the Vidhan Sabha on Friday afternoon.

UPPCL consumers can make changes in load demand online

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

In a move to enhance consumer convenience, Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) has fully digitised the process for increasing electricity load. Reflecting Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's commitment to prioritising consumer ease, Dr. Ashish Kumar Goyal, Chairman of UPPCL, made this announcement during a review meeting at Shakti Bhawan. This digital transformation is set to streamline the process, making it faster and more efficient for consumers.

The new online system will officially roll out on 1 May, 2025, with a dedicated portal that will soon be available at www.uppcl.org and the 'Jhatpat' portal. With this system in place, consumers will no longer need to visit departmental counters to request load increases. Instead, they can submit applications directly through the 'Load Change Request' link available on the UPPCL website. The process will also be available through Jan Suvidha Kendras. Consumers can now apply online to increase their electric load, with no limits on the load or category. The required documents, including an undertaking letter, B&L form, no-objection certificate issued by the Directorate of Electrical Safety, and the contract letter, can all be submitted digitally.

Hotel owner, manager booked for irregularities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

A hotel owner and his manager were booked for facilitating stay of five foreign nationals, without informing the local police in Gomti Nagar police station area.

The case was registered on the complaint of woman sub-inspector Kanchan Tiwari on Thursday after the issue came to the notice of police. The move came following the alert sounded by security agencies after the carnage of tourists in Pahalgam.

Those named in the case were identified as hotel owner Gaurav Kashyap and his manager Adil. The foreign nationals of Oman, who stayed at the hotel have been identified by police as Saleh Ali Masood Nasir Ul Rushadi, Mahmood Saleh Adeem Al Ashi, Khamis Salim Kharmas Al Ganbusi, Salim Khamis Salim Al Ganbusi and Alanud Ahmed Sulemanhadhoor Al Rahabi. As per reports the police was tipped off that some foreigners had lodged in hotel located in Virat Khand area under Gomti Nagar. The police was further tipped off that the hotel owner allowed these foreigners for his own eco-

nomic benefit and without informing the local police. On the information a police team led by woman SI Kanchan Tiwari reached the hotel where Manager Adil was found present. Adil was asked to show the hotel register and on checking five foreigners from Oman were found to have stayed at the hotel since April 14.

On being summoned by the police, hotel owner Gaurav Kashyap also reached the spot for giving an explanation. "Gaurav showed photocopies of passports and other documents of the foreigners but could not explain the reason for the foreigners staying in the hotel for so many days and for not informing the local police," said the SI Tiwari.

She further said some of the foreigners had already checked out from the hotel at the time police conducted the checking. "It was found from the hotel register that these foreigners, most of time, left the hotel in the morning and returned to the hotel late at night. Gaurav Kashyap and his manager Adil, have been found to be illegally accommodating foreigners for financial gain, which is a violation of law of the land," said Tiwari.

Municipal Commissioner inspects works

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Municipal Commissioner Gaurav Kumar inspected various parts of the city on Friday morning. During his visit, he reviewed the cleanliness operations, waste management, vending zones and other municipal activities. The aim of the inspection was to assess the pace and quality of ongoing development works to ensure that the

city's services are improved and delivered efficiently. Gaurav Kumar also visited the central municipal workshop located in Gomti Nagar. He reviewed records of vehicles that had come for refuelling and understood the functioning of the workshop. Additionally, he held discussions with the officials regarding the construction of the new municipal headquarters. During the inspection, the Municipal Commissioner was accompanied

by the Additional Municipal Commissioner Lalit Kumar, Chief Engineer (Civil) Mahesh Verma, Chief Engineer (RR) Manoj Prabhat, Zonal Officer of Zone-4 Shri Sanjay Yadav, Zonal Sanitary Officer of Zone-4 Pankaj Shukla, and other officials from the Municipal Corporation. The Municipal Commissioner reviewed the work of various departments and provided directions for necessary improvements for urban development.

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Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
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1. 180 ml Glass Bottle for Verka Patiala Dairy.	Annual/ 1 Crore
2. Visi Cooler	
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iii. Minimum 400 ltr and above	
iv. Minimum 600 ltr and above	
3. Chest Cooler	
v. Minimum 200 ltr and above	Annual/ 560 units
vi. Minimum 300 ltr and above	
vii. Minimum 400 ltr and above	
viii. Minimum 500 ltr and above	

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1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
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Mehak tops Inter, Yash HS exams

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow/
Prayagraj

Mehak Jaiswal of Bacha Ram Yadav Inter College in Prayagraj topped the Intermediate examination of the UP Board with 97.20 per cent marks. In the High School examination, Yash Pratap Singh of Late Smt Raskendri Devi Inter College, Umri (Jalaun district), emerged the topper with an outstanding 97.83 per cent marks. The results of the Intermediate and High School examinations of the Uttar Pradesh Secondary Education Council were announced on Friday afternoon. The second position in Intermediate examination was shared by Sakshi from Amroha, Adarsh Yadav from Sultanpur, Shivani Singh from Prayagraj and Anushka Singh from Kaushambi. They all bagged the second position with 96.80 per cent marks together. Mohini from Etawah secured the third place with 96.40 per cent marks in the state. Tooba Khan secured fifth position with 480 marks while Dimple Maurya secured the sixth position with 479 marks. The second position in the High School examination was bagged by Anshi from Etawah and Abhishek from Barabanki with 97.67 per cent marks. The third position was obtained by Ritu Garg from Moradabad, Arpit Verma from Sitapur and Simran Gupta from Jalaun with 97.50 per cent marks. The overall pass percentage for Class 12 students stood at 81.15 per cent while for Class 10 it was 90.11 per cent, Director of Education (Secondary) Mahendra Dev announced at the council's headquarter in Prayagraj. Girls outperformed boys in both classes. Inmates in UP jails also

Mehak excels without coaching



Uttar Pradesh Board class XII topper Mehak Jaiswal celebrates after the result in Prayagraj on Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Prayagraj

Mehak Jaiswal, who secured the first position in the Uttar Pradesh Board Intermediate Examination 2025, said on Friday that she achieved this success without taking any coaching classes. A student of the Bacha Ram Yadav Inter College in Bhulai Ka Pura, Prayagraj, Jaiswal told reporters, "I studied entirely at home and did not take any offline or online coaching classes. I only focused on what was taught in school."

Sharing her study routine, she said, "I used to study for nine to 10 hours every day. My dream is to become a doctor. I give credit for my success to my elder sister, other family members and teachers. I had not expected to get the first rank in the state, but hoped to score above 95 per cent." "I had thought my name would appear among the top students in Uttar Pradesh, but not expected to secure the first position," she added. According to the results announced by the Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, a total of 30 students secured places in the top-10 list in the Intermediate examination. Jaiswal came first in the state with a score of 97.2 per cent.

passed the board exams with impressive results. In the High School exams, 94 inmates appeared, out of which 91 passed, achiev-

ing a remarkable pass percentage of 96.81 per cent. In the Intermediate exams, 105 inmate candidates took part, and 91 of them passed, recording a pass percentage

of 86.67 per cent. Of the 13,87,263 boys who appeared for the Intermediate (Class 12) examination, 10,62,616 passed, achieving a pass per-

CM congratulates students for success in exams

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath extended heartfelt congratulations to all students who passed the Classes 10 and 12 examinations conducted by the Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (UPMSP).

Commending their success, the chief minister attributed the achievement to the students' intelligence, hard work and discipline.

"This success is a result of your dedication and determination. May your efforts continue to be recognised and success always be your companion," he stated in a message on social media platform X.

He also addressed students who did not clear the exams, urging them not to lose hope. "Failure should not be a reason for despair; it is an opportunity for self-assessment. Don't give up, success is waiting for you," he encouraged them.

Further applauding the students who secured ranks in the merit list, Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that their success is a matter of pride not just for themselves, but also for their parents and teachers.

As a mark of recognition, the chief minister announced that the Uttar Pradesh government will honour all state and district-level toppers. "The @UPGovt will felicitate all toppers at both state and district levels," he confirmed.

This gesture reaffirms the government's commitment to celebrating academic excellence and encouraging students across the state.

Ayush, Ritesh, Safal, Pragati toppers in Lko

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Ayush Kumar Maurya, a student of SKD Academy in Rajajipuram, topped the intermediate examinations of UP Board in Lucknow by securing 92.8 per cent marks. Ritesh Kumar, Safal Mishra from Lucknow Public College in Rajajipuram and Pragati Gupta from Bal Guide Inter College at Gosaiganj topped the high school examination in the city, securing 95 per cent marks. Tall and lanky at six feet, Ayush Kumar Maurya looked a bit surprised when he first learnt that he was the district topper in the intermediate examinations of the UP Board with 92.8 per cent marks. Son of a property dealer, Ayush said that he was happy with the result. "I was expecting more marks around 95 per cent but I am satisfied with the result," he said. Talking about his preparations for the examination, Ayush said that he trusted his teachers and went through the notes and the regular sheets they had given for revision. "I followed whatever they told me while maintaining regularity and consistency, which is the reason that I am standing at this position today," he said. The young achiever, who is preparing for IIT-JEE, said that his dream was to crack the National Defence Academy examination. "I want to serve my country by joining the NDA. It is my father's dream and I want to fulfil it," he said. Incidentally he did not keep off social media during the preparations for the examination unlike many other students of his batch. "I believe that social media is important as far as information dissemination is concerned. Many amongst the youth do not read news but follow Instagram and so many of us came to know about the recent Pahalgam incident from the Instagram," he said. As an armed forces aspirant, Ayush said that he was much affected by the Pahalgam incident. "I had goosebumps which stirred patriotism in me," he added. Incidentally he counts making new inventions and playing badminton as his hobby. "Physics is my favourite subject as it is relatable to real life. I look at it as a fun subject," he said. His message to those who have been unable to secure good marks is that they should not get disheartened. "Marks are simply numbers on a sheet of paper which will remain there. So those who have not performed well should simply give their best and move forward. They should not look back and be demotivated, otherwise they will spoil their future," he said. Talking about how he motivated himself during times of self-doubt, Ayush said that teachers helped him. "We had WhatsApp groups wherein we could consult our teachers," he said. Ayush, who is all set to celebrate his success, said that his grandfather would be the happiest person in his family when he would learn that he had topped the Lucknow district in the UP Board examinations. Ritesh Kumar said that he was not satisfied with the result. "I have done a lot of hard work and was expecting a better percentage but I got less marks in the social science subject," he said. Ritesh said that he was consistent, loyal to his goal and disciplined to be able to achieve what he had achieved. "I planned a target for myself each day and did different things every day to reach my goal," he said. Keen on pursuing engineering, he said that he wanted to join IIT Delhi. Son of a retired army officer, Ritesh plans to make advanced websites and protect Indian websites from international hackers. "Right now there is a dispute between Pakistan and India and such endeavours will prevent others from accessing our classified information," he said. Safal Mishra said that he was not satisfied with his percentage as he was expecting better results. Son of a chemist store owner in Hazratganj, Safal said that for his preparation he kept away from social media and focused on the concepts of his subjects. Keen on joining an engineering course, he said that he wanted to carry out research at the National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) in Bengaluru. "I am very interested in physics and want to make a name for myself in this subject," he added. In the Lucknow district, the pass percentage for the intermediate students was 92.78 and for High School was 81.17 in the UP Board examinations 2025. As many as 53,832 students had registered for intermediate examinations in the district out of which 51,080 took the examinations and 47,393 cleared the examinations. In High School, 49,950 were registered for the examination, 48,407 took the examination and 39,291 cleared it. Incidentally, no student from Lucknow figures among the 10 toppers of both the intermediate and the High School examinations.



Ayush Kumar Maurya



Ritesh Kumar with parents



Safal Mishra with mother

Five workers inhale smoke in rice mill, die



District Magistrate Monika Rani and Superintendent of Police Ramnayan Singh meet injured at a hospital after at least five workers died due to suffocation caused by the smoke coming out of the dryer of a rice mill in Bahraich on Friday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bahraich

Five workers died allegedly after inhaling smoke emanating from a dryer machine that malfunctioned at a rice mill here on Friday. Three other workers, who fainted after inhaling the smoke, were rushed to the district hospital. District Magistrate Monika Rani said the workers were working on a paddy drying machine and the smoke emanated from it led to the deaths of five workers. The district administration has formed a joint investigation team to probe the incident. Preliminary investigation suggested that the dryer machine developed a technical snag and began emitting smoke, which the workers inhaled, leading to their suffocation, a senior official said.

According to Rajgarhia Rice Mill director Vinod Agarwal, the dryer is a fully automated plant and used to remove moisture from paddy through hot air generated by steam. Agarwal stated that there was no scope of smoke or fire in the machine. However, around 5 am, a worker reportedly saw smoke inside the dryer. The exact cause of the smoke remains unknown. After seeing the smoke, the worker switched off the machine and entered the plant to investigate. When he did not return, seven other workers entered the dryer one after another and became trapped and unconscious inside.

Mill workers then alerted the fire brigade, which extracted the unconscious workers and rushed them to the hospital. The joint investigation team that will probe the incident comprises the chief fire officer, assistant labour commissioner, general manager of District Industries Centre and technical experts. Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Ramanand Prasad Kushwaha said that further legal action would be determined based on the findings of this investigative team's report. He said there was no fire at the incident site.

Kushwaha had earlier said that several workers went to inspect smoke emanating from the dryer at the Rajgarhia rice mill on Friday morning. "The fumes were so overwhelming that all the workers present fainted at the scene. Upon receiving information, the fire service team reached the location and evacuated the affected individuals. They were transported to the district hospital. Five of the workers were pronounced dead upon arrival," he said.

Chief Medical Superintendent of the district hospital, Dr MM Tripathi, disclosed that five people were brought dead to the hospital, while three are undergoing treatment. Dr Tripathi identified the deceased as Rajesh Kumar (26), Bablu Prajapati (28), and Gaffar (22), all from Kannauj, Jahoore (60) from Shrivasti, and Bittu Shah (30) from Madhepura, Bihar. Those undergoing treatment were identified as Surendra (40) from Bahraich, Devi Prasad (25) from Shrivasti, and Sukhdev (30) from Tarn Taran, Punjab. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed grief at the loss of lives in the incident. The chief minister's office said in a post on X that Yogi Adityanath has directed the district administration officials to provide proper treatment to the injured.

'Hard work mantra of success' Prison no bar for good performance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Hard work, smart work and keeping off social media was the success mantra of the young achievers who secured high marks in the UP Board examinations, the results of which were declared on Friday afternoon. Sharing their experiences, a majority of the students said that they were not satisfied with their result and had expected better marks. Divya Singh of Class 12 at Lucknow Public College, Rajajipuram, who secured 80.6 per cent marks, said that she had been aiming for 90 per cent. "There was a lot of smart work that went into the preparation apart from hard work. Revision was a part of my daily routine and I kept away from social media," she said. Having big dreams of serving the country, the young achiever said that she wanted to appear for the civil services examination.

Rifa Qadir of Class 12, who secured 83.6 per cent marks, said that success could only be earned through hard work. "We need to do things by practically understanding concepts and not cramming up subjects," she said. Aiming to be a doctor, Rifa said that she wanted to serve the country by treating patients and helping needy persons.

Pihu Sharma, who secured 85 per cent marks in the intermediate exam, said she motivated herself, kept a goal and worked very hard for about 8-10 hours regularly. "I kept myself away from social media," she added. She aims to be an army officer as it is "an adventurous and wonderful job". Vivek Yadav, who secured 86.5 per cent marks in Class 10 examination, said the ladder to success was not wasting time and working hard. "I want to join the railway services and help in adding facilities for the passengers," he said.

Sachidanand Pandey, who secured 86 per cent marks in the High School exam, said that he scored less in mathematics which affected his overall percentage. "My success mantra was hard work, consistency, overcoming failures and keeping off social media because it is a big distraction," he said. Keen on joining the IIT, he said that he would work for the betterment of the country. Navya Yadav of Class 10 who secured 82 per cent marks said that teachers were the game changers because they explained the subjects well and worked hard with the students. "Parents also helped us. My mother taught me biology and I kept away from social media," said the young achiever. She aims to join the civil services. Shrishti Kannaujia of Class 10 who secured 81.3 per cent marks, said her parents played a great role in motivating her. She said she wanted to join the engineering services. Sarabhi of Class 10 who secured 70.2 per cent marks, said that she studied in the morning and put in six hours of work every day while keeping distance from social media. She wants to become an engineer. Priyanshi Verma of Class 10 who secured 89.6 per cent marks, said that taunts of people motivated her to give her best. "I was not good at studies so people used to taunt me which worked in my favour," she said. For Sachin Rawat of Class 12 who secured 89.2 per cent marks, the success mantra is to finish the syllabus and then revise. The young achiever wants to join civil services as this was the dream of his father who is no more. He said those who wanted to fare well in examinations should pay attention to small details. Yashi Saxena, who secured 94.5 per cent marks in Class 10 exam, said the success mantra was starting the preparations from Class 9 itself. Yashi wants to become an engineer.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Prayagraj

In an impressive result, 91 out of 94 prisoners who appeared for the Uttar Pradesh Board of Secondary Education's Class 12 examination from different jails across the state have passed the examination. According to the information revealed in the list released by the UP Board on Friday, the Agra jail saw the highest participation with 17 prisoners appearing for the Intermediate (Class 12) exams and all of them clearing it. The UP Board's list indicates that 94 prisoners from 32 jails across UP appeared in the Intermediate examination, with 91 of them passing, resulting in an impressive overall pass percentage of 96.81 per cent for the incarcerated candidates at this level. However, the performance of prisoners in the High School examination was comparatively lower. While all 10 prisoners from Ghaziabad and all 10 from Varanasi jails passed the High School exams, only 16 out of 21 prisoners from Agra and nine out of 13 from Bareilly were successful. Overall, 105 prisoners from 32 jails appeared in the High School examination, with 91 of them passing, resulting in a pass percentage of 86.67 per cent for prisoners at the High School level.

Senior Jail Superintendent Vipin Mishra said six inmates had appeared for the exams conducted by the Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad. Among them, three inmates cleared the High School examination with first division marks, while one inmate passed the Intermediate examination with first division. "In the High School results, inmate Ravi scored 75.8 per cent, Shivam secured 71.30 per cent and Nadeem Khan achieved 75.33 per cent, all qualifying in the first division," Mishra stated. To celebrate their success, Superintendent Mishra congratulated all the successful candidates and distributed sweets. "I encouraged them to continue on the path of becoming responsible citizens," he added.

UPCOS to protect interests of outsourced personnel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

In a major step towards protecting the interests of outsourcing personnel across Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath government has set up the Uttar Pradesh Outsourced Service Corporation (UPCOS). An announcement to this effect was made in the budget of Financial Year 26 for ensuring the protection of their service rights, labour entitlements and fair remuneration. Chief Minister Yogi, on Friday, reviewed the progress of the new policy measure. He emphasised the state's deep respect for the contributions of outsourcing personnel, recognising their commitment to public service. He reiterated the government's prior-

ity in ensuring their social and economic security. The chief minister highlighted the prevailing challenges faced by outsourced workers, such as salary deductions, delayed payments, denial of EPF/ESI benefits, lack of transparent recruitment and workplace harassment, and stressed the need for systemic reforms. In shaping the framework of the proposed corporation, the chief minister directed that a service provider agency should not remove any employee without the recommendation of the competent authority of the department concerned. He directed that full remuneration must be credited directly to employees' bank accounts by the 5th of every month, and timely deposits of EPF and ESI contributions must be ensured.

Jeevika, Swarnim shine in Kanpur

UP BOARD RESULTS



Jeevika Srivastava.



Swarnim Kushwaha with parents

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

Jeevika Srivastava, a student of Omkareshwar Saraswati Vidya Niketan Inter College, Kanpur, topped the city intermediate examination. She got the ninth rank in the state. Jeevika got 95.5 per

cent marks. Nishant Sachan stood second with 95 per cent marks.

Jeevika's father Neeraj Srivastava is a revenue inspector in the Water Works department. Mother Purnima Srivastava is a housewife. Jeevika said that now she wanted to pursue engineering. "I was

expecting to more marks but I did not do well in the computer exam, due to which my marks went down," she said.

Jeevika added, "I have always kept a distance from social media because it wastes time. Especially, I stopped using it two months before the exam. I did not watch

TV at all throughout the year." Jeevika's elder sister Ishika Srivastava is also an intermediate student in the same school and she has scored 93 per cent marks. Jeevika said, "if we want to achieve our goal then we should first follow the guidelines given by the school and not waste our time". Teachers congratulated them and fed them *laddus*. As many as 46,883 students appeared in the class XII examination and 123 centres were set up in the city.

Meanwhile, in the UP Board High School Examination 2025, Swarnim Kushwaha from Kanpur secured an impressive 97 per cent marks, becoming the city topper and achieving the sixth rank in the entire state. What makes his achievement even more remarkable is that he did it without any coaching — completely through self-study.

Swarnim's father, Sushil Kumar, runs a public service centre, while his mother, Sunita, is a government teacher at a primary school. Swarnim said that he studied for 10 to 11 hours daily and focused on understanding each subject thoroughly. He said, "One should understand every subject first and plan study time accordingly. Only then we can achieve success." Sharing his future plans, Swarnim said he wants to pursue B.Tech after clearing the intermediate examination with good marks in the science stream.

This year, 123 examination centres were set up in Kanpur for the UP Board High School examination in which a total of 45,906 students appeared.

Khyati Singh brings laurels to Varanasi



Director of Gopi Radha Balika Inter College offering sweets to a topper in Varanasi on Friday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

Khyati Singh of Vikas Inter College has brought laurels to Varanasi district by securing eighth position in the top-10 list of the state in class X of Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, popularly known as UP Board. There was an atmosphere of jubilation as the results of UP Board's High School and Intermediate were announced on Friday.

Khyati Singh of Khushal Nagar has achieved her success by getting 580 marks out of 600 i.e. 96.67 per cent marks. She gave the credit of her success to her parents and teachers. She said that the encouragement given by her father, Sanjay Kumar Singh, an accountant in a private firm while going to give the exam helped her a lot. Her mother Kanchan Singh is a housewife. There was a jubilant mood in her family on her achievement.

Overall, 21 students have made their places in the toppers' list of intermediate students in the district. These include 15 girls. The topper is Naman Gupta of Shrimati Pyari Devi Inter College, Ramnagar. He has secured first position by securing 92.20 per cent marks. In high school, there are 14 students in the toppers' list and out of these, nine are girls. After the results were declared, there was a festive atmosphere in most of the schools of the district. Besides, out of the 13 prisoners lodged in Varanasi's central and district jails, three high school students and 10 intermediate students have passed.

Meanwhile, according to director of Gopi Radha Balika Inter College Dr Shalini Shah, two High School students have brought laurels to the school by being included in the district's topper list.

Pragya Kapoor, an English medium student of Gopi Radha, secured seventh position in the district securing 570 marks out of 600. Chitranshi Kushwaha, a Hindi medium student, secured 566 marks out of 600 and secured 10th position in the district.

Director Dr Shalini Shah, along with principal Neeti Jaiswal congratulated the two meritorious students by offering them *laddus*. The director announced scholarships for both the students. Chief Administrative Officer Smriti Shah and Deputy Director Saloni Shah felicitated the meritorious students. Apart from this, 98 per cent of the students have achieved success in class X and XII. In class X 156 out of 159 students achieved success, while in intermediate, 194 out of 197 students were successful.

In high school, Pragya Kapoor secured 95 per cent marks and stood first and seventh in the district. Chitranshi Kushwaha secured second position in the school and 10th position in the district with 94.33 per cent marks. Riya Gupta secured the third position with 88 per cent marks. All the English medium high school students of the school passed.

In intermediate, overall topper Sneha Yadav secured the highest position in all the categories by scoring 83 per cent marks. Pratistha Jaiswal secured second position with 82.6 per cent marks and Sarvada and Jahnavi Chakrawal secured third position. The English medium science class and Hindi medium commerce class had 100 per cent result.

School manager Dr Manoj Kumar Shah, deputy manager Dr Abhinav Bhatt also congratulated and wished all the meritorious students, school principal and all teachers.

Shrey excels in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Prayagraj

Shrey Singh of Prayagraj has topped the district in High School examination of UP Board the result of which was declared here on Friday. He got 97.33 per cent marks. While Sakshi Ojha was at second place. She secured 96.50 per cent marks. While Aditya Kesari was at third place with 96.17 per cent marks.

In Prayagraj 93.99 per cent students passed in High School. The total registered students were 92,949. Out of these, 86,137 students appeared in the examination. Out of these, 80,962 students passed.

In the UP Board High School examination in Prayagraj, the board had set up 8,140 examination centres for the examination. The high school examination started on February 24, and ended on March 12, in 13 working days (rescheduled on March 9 in Prayagraj).

Meanwhile Shivani Singh secured second place in Intermediate examination in the Prayagraj. She secured 96.80 per cent



Students celebrating at a school in Prayagraj after the UP Board High School and Intermediate results were declared on Friday

marks. While Shipra was at third place. She got 481 marks. She got 96.20 per cent marks. A total of 1.9 lakh candidates from the Prayagraj district appeared in the inter-

mediate examination. As many as 1,09,388 candidates were registered for intermediate in Prayagraj, out of which 82.43 per cent candidates passed.

Protest against terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

The Samawadi Party workers under the leadership of city president (minority cell) Haider 'Guddu' lit candles and registered their protest against terrorism at the camp office of Samajwadi Minority Sabha in Aurangabad. They also paid tribute to the tourists who died in the terrorist attack.

Prominent among those who were also present in the programme were former city SP president Vishnu Sharma, city general Secretary of Minority Sabha Mohammad Ashfar Guddu Master, state secretary Javed Ansari, Shamim Ansari, Waqif Hussain 'Vicky', Latif Ahmed, Imtiaz Ansari, Rahul Chaurasia, Moin Ansari, Mumtaz Ansari, Ejaz Ahmed, Arshad Ansari, Asif, Shaheed Khan 'Chintu' etc. Earlier, on behalf of Saaisha Sanskriti Manch (SSM), a tribute meeting was organised at Shaheed Udayan (Sigra).

DM inspects health centre



District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh inspecting Urban Primary Health Centre, Birhana Road.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh carried out a surprise inspection at the Urban Primary Health Centre, Birhana Road, Civil Lines (MacRobert's Hospital). During the inspection, three Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) were found to be absent from duty. The attending medical officer informed that they had gone for school vaccination. However, the school concerned closes at 2 pm and they had not returned even till 4 pm.

When contacted over the phone, they said that they had been delayed due to personal work. Taking a serious note of this, the district magistrate directed that an explanation be sought from all three ANMs and clearly stated that personal work during official hours will not be tolerated.

Additionally, a lab technician was also found absent during the inspection. It was informed that he is posted at Chatai Mohal and is scheduled to be present there on

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. However, he was absent without prior notice and no leave application was found. The district magistrate ordered that his salary be withheld.

The OPD register was also reviewed during the inspection, in which records of 32 patients were found, including entries from the e-Sanjevani app. In this regard, in charge Dr Ramit Rastogi said that a new register had been issued a year ago but was not being used. The old register lacked essential columns like mobile numbers. On this the district magistrate directed that a clarification be sought from Medical Superintendent Dr Ashok and pharmacist Manoj Kumar.

The district magistrate also instructed that an explanation be sought from the chief medical officer and additional chief medical officer for laxity in supervision.

Further, the district magistrate directed the CMO to ensure proper maintenance of records and that all urban primary health centres function in accordance with government standards.

LIC to expedite claim settlement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

The LIC of India has expressed deep sorrow over the death of innocent civilians in Pahalagan in the terrorist attack on April 22.

LIC of India is committed to support the affected people and will expedite claim settlement to provide financial relief.

CEO and MD, LIC, Siddhartha Mohanty, announced several concessions to ease the difficulties of LIC claimants. In lieu of death certificate, any proof in government records of death of policyholder due to terrorist attack or any compensation paid by central/state government will be accepted as proof of death. All efforts will be made to ensure that claimants are reached out to and claims are settled expeditiously to the affected families. For further assistance claimants can contact the nearest LIC Branch/Division/Customer Zone or can also call call centre 022-68276827.

Tribute to Bahuguna

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

The members of Adhivakta Kalyan Sangharsh Samiti organised a special event to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna on Friday. On the occasion, Amit Singh, General Secretary of the Kanpur Bar Association, paid floral tribute to Bahuguna's portrait and recalled his significant contribution in launching the first welfare scheme for advocates in the state in 1974 — the Advocate Group Insurance Scheme.

UPSIDA contributes significantly to elevating state over past 8 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

Over the past eight years, Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) has significantly contributed to elevating Uttar Pradesh to the ranks of the nation's leading industrial states. Guided by the state government's progressive industrial policies, UPSIDA has fostered an investment-friendly environment that is efficient, transparent and conducive to the establishment of industries.

UPSIDA Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Mayur Maheshwari said, "Under the visionary guidance and dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the ambitious mission to transform Uttar Pradesh into a \$1 trillion economy is steadily gaining momentum. The state government's prioritisation of industrial development and its investor-centric approach have yielded highly positive outcomes. In the past year alone, UPSIDA has adopted a structured and strategic approach, resulting in the highest-ever number of industrial plot allocations. Additionally, the authority has achieved

record revenue generation during this period, reflecting the growing confidence among investors and the creation of a robust industrial ecosystem in the state. Our consistent endeavour is to make the land allotment process even more transparent, streamlined and swift in the coming time, ensuring that investors do not face any unnecessary delays or procedural hurdles. We are fully committed to providing all necessary support and infrastructure to facilitate the timely establishment of industrial units across Uttar Pradesh."

CORE GM inspects Operation Control Centre, DFCCIL

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Prayagraj

General Manager, Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE), Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, conducted an inspection of the Operation Control Centre (OCC), DFCCIL, Prayagraj on Friday, marking his first official visit since assuming charge at CORE, Prayagraj.

During the inspection, Srivastava thoroughly reviewed various austere and advanced safety measures implemented in daily train operations. He interacted with officials from Operations, Engineering, Signalling & Telecommunication, Traction and Rolling Stock (TRS), and the Traction Power Control (TPC) team, acknowledging their dedicated efforts in ensuring safe and efficient train movement.

Srivastava was particularly impressed by the 2x25 kV traction power system adopted by DFCCIL, which is a first-of-its-kind in Indian Railways for freight corridors.

He noted that with stations spaced approximately 30 km apart and the high train density (10-12 freight trains running concurrently in a section), this technology significantly reduces transmission losses and ensures seamless power supply to moving trains.

The automated sectioning and feeder control mechanisms were described as a boon for high-speed



freight movement, greatly enhancing the reliability and throughput of operations. Srivastava remarked that DFCCIL's successful implementation of 2x25 kV technology can offer valuable insights for Indian Railways, especially in the context of upcoming plans to enable train operations at speeds up to 160 km/h. The technical know-how, infrastructure design, and operational strategies used by DFCCIL are highly relevant for future electrification and speed enhancement projects under CORE's purview.

He lauded the expertise of DFCCIL's staff posted at OCC-

Prayagraj and praised the professional working environment, coordination among departments and the role of OCC as the nerve centre of freight movement across the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor.

He concluded stating the environment at OCC is highly professional and well-structured.

The integration of modern technology and the commitment of the staff towards safety and efficiency are truly commendable. During the inspection, Chief General Manager, Prayagraj, Devendra Singh, and others were present.

Babasaheb always strived for society based on justice and equality: Patel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

Under the ongoing Saman Abhiyan being organised in connection with the birth anniversary of the 'architect of the Constitution' Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, regional president of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Dilip Patel met the intellectuals of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Sundarpur area and presented a booklet written on the truth of Baba Saheb's life and his thoughts.



On this occasion, the regional BJP chief said that Babasaheb always strived for a society based on justice and equality. "Taking inspiration from his great personality and life values, we should imbibe his

ideals", he said, adding that the central and state governments under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are continuously working to fulfil the dreams of Baba Saheb.

"In the last decade, 25 crore people in the country have come out of the poverty line and the SC Act has been strengthened", Patel said, adding that along with this, various schemes including Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana have proved effective in making the lives of the poor prosperous.

SC slams Rahul over remarks on Savarkar, stays HC order

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday censured Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for “irresponsible” remarks on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar at a rally in Maharashtra but stayed the criminal proceedings against him. A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan said, “Let’s not mock our freedom fighters.”

The bench further asked senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Gandhi, whether he knew that even Mahatma Gandhi used the words such as “your faithful servant” in his communications to the Britishers.

When Singhvi argued charges of promoting enmity and public mischief were not made out against Gandhi, the bench remarked, “You are most obedient, does your client know that Mahatma Gandhi also used ‘your faithful servant’ while addressing the viceroy? Can Mahatma Gandhi be called a ‘servant of Britishers’ merely because he addressed himself to the viceroy as ‘your servant’? In those days, even I have seen, our judges of the Calcutta High Court used to address Chief Justice as writing ‘your servant.’”

Justice Datta added, “Does your client know that his grandmother (Indira Gandhi), when she was the Prime Minister, also sent a letter praising this



Supreme Court of India

FILE PHOTO

very gentleman (Savarkar)?” The judge went on, “So, let’s not make irresponsible statements about freedom fighters. You have made a good point on law, you are entitled to stay. We are not saying anything on that.”

“Any further statement by him (Gandhi) will be taken up suo motu. No more words on our freedom fighters, they have given us freedom and we treat them like this? This is not the way,” the bench warned. The top court then issued notice to Uttar

Pradesh government and complainant advocate Nripendra Pandey and stayed a Allahabad High Court order which refused to quash trial court’s summons against Gandhi.

Singhvi urged the court to not make any comments and said Gandhi did not intend to create enmity between the groups. The bench retorted, “This is not how you treat freedom fighters, when you don’t know anything about the history of India, you should not make any such com-

ments.” Justice Datta further said, “He is a leader of a political party and why would you make a comment like this, you go to Maharashtra, he (Savarkar) is worshipped there. Don’t do this.”

Singhvi said the message was loud and clear. The top court, however, stayed the criminal proceedings against Gandhi in the case lodged in Uttar Pradesh.

Gandhi moved the apex court against an order of the high court. A case under various provisions for alleged offences such as promoting enmity between classes and public mischief was lodged against him by Pandey.

The case stems from the Congress leader’s comments on Savarkar made on November 17, 2022, during his Bharat Jodo Yatra at a rally in Maharashtra’s Akola district.

The Lucknow bench of the high court on April 4 said that Gandhi can file a revision petition before the sessions court, making the high court’s intervention unnecessary at this stage.

Before the high court, Gandhi had challenged a trial court’s decision to summon him in the case, while contesting the ongoing proceedings against him.

The complainant has accused Gandhi of intentionally insulting Savarkar during the rally and said his remarks were part of a “well-planned conspiracy” to defame Savarkar.

CM Naidu invites PM Modi to Amaravati launch on May 2

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Friday and invited him for the groundbreaking ceremony of the renewed ₹65,000-crore Amaravati capital city project scheduled for May 2.

During the brief meeting, Naidu also discussed the recent terrorist attack in Kashmir’s Pahalgam, which killed 26 people, mostly tourists, and injured several others on Tuesday, sources said. He informed the prime minister that two people from Andhra Pradesh — S Madhusudhan Rao, a software engineer and JS Chandramouli, a retired bank employee — were among those killed in the attack.

Naidu revived the Amaravati city project — the new capital of Andhra Pradesh on the banks of the Krishna River — after returning to power in the state in 2024.

The project remained stalled between 2019 and 2024.

The chief minister aims to build a world-class, inclusive and modern urban hub inspired by global cities such as Amsterdam, Singapore and Tokyo.

Amaravati was designated as the new capital following Andhra Pradesh’s bifurcation in 2014.

The Amaravati Master Plan, crafted by UK-based firm Foster and Partners, envisions development over a 217.23 square kilometre area between Vijayawada and Guntur towns.

The city is expected to create 1.5 million jobs, house 3.5 million people, and have a GDP of \$35 billion by 2050.

Officials said the estimated budget for Amaravati’s development works as determined in 2024 is about ₹64,910 crore, with Phase-1 to be completed over the next three years.

The Government of India has committed ₹15,000 crore in financial assistance and facilitated World Bank and Asian Development Bank support totalling USD 1.6 billion.

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) is designing branding programmes to attract anchor investors and private sector participation.

Public-private partnership projects are being promoted, with a special purpose vehicle envisioned to meet viability gap funding.

Sibal seeks special session on J and K attack

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to call a special session of Parliament and pass a resolution condemning the Pahalgam terror attack and conveying the message to the world that the country is united. Sibal also suggested to the government to send out delegations of the ruling and Opposition MPs to various important countries so that diplomatic pressure can be created on Pakistan. Addressing a press conference here, the former Union minister suggested that like the US does with its sanctions, India should tell all major nations who have trade with Pakistan that they cannot come to our market if they trade with Islamabad.

“In 1972, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had said, ‘we will bleed India with a thousand cuts’. Following that, terror attacks have taken place in Parliament in 2001, Kaluchak massacre in 2002, Indian Institute of Science was attacked in 2005, Mumbai train bombings in July 2006, Mumbai attack in 2008, Pathankot airstrike attack in 2016, Uri terror strike in 2016 and Pulwama suicide bombings in 2019, this continues,” he said. “In context, I want to suggest to the PM to convene a special session of Parliament and hold discussion over this, because the coun-



Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal

FILE PHOTO

try is standing with you. The opposition is with you because it is an attack on India’s sovereignty,” the Independent Rajya Sabha MP said. Sibal said a resolution must be passed by Parliament unanimously to express the sentiment of the nation in front of the world that everyone is standing with the government and the country is together and will not tolerate such acts.

“A terrorist is a terrorist, is a terrorist, he has no religion. Pakistan wants to put forth its issues before the world through terrorism and thinks that its military system will stay in place,” he said. Sibal also called for delegations of the ruling and Opposition MPs to be sent to countries

such as Africa, the US, Europe, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Russia and South America, so that “diplomatic pressure” is created. “We should tell all major nations who have trade with Pakistan that they cannot come to our market if they trade with Pakistan. What the US does to other nations, do it, and the country will stand with you,” the former Congress leader said. “We should present this point in every diplomatic initiative. The United Nations should create pressure. A resolution must be passed in the Security Council, and we should see whether China supports it or goes against it. We have to take these diplomatic initiatives,” Sibal asserted.

“The statements being made in mainstream media are moving towards the direction Pakistan wants us to move. Does the mainstream media want to support Pakistan? Some BJP leaders are making statements and doing the same,” he said. “Taking the life of an innocent be it of any religion you should not take political advantage of that. I agree with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat’s statement that if you get together you will be heard,” he said. Sibal also criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not attending the all-party meeting on Thursday.

Social media posts reflect on service: New civil services guidelines

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

All recently selected civil service candidates have to be mindful that their social media posts reflect on the service and they should reject all forms of inducement such as gifts, hospitality, and free publicity, official guidelines issued on Friday stipulated.

Civil servants are the public face of the state and their conduct is under constant public scrutiny, it said.

“You must ensure that your personal conduct and official and social interface with the general public, people’s representatives, corporate entities, civil society organisations, government personnel, all other dignitaries and vulnerable sections of the society is courteous, respectful, dignified and appropriate,” read the guidelines issued by Mussoorie-based Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), a premier training institute for the civil servants.

The guidelines are meant for the candidates selected through the civil services examination 2024, the results of which were announced on Tuesday. As many as 1,009 candidates cleared that exam.

“As a future civil servant you are expected to be a role model throughout. Your past actions also will be a reflection of your character and personality throughout your career.

“You should start displaying exemplary conduct that befits an officer right from this day and not wait for your training to start. You will go on to occupy important positions in institutions of governance and public service delivery,” it said.

Comments and any posts made or facilitated “by you on social media will also reflect on the service,” the guidelines said. “Therefore, you should remain mindful, even at this stage, of avoiding posts that would or could defame the service or its members.

“Be diligent and judicious about posting content that could be considered unprofessional or inappropriate for an officer or member of service,” it said.

One should, in particular, refrain from impulsively posting statements on social media, the guidelines said.

“Pause and reflect on the possible impact of what you are going to post. Rather, it is advisable to avoid posting any content lest it may lead to misinterpreta-

tion at an individual or institutional level,” it added. The motto of the academy, ‘Sheelam Param Bhushanam,’ — Character is the supreme embellishment — guides the officers and alumni to conduct themselves with integrity, dignity, humility and rectitude at all times, the guidelines said, adding that their “inner conscience is the best way to go forward” and that these dos and don’ts “can be a good start.”

The guidelines, issued by the LBSNAA Director Sriram Taranikanti also said the candidates are expected to abstain from consuming any intoxicant substances in public

“The credibility of an officer is decided by his or her integrity, a timeless virtue. It is important to keep a diligent account of financial issues and reject all forms of inducement such as gifts and hospitality and free publicity. In this context care has to be taken that your success is not leveraged inappropriately at any stage hereon,”



President Droupadi Murmu departs for Vatican City to attend the State Funeral of Pope Francis

President Murmu departs for Pope Francis’ funeral

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday departed for Vatican City to attend the funeral of Pope Francis later this week. She is accompanied by Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for Minority Affairs and Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, George Kurian and Deputy Speaker of Goa Legislative Assembly, Joshua De Souza, her office said in a social media post.

Murmu will be on a two-day visit to Vatican City and offer condolences on behalf of the government and people of India. “President Droupadi Murmu departs for Vatican City to attend the State Funeral of HH Pope Francis,” read the post from the President’s secretariat. Francis, who was the first non-European Pope in nearly 1,300 years, died on Easter

Monday. He was 88. Murmu will pay homage to Pope Francis by laying a wreath at Basilica of Saint Peter in Vatican City on Friday. “On April 26, the president will attend the funeral Mass of His Holiness Pope Francis at Saint Peter’s Square in Vatican City, which will be attended by dignitaries from around the world,” Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement. India declared a three-day state mourning on the passing of Pope Francis.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi visited the Apostolic Nunciature here on Friday and offered condolences on the passing away of Pope Francis. The former Congress chief also paid a courtesy call on Archbishop Dr Leopoldo Girelli, the Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal. Apostolic nunciature is a top-level diplomatic mission of the Holy See, the central governing body of the Catholic Church and the Vatican City.

India rises when hit: Scindia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Offering condolences to the victims of Pahalgam terror attack, Telecom minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday said inhuman elements struck at the soul of India without realising that the country rises even faster when challenged.

While speaking at a Telecom Engineering Centre event on Quantum Technology, Scindia said India will respond to the terrorists and their backers under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has said that those responsible for the terrorist attack and their conspirators will be punished “beyond their imagination”.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday declared that the killers of Pahalgam will be pursued “to the ends of the earth” and promised to “identify, track and punish every terrorist and their back-

ers”. Scindia said that the incident at Pahalgam was a cowardly heinous attack by inhuman elements that claimed innocent lives.

On Tuesday, at least 26 persons — mostly tourists — were killed by terrorists on Tuesday at the Baisaran meadows in Pahalgam in one of the worst terror attacks on civilians in Kashmir in the past many years.

“Those inhumans struck at the soul of our country. But they do not realise that India rises even faster and higher when challenged at this very core,” he said after paying condolences to the victims of the Pahalgam attack.

“India will rise, I am confident and I think we all are confident that we the people of India stand united across every state, across every faith and with one voice and we will answer these elements with the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi,” Scindia said.

Journalist-turned-IAS, Ruchika Jha secures AIR 51

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

From breaking news to cracking the UPSC Civil Services exam, Ruchika Jha’s journalism background helped her master current affairs and develop a habit of deep thinking and reading.

Jha, who cleared the prestigious exam in her fifth attempt, bagging the 51st rank, is also an electronics engineer. However, it was during her stint at the PTI newsroom that she discovered a passion for serving the country.

While balancing the demanding newsroom job with studies was an arduous task, Jha used her free time and weekends to strengthen her foundation.

Speaking exclusively to media, Jha said, “My UPSC journey started in 2020 while I was working as a copy editor with the Press Trust of India. I had completed my

journalism diploma from the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) and then joined the media industry. While working at PTI, I began preparing for the civil services.

“The idea of serving the country and working at the grassroots level inspired me. It was not easy to balance my job and studies, but I used my free time and weekends to build my foundation,” she said.

Jha asserted that her journalism background helped her in preparation, as her daily rendezvous with news solidified her knowledge of current affairs.

“Every day, I had to read, edit, and publish news stories, which improved my understanding of current affairs and many important topics. It also helped me develop a habit of deep reading and thinking. PTI supported me throughout the journey, especially when I asked for a sabbatical to

focus more on studies. “I am thankful to my then colleagues for extending all the necessary support when I was working at PTI from November 2018 to April 2022. This was my fifth attempt and second interview. The journey had its ups and downs, but with hard work, patience and the support of my family, friends and former colleagues, I finally achieved my goal in 2025,” she said.

Born and raised in Delhi, Jha’s family hails from Bihar. “My father is a Chemistry teacher and has always inspired me with his discipline and dedication, while my mother is a homemaker who has been my biggest emotional support throughout this journey.

“My family’s simple and hardworking background has always kept me grounded and motivated to work towards my goals,” she said. Jha is among the 32 can-

didates from Jamia Millia Islamia’s (JMI) Residential Coaching Academy (RCA) who have cleared the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2024, one of the most competitive exams in the country.

The Civil Services Examination is conducted in three stages — preliminary, mains and interview — to select officers for the IAS, IFS, IPS and other central services.

The preliminary exam was held on June 16, 2024, with 9,92,599 candidates applying and 5,83,213 appearing. A total of 14,627 candidates qualified for the main exam held in September, and 2,845 reached the interview stage, which was conducted from January 7 to April 17, 2025.

This year, the UPSC has recommended 1,009 candidates — 725 men and 284 women — for appointment to various services.

NHRC condemns Pahalgam terror attack, calls for action

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Friday condemned the Pahalgam terror attack and said the time has come to act against those indulging in terrorism, “directly or indirectly”.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said it was “deeply disturbed” by the news of the terror attack, and hoped “the state will take all necessary steps to fix accountability” and “bring the perpetrators to justice”.

In a statement, the rights body also said that the time has come to act against those who are “aiding, abetting, supporting and advancing terrorism and to hold them accountable for this menace against

humanity”. Terrorists struck at a prime tourist location in Pahalgam in Anantnag district on Tuesday, killing at least 26 people, mostly tourists, and injuring several others. The NHRC said it “condemns the dastardly attack on the unarmed and unsuspecting innocent civilians who were on a holiday to the Valley”.

The attack, the worst in the Valley since the 2019 Pulwama strike, has drawn condemnation from several countries, with top world leaders extending their solidarity to India and condolences to the victims’ families. “The incident has shaken the conscience of every right thinking human being as a serious issue of violation of human rights of the innocent victims and their families,” the NHRC said in the statement.

Editor's TAKE

Lessons from Chernobyl disaster

Its remembrance day is a stark reminder of nuclear perils and human resilience

Every year on April 26, the world pauses to commemorate International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day, honouring the victims of one of the gravest nuclear catastrophes in human history. It is not just a day of remembrance, but also a solemn call for vigilance — against the potential hazards of nuclear power and the far-reaching consequences when things go wrong.

On April 26, 1986, Reactor No 4 of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, located in what is now Ukraine, exploded during a late-night safety test gone wrong.

The blast released radioactive material across much of the western Soviet Union, affecting territories now known as Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. Nearly 8.4 million people were exposed to high levels of radiation, with long-term effects on their health, environment, and livelihoods.

What made Chernobyl particularly harrowing was not just the scale of the disaster but also the delayed and inadequate response. The Soviet Government did not request international help until 1990, four years after the explosion, acknowledging only then the need for global cooperation in managing the fallout.

History records only two instances where nuclear explosions directly led to large-scale human casualties: the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and the industrial disaster at Chernobyl in 1986. While the former were acts of war, Chernobyl was a stark reminder that nuclear technology, even in peaceful applications, can spiral into catastrophe without stringent oversight and safety protocols. Both events left indelible scars on humanity and taught us one crucial lesson: nuclear power is not merely a technological marvel — it is a profound responsibility.

In response to the disaster, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 45/190 in 1990, launching a global movement to mitigate the consequences of the explosion.

Over the years, more than 230 projects have been implemented in health, nuclear safety, environmental restoration, clean food production, and education. In 2002, the UN changed its approach, focusing not only on humanitarian aid but also on long-term sustainable development. Agencies such as the UNDP led regional recovery efforts in Belarus, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation.

The launch of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN) in 2009 further reinforced this developmental vision. Perhaps the most symbolic milestone was the 2019 completion and handover of the New Safe Confinement, a \$2.2 billion engineering marvel built to encase the damaged reactor. Funded by over 45 nations, it stands as a global symbol of what international cooperation can achieve in the name of safety.

Technological advancements have significantly improved nuclear safety since 1986. Modern reactors are equipped with passive safety systems, improved materials, and fail — safes that automatically shut down operations during emergencies. International regulatory bodies have also tightened oversight, ensuring higher standards for reactor design, operation, and waste management. Yet, the core truth remains: no system is immune to human error, natural disasters, or unforeseen technical failures.

As the world grapples with climate change and searches for clean energy alternatives, nuclear power is once again in the spotlight. While it offers low-carbon energy, it also carries high risks — making it imperative that caution, transparency, and global cooperation remain the cornerstones of nuclear development.

International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day is not only about looking back; it's about ensuring we never repeat the mistakes of the past. It's about remembering the lives affected, the lessons learned, and the enduring message: with great power comes great responsibility — especially when that power lies in the nucleus of the atom. Let us honour this day by committing to a future where nuclear technology is wielded wisely, ethically, and with the utmost respect for life and the planet.

A crime against humanity

As India reels from the horror, pahalgam massacre underscores the persistent threat of cross-border terror, the fragility of peace in Jammu and Kashmir, and the urgent need for a robust national and global response

In the deadliest terror attack on civilians in the country since the Mumbai mayhem of 26/11, a picturesque meadow near Jammu & Kashmir's Pahalgam, which is the most — loved tourist destination and mini-Switzerland of India, was marred by a heart-wrenching act of perpetrators who brutally cut short innocent lives, leaving the consciousness of the nation stirred and the entire community devastated.

The ghastly and barbaric attack was not merely aimed at tourists or individuals; rather, it is seen as an assault and atrocity on humanity that has shattered the subtle fabric of cohesive society, as the terrorists selectively killed innocent people point-blank only after identifying their religion (Hindu).

It appears that they have tried to create inflammatory narratives in India, which is currently fending off the kerfuffle caused by the Waqf Bill and communally charged Aurangzeb rhetoric.

The Resistance Front (TRF), a splinter group of the Pakistan — based Lashkar-e-Taiba, is suspected of orchestrating Tuesday's terrorist attack in Pahalgam's Baisaran, which claimed 26 lives. The timing of the Pahalgam meadow massacre exposes the nefarious *modus operandi* of Pakistan, which has been the biggest enemy of normalcy in the Valley.

The assaults were carried out when Prime Minister Modi was visiting Jeddah for diplomatic engagement and bilateral talks to boost the centuries — old economic and socio-cultural ties between India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The attack unfolded while US Vice President JD Vance's ongoing four — day visit to India marked an important milestone for the diplomatic push to deepen bilateral dialogues during Trump's trade tariff global gung — ho.

The Pahalgam terror attack, which mirrors former US President Bill Clinton's 2000 trip to India when LeT carried out a Sikh massacre in Chittisinghpura in Anantnag district of J&K, could be seen in the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's reluctance to entertain Pakistan's Kashmir clamour.

The Pahalgam incident took place exactly a week after Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir made the most provocative comments filled with anti-India rants and called Kashmir Pakistan's "jugular vein." Pakistan, which currently represents hunger, poverty, extremism, terrorism, and economic decline — is at a crossroads as its military is reported to be facing the fire of inter-



RAMAKANT CHAUDHARY

caused great concern for China, which has significantly invested in several projects, including energy, transport, and infrastructure, in Pakistan. Pakistan's failure to engage with tribal communities has fuelled the growth of armed separatist groups, targeting security forces, Chinese interests, and migrant workers.

The growing alienation of the population, driven by the denial of democratic and economic rights, has fuelled anger, especially among the youth.

The brutal attack on tourists, which rarely happened even during the heydays of militancy in the Valley, vividly shows the frustration and desperation of Pakistan-based terror outfits.

The barbaric attack happened just ahead of the Amarnath Yatra, which attracts huge

numbers of Hindu tourists and pilgrims. The terror attack in Pahalgam could be seen in the light of the hijacking of the Jaffar Express train by Baloch separatists in March, exposing the bluff and inability of the Pakistan army.

The failure of Islamabad to curb the Baloch insurgency has caused great concern for China, which has significantly invested in several projects, including energy, transport, and infrastructure, in Pakistan. Pakistan's failure to engage with tribal communities has fuelled the growth of armed separatist groups, targeting security forces, Chinese interests, and migrant workers.

With peace limping back to the Valley in the face of a slump in terror attacks in the Valley, lakhs of tourists have made a beeline to the Valley. It prompted huge investment in the region to win the hearts of tourists.

As tulips bloom and tourism booms — this year Srinagar has witnessed huge footfalls of domestic and international tourists. The growing tourism endorses the success saga of the Government and the engagement of locals and Kashmiri youths for harvesting income, heralding normalcy in the Valley. So, the attack on tourism was the obvious choice of militants and "Mullahs."

The Government response must be befitting and multi-dimensional to give a tight lesson to evil minds. The Pahalgam attack is the biggest since the Pulwama attack of 2019 in terms of casualties. India's past retaliatory actions are still echoing. The Uri surgical strikes (2016) and Balakot airstrikes (2019) have formed the foundation of India's punitive responses. In its full-scale diplomatic retaliation, the PM

Modi Government took a strong stand: Keeping the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 in Abeyance, Shutting of Attari Integrated Check Post, Stopping of SAARC Visa Scheme for Pakistanis, Cutting of High Commission Strength to 30, and Declaration of Military Advisors in the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi Persona Non-Grata. India's military response to the Pahalgam attack appears to be another defining moment in the turbulent history of Kashmir and could add a new chapter in dealing with terrorism.

A swift and strategic response will not only deter future attacks but also reinforce India's commitment to safeguarding its citizens and restoring peace in the Valley.

By addressing the root causes of unrest and strengthening security measures, India can ensure that such heinous acts do not derail the progress towards stability and prosperity in Jammu & Kashmir.

It is pertinent to mention a famous quote of Kofi Annan to end terrorism: "The only way to deal with the scourge of terrorism is to address its root causes and unite against it with unwavering resolve."

(The author works with PRP Group as Content Head. Views are personal)

Towards economy with a conscience

SECOND Opinion

BY RAJYOGI BRAHMUKUMAR NIKUNJJI

During the last two decades or so there has been a growing trend towards globalisation of trade and commerce and a free-market economy. The academic economists believe that these steps would give a spurt to forces of competitiveness, efficiency, better job opportunities and generation of more wealth and prosperity.

But one has to take into account not just these benefits but also the overall consequences of globalisation and the free play of market forces. As everyone knows, globalisation is only a small bit of economic philosophy or policy and one must know the all-inclusive worldview or philosophy of which it forms a part. Without viewing it in the full context, one may have an erroneous view of it.

Like, the globalisation of business and trade without a global view of society as a global family would lead to social tensions and economic strife and this is what we are experiencing today.

Also, globalisation in economics is an outward-looking view and if it has no corresponding inward — looking view, it would unleash bitter competition and in the absence of the inward-looking balancing forces, it would lead to stark materialism and commercialism, diminishing or setting at naught the values of sympathy, kindness, compassion, world-brotherhood,

co-operation and so on. Thus, it would not only destabilise the financial markets but create disharmony in human relations as well. Moreover, it's a known fact that capital tends to flow from countries that have free — market economies to other countries where it has a better chance of profit by employing cheap labour, available resources, etc., whereas labour does not find it as easy to go to places where it has better prospects because labour has emotional ties with family and is affected by family circumstances.

Thus, due to better mobility and flexibility of capital in contrast to that of labour, international portfolio investors, and not the labour, would benefit the most.

Thus, globalisation would result in disproportionate profit to those who can invest capital and it would lead to uneven distribution of benefits and social and economic deprivation. Further, in a free-market economy, every player in the manufacturing sector would tend to drive others out of the market and thus competition would grow and stiffen and the financial markets, which are inherently unstable, would accentuate instability.

Thus, the whole economy would never return to some kind of equilibrium. In this state of instability, the business and industrial class would tend to adopt all sorts of unfair means to prevent any dwindling of its profit and, thus, the whole atmosphere would be vitiated, for the portfolio investors would try to take the politicians and the bureaucrats also with them to survive or thrive.

This would further give rise to corruption, black money and other evils. Thus, it is strange that our leaders talk of moral

values on the one hand and of globalisation on the other hand without making any efforts to make popular a global spiritual view of society as a global family. One can see that the major economic powers today dominate the multilateral trading system. They define and redefine globalisation to suit their national interests. This leads to clashes of interests and instability. Again, to assess the merits or demerits of a system, one should also go into the ideological base of a policy and take note of its consequences.

We should ask ourselves the question as to why we want a free-market economy or a state — controlled one. We should be clear in our mind about our desirable goal and see whether a particular form of economy takes us towards that goal. If our goal is to remove poverty and great economic disparity and to have a society based on economic justice and fair play, then we should sort out whether globalisation or a state-controlled economy can do it better.

This should be judged by those who are neutral and have no vested interests in either form of economy. So, if in the present world situation, we must have globalisation, then we should have a global open society that has some sort of state control in certain sectors and constantly strives to correct and improve. In any case, a happy blend of economics and spirituality — both based on values — is necessary and, in the process of decision-making, involvement of such institutions as are neutral would be beneficial.

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

Leaderspeak



The whole country is with the bereaved families. The Government is trying its best to ensure the well-being of those injured. Someone has lost a son, someone has lost a brother, someone has lost life partner... From Kargil to Kanyakumari, there is grief and rage. This attack was not just on innocent tourists; the country's enemies have shown the audacity to attack India's soul.

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



Letters to the Editor

A selfless act of a pony operator

Madam — I wish to pay my heartfelt tribute to Syed Adil Hussain Shah, the 30-year-old pony operator who displayed unimaginable bravery during the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam.

Adil selflessly attempted to shield tourists he had escorted to Baisaran Meadow, ultimately losing his life in the process. Reports state he even tried to snatch a weapon from one of the terrorists before being shot thrice in the chest. His sacrifice is both heroic and heartbreaking. In a time marred by religious polarisation, Adil's actions remind us of the innate goodness and humanity that transcends faith. He stands as a beacon of courage and compassion — proof that heroism knows no religion. While extremists attempt to divide us along communal lines, Adil's martyrdom reaffirms the simple truth: humanity is our greatest religion. It is often said that a terrorist has no religion. But those who die protecting others, regardless of the victims' faiths, show us what it means to truly embody divine values.

In contrast, religious zealots who push a narrative of "our god versus their god" only undermine the very essence of spirituality. Adil's story deserves national recognition. Let us remember him not just as a brave man from Pahalgam, but as a true son of India. We must amplify such stories of unity and courage, and let them shape the discourse of our nation.

SUJIT DEJI | KOLKATA

Bullish sentiment reflects optimism

Madam — The Indian stock market witnessed a remarkable upswing on April 24, 2025, with the BSE Sensex closing at 74,339.44 — an increase of 486.50 points (0.66 per cent). The NSE Nifty too mirrored this surge, climbing 167.95 points (0.75 per cent) to settle at 22,570.35.

The momentum was largely driven by robust performances in the banking, financial, and metal sectors. Investor sentiment appears buoyant, with consistent buying indicating renewed faith in India's macroeconomic outlook.

Analysts attribute this positive trend to multiple factors: stable inflation rates, proactive fiscal policies, and strong corporate earnings. Foreign investment has also shown encouraging signs, reflecting global confidence in India's economic resilience. These gains are not just numbers — they signify broader economic stability and the potential for sustained growth.

A bullish market often translates into increased consumer and business confidence, spurring spending, job creation, and infrastructural development.

However, while optimism is warranted, it's essential to remain cautious and well-informed. Markets can be volatile, and policy decisions — both domestic and international — can influence future trends. Nevertheless, this surge offers a promising indicator for investors and the economy at large.

AAMIR ZAMAN | MUMBAI

An urgent appeal against rising hate

Madam — It is deeply distressing to witness the growing atmosphere of hostility and organised propaganda against minorities, particularly Muslims, in our country. As the world's largest democracy, India should be a model of coexistence and inclusivity.

Unfortunately, a segment of political and ideological forces seems determined to distort this legacy. Every day, Muslims are subjected to suspicion, hate, and vilification — under the guise of nationalism, patriotism, or allegations of extremism. These narratives are often propagated through media, political rhetoric, and social platforms, creating an environment of fear and alienation. The consequences are grave: rising intolerance, social division, and the erosion of communal harmony.

Such developments are a betrayal of India's constitutional ideals and its centuries-old tradition of unity in diversity. When citizens are targeted based on their faith, we do not just harm the targeted community — we weaken the fabric of the nation itself.

I urge your esteemed platform to bring attention to this pressing issue. The public must be made aware of these undercurrents of hate, so they can reject the politics of division and stand up for truth and justice. Only by confronting these challenges together can we ensure that India remains a truly secular and democratic republic.

OMAR FARUQUE MONDAL | GOALPARA

PAHALGAM ATTACK: A NATION'S ANGUISH DEMANDS STRONG ACTION

This is in reference to the headlines and editorial on the Pahalgam tragedy (April 24). The entire nation is engulfed in grief and anger over this horrific attack.

While diplomatic steps such as suspending the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, shutting down the Attari check post, withdrawing from the SAARC visa exemption scheme, recalling our diplomats, and asking Pakistani officials to leave are substantial in the long term, they fall short of addressing the immediate public outrage and sorrow. The statements of sympathy from Islamic nations to the victims' families seem, as always, perfunctory and lack meaningful substance.

These symbolic gestures do little to shake or impact Pakistan. The Jammu and Kashmir Government must accept accountability for this grave security lapse. Inviting tourists without ensuring their safety is a betrayal of trust. The popular Baisaran Valley, often referred to as "Mini Switzerland," attracts scores of tourists.

Yet, had there been adequate police or paramilitary deployment along the route, this tragedy could likely have been prevented.

Tourists were left vulnerable, ferried on ponies through remote and risky paths by pony operators, many of whom are reportedly insensitive to the needs of travellers. It is time the Government reconsidered promoting Jammu and Kashmir as a safe tourist destination.

The Northeast, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Odisha offer equally, if not more, breathtaking views without the shadow of constant threat.

Mere symbolic gestures — candle marches, market closures, and all-party condemnations — are not enough. It calls for another surgical strike echo across the nation, but the question remains — have previous strikes served as a deterrent? The public deserves justice, not platitudes.

VINOD JOHRI | DELHI

Building a new world economic order

A new, multipolar economic order is taking shape, led by nations like India, whose demographic strength, resource wealth, and deeply rooted ethos of fairness position it as a key architect of a more just and sustainable global economy

FIRST
Column

The world economy is in for a big churning, a severe shake-up. The reasons are primarily two — a debt-based capitalistic model of development and the dominance of the dollar as the international monetary currency, delinked from any traditional tangible material resource like gold.

In the last 75 years, the economic models of the USA, Europe, and a major part of the rest of the world have been built on a typical capitalist ecosystem in which large funds, banking institutions, and a dominant global currency — the US dollar — have been the driving elements.

This model has begun to wear out, naturally, because it was unsustainable and out of sync with the fundamental economic principles that drive the economic growth of institutions, including that of nations.

It is the widely held view in the present times that economic growth occurs through the production of valuable goods and services and their sale to those who consume such goods or services.

But this understanding or definition needs clarification. Today, the economic growth of nations is defined and measured in terms of GDP, of which trade forms a major component.

Trade here connotes exports as well as imports. However, economic status depends on accumulated wealth due to the net inflow of money. Accumulation of money takes place through two modes — international trade and domestic production and sale. But for a nation to grow rich, it has to be sovereign and politically independent — because the terms of international trade and domestic business need to be in tune with fairness and equity.

This was not the case during the British rule in India, which was a saga of depredation and plunder. This also is not true in the wake of an inequitable global economic order where rules of business are skewed in favour of the mightier and more influential nations.

The world economic order over the last 80 years since the cessation of the Second World War has been determined and drawn by the victor block of the war — the Allied powers.

The Allied power group created vassal or semi-vassal states out of the vanquished Axis power states and other states.

Military might created political hegemony, and this gradually transformed into economic hegemony through one-sided trade rules that perpetuated the poverty of third-world countries and further enriched the first-world countries.

The establishment of the UNO and its sub-organisations did not do much to alter the tilt of the economic order towards the First World block. Things became worse 30 years later when the US dollar, the reserve currency of the world, was delinked from gold, thus giving it overriding and overwhelming dominance.

Growth potential was always with the resource-rich third-world countries, and the high econom-



ic growth of these countries through the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century could not be matched by the economically saturated and stagnating first-world block, WTO and a set of trade rules thereunder, like GATT and TRIPS, were established.



ATUL SEHGAL

inhuman and naturally unsustainable too. The world is staring at a new economic order because of the changing power equations across the globe. Today, military and industrial technol-

6
MILITARY MIGHT CREATED POLITICAL HEGEMONY AND THIS GRADUALLY TRANSFORMED INTO ECONOMIC HEGEMONY THROUGH ONE-SIDED TRADE RULES THAT PERPETUATED THE POVERTY OF THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES AND FURTHER ENRICHED THE FIRST-WORLD COUNTRIES

ogy is not the sole preserve of the designated first-world nations of the twentieth century.

China, India, Brazil, and Iran are some of the ex — third-world countries that, besides being resource-rich, also have industrial and military technologies.

China and India possess nuclear arsenals, and even Iran is on its way to acquiring nuclear capability. So, neither military might nor economic might of the erstwhile powers can sustain the old world economic order.

The mammoth debt of China, pegged at 300 per cent of GDP, and of the USA, estimated at 36 trillion US dollars (more than 100 per cent of its GDP), is already showing its detrimental effects in both these countries, evidenced by the economic recession, inflation, and unemployment.

The Belt and Road initiative of China has landed in a quandary, and WTO rules are being thrown to the winds by the Trump administration in the USA.

The new world economic order will, inexorably, see the decline and demise of the US dollar as the dominant currency and the emergence of a mul-

tiples — currency basket for trade.

The natural laws of economics are manifesting their work in the resurgence of India, and there seems to be no stopping the slow-stepped elephant after the dragon in its neighbour seems to have fagged out.

The unique positive naturally endowed features of India are its plentiful, productive Human Resources and its economically strategic agro-climatic location along with its rich mineral resources.

Today, this country is mostly free from exploitative interference and arm-twisting by global powers and is poised for rapid take-off to become a developed nation.

The new economic order will, therefore, inevitably, see a strong economic resurgence of the Indian subcontinent, regression of the eurozone countries, and a relatively slow growth of Latin American and African countries. The latter will pick up growth led by a resurgent India in the years and decades to come.

The Indian subcontinent, in its growth and development journey, will not indulge in the exploitation of the smaller and weaker states, unlike its colonial masters and their new avatars. It is not in the DNA of India to invade, conquer, and plunder other nations.

The Indian ethos underlines the philosophy of 'live and let live' instead of 'survival of the fittest'. That is another area where India is different and unique.

In conclusion, the global economic landscape is undergoing a profound transformation driven by the unsustainability of a debt-fuelled, capitalist model and the waning dominance of the US dollar.

The era of Western economic hegemony — rooted in military might, exploitative trade practices, and the artificial supremacy of fiat currency — is rapidly eroding. Emerging economies like India, China, Brazil, and Iran, rich in resources and technological capabilities, are reshaping the balance of power.

Among these, India stands uniquely poised for sustained and inclusive growth, bolstered by its demographic advantage, strategic location, and ethical economic philosophy.

As the global order pivots toward a multi — currency trading system and more equitable partnerships, India's non-imperial ethos positions it as a natural leader in the evolving economic era.

The new world economic order will not just be about wealth accumulation but about fairness, sustainability, and mutual progress — principles deeply embedded in India's civilisational values. A future rooted in cooperation, not domination, is now within reach.

(The writer is a management consultant based in New Delhi. Views are personal)

Ramanujan: Eternal lamp in the temple of mathematics

On April 26, 1920, the nation lost Srinivasa Ramanujan a rare mathematical genius. His mathematical consciousness illuminated the world for eternity. This is not merely his death anniversary; it is a celebration of a saint — like devotee of numbers who elevated mathematics to the realms of philosophy and the divine

When numbers resonate and equations seem to dance with the soul, one name echoes through the very fabric of creation — Srinivasa Ramanujan. On April 26, 1920, a dark day in Indian history, the nation lost this priceless gem.

Yet, in that moment, his mathematical consciousness illuminated the world for eternity. This is not merely a death anniversary; it is a celebration of a saint-like devotee of numbers who elevated mathematics to the realms of poetry, philosophy, and divine connection. Ramanujan was no ordinary mathematician — he was a mystic of numbers, a seeker of hidden truths, a visionary who saw the universe through the lens of infinite equations.

His story is a spark that turns the impossible into the possible. Born on December 22, 1887, in the small town of Erode, Tamil Nadu, Ramanujan's life was nothing short of a modern fairy tale. Raised in a humble Brahmin household, surrounded by financial hardships and lacking formal education, he faced walls that would deter most.

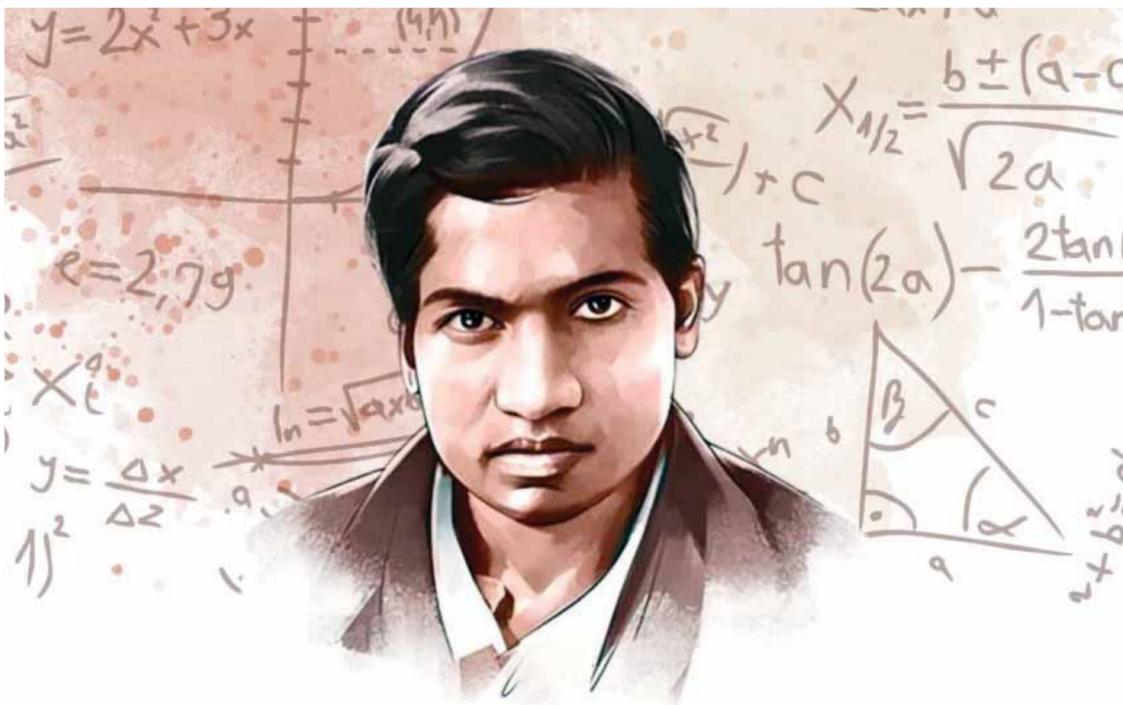
But his genius was a relentless wave that shattered every barrier. From a young age, numbers were his companions and his playground. While other children played with toys, he delved deep into the mysteries of mathematics.

School textbooks quickly proved inadequate, and he began exploring advanced mathematical concepts on his own. At the age of 15, he discovered A Synopsis of Elementary Results in Pure Mathematics by GS Carr — a book that became his sacred scripture. It fuelled his imagination and transformed his notebooks into treasure troves of original formulas and theorems.

To Ramanujan, mathematics wasn't just about calculations — it was a spiritual quest. He often credited his insights to his family deity, Goddess Namagiri, saying, "Every formula that comes to my mind is by the grace of the Goddess." To him, mathematics and divinity were two expressions of the same truth. His work — be it infinite series, continued fractions, or partition functions — read like verses of a cosmic poem.

His formulas for calculating pi are so elegant and precise that they are still used by modern supercomputers. His partition function transformed number theory, and his discoveries in theta functions and modular equations have found applications in cryptography, physics, and even black hole theory. The world took notice of his genius in 1913, when he sent a letter filled with groundbreaking formulas to the eminent Cambridge mathematician GH Hardy.

Initially sceptical, Hardy was soon astonished. Upon meeting Ramanujan, he said, "Ramanujan's



RK JAIN ARIJET

— thousands of formulas, many without proofs, that took mathematicians decades to fully understand.

His mock theta functions, penned during his final days, baffled mathematicians for nearly a

mathematics is beyond the human mind; it is divine inspiration." Ramanujan was invited to Cambridge, and his collaboration with Hardy sparked a revolution in mathematics. The Hardy — Ramanujan formula on the distribution of prime numbers, along with their other contributions, are considered monumental achievements.

Ramanujan's greatest legacy lies in his notebooks

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FROM A YOUNG AGE, NUMBERS WERE HIS COMPANIONS AND HIS PLAYGROUND. WHILE OTHER CHILDREN PLAYED WITH TOYS, HE DELVED DEEP INTO THE MYSTERIES OF MATHEMATICS

century but are now essential in quantum physics and string theory.

His contributions to the Riemann zeta function continue to influence research on one of mathematics' most profound mysteries — the Riemann Hypothesis.

Yet, Ramanujan's journey was not without immense struggle. At Cambridge, he battled cultural isolation, dietary challenges, and the harsh English climate. Diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1917, his health deteriorated, and he returned to India in 1919.

Just a year later, on April 26, 1920, at the age of 32, he passed away in Kumbakonam. But though his mortal life ended, his spirit lives on through his work.

The discovery of his "Lost Notebook" in 1976 reignited excitement and opened new doors in mathematical research. Ramanujan's influence goes far beyond mathematics. His story is a bea-

con for dreamers and doers who dare to rise above adversity. In 1987, India marked his birth centenary by declaring it National Mathematics Day. His legacy continues in the world's top institutions, and his life inspired Robert Kanigel's biography The Man Who Knew Infinity, later adapted into a global film.

In his honour, December 22 is now celebrated as National Mathematics Day in India. Ramanujan's life is proof that genius needs no degree, wealth, or privilege. His journey is a testament to passion, faith, and the boundless potential of the human mind. His discoveries not only advanced science but also revealed a deep philosophical truth — that within each of us lies the power to touch the infinite.

Today, as we remember him on April 26, we do more than pay tribute — we renew our commitment to nurturing the spark within us. Like Ramanujan, may we turn our dreams into devotion. Equations may evolve and theorems may change, but there will never be another Ramanujan.

He is the eternal lamp in the temple of mathematics — forever radiant. His legacy is not India's alone — it belongs to all of humanity. As long as numbers are written and equations are solved, Ramanujan will remain immortal — a soul who touched infinity and offered its light to the world.

Srinivasa Ramanujan was not just a mathematician — he was a visionary who transformed numbers into a divine language. On April 26, we don't just mourn his passing; we celebrate a life that elevated mathematics into art, spirituality, and cosmic truth.

Despite humble beginnings and relentless hardships, his passion and genius blazed trails that continue to shape modern science.

His discoveries — ranging from infinite series to mock theta functions — remain cornerstones of mathematics, physics, and beyond. Ramanujan's journey proves that brilliance needs neither privilege nor pedigree.

His life is a testament to what the human spirit can achieve with faith, curiosity, and devotion. Today, his legacy lights the path for dreamers, thinkers, and seekers of truth across the world. As we remember him, we also honour the infinite potential within us all.

Ramanujan lives on, not just in equations, but in the eternal quest for knowledge he so passionately embodied. He is, and always will be, mathematics' guiding flame.

(The writer is a columnist and a blogger. Views are personal)

No discord in Mahayuti government: Bawankule

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ Mumbai

Amid reports of the ruling BJP and Shinde Shiv Sena vying for credit over the safe return of stranded tourists from Kashmir following the Pahalgam terror attack, Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Friday denied that there was any “rift” or “discord” in the Mahayuti government over the issue. Bawankule’s denial came in the wake of Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP rushing State Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan to Srinagar for coordinating the efforts to bring back tourists from the state, while deputy CM Eknath Shinde of the Shiv Sena air-dashing to Jammu and Kashmir in a private aircraft “to expedite the process of bringing back state tourists stranded in Jammu and Kashmir”.

Fadnavis had deployed two Cabinet ministers — Ashish Shelar and Mangalprabhat Lodha at the Mumbai airport to receive the stranded tourists arriving from the valley state, while Minister of State Madhuri Misal was stationed in the Pune airport. On the other hand, Shinde deployed two Cabinet ministers Dada Bhuse and Gulabrao Patil and Minister of State Yogesh Kadam at the Mumbai airport for receiving the tourists, Cabinet Minister Prakash Aitkar was present in the Pune airport. Meanwhile, a statement issued from the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) on Thursday said the state government had



Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule

FILE PHOTO

arranged a special flight each for IndiGo and Air India. A statement issued by the Deputy Chief Minister’s office said his visit to Kashmir highlighted that whenever a tragedy strikes, he was the first person to rush to help. Unofficial reports have meanwhile said that more than 500 stranded tourists from Maharashtra have so far been brought to Mumbai by special flights besides the dead bodies and survivors of the terror attack.

On his part, Bawankule rubbished reports that the ruling BJP and its ally in the government Shiv Sena (Shinde) were outgrab credit for ensuring the safe return of the Maharashtra tourists stranded in Kashmir. Talking to media persons in Nagpur, Bawankule said, “There

is no rift or discord in the government. Neither is there any politics behind Deputy CM Eknath Shinde going to Srinagar to meet the tourists from Maharashtra. Nor is there any politics in Girish Mahajan’s visit to Jammu and Kashmir because he is the state disaster management minister.”

“We did not send other people to Kashmir to avoid much VIP movement over there. We are focused on bringing back over 3,000 tourists from Jammu and Kashmir. There is no politics or race to get credit for anything,” Bawankule said. When asked about Rahul Gandhi’s visit to Srinagar on Friday to meet those injured in the Pahalgam terror attack, Bawankule said it was a good move by the Congress leader.

Ladli Behna Yojana grapples with financial challenges

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government’s much-publicised flagship initiative, the Ladli Behna Yojana, launched just months ahead of the 2023 Assembly elections, is now grappling with financial and administrative challenges. The scheme, which was initially launched in June 2023 to provide direct cash assistance to women from economically weaker sections, has seen a steady decline in beneficiary numbers and is reportedly under strain due to a shortage of funds.

Launched by then Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the scheme began with a monthly transfer of ₹1,000 to eligible women aged between 21 and 60 years. At its peak, over 1.34 crore women were registered beneficiaries. Chouhan had promised to eventually raise the amount to ₹3,000 per month, making the scheme a central element of his re-election strategy. However, since August 2023, the number of beneficiaries has reduced to 1.27 crore, a reduction of 7 lakh. Government officials attribute this drop to the automatic exclusion of women who crossed the upper age limit of 60 years. No new beneficiaries have been added to the list over the past 23 months, raising questions about the scheme’s sustainability.

After the elections, and the change in leadership with Dr Mohan Yadav assuming the Chief Minister’s office, there were sporadic protests from women who had supported the previous government. CM Yadav had assured

the public that no welfare scheme launched by his predecessor would be discontinued. Yet, internal sources suggest that the financial burden of the Ladli Behna Scheme — estimated at ₹47 crore per month — is weighing heavily on the state exchequer.

Launched by then CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the scheme began with a monthly transfer of ₹1,000 to eligible women aged between 21 and 60 years

In a notable development, the scheme’s official portal now includes an option for beneficiaries to voluntarily opt out, further fueling speculation about its future. Political observers believe the state government may wait until after the Bihar Assembly elections, scheduled for October this year, to make significant changes to the scheme. There is growing speculation that the number of beneficiaries may be drastically reduced or that a new welfare program may replace it.

While talking to *The Pioneer*, Madhya Pradesh Congress spokesperson Mithun Ahirwar, alleged that both the ruling BJP and bureaucrats are reluctant to continue the scheme in its current form. “Since the benefits are directly transferred to the bank accounts of women, there’s minimal scope for misappropriation. This doesn’t suit many,” Ahirwar said.

Delhi HC suspends Medha Patkar’s sentence in LG Saxena defamation case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In a relief to activist Medha Patkar, the Delhi High Court on Friday suspended her sentence in a defamation case filed by Delhi LG VK Saxena in which she was arrested and produced in a sessions court earlier in the day. Saxena filed the case 23 years ago when he was heading an NGO in Gujarat.

On April 2, a sessions court upheld Patkar’s conviction in the defamation case but suspended her jail term and released her on “probation of good conduct”.

It directed her to furnish a ₹25,000 probation bond on April 8 and imposed a pre-condition of ₹1 lakh fine. Probation is a method of non-institutional treatment of offenders and a conditional suspension of sentence in which the offender, after conviction, is released on bond of good behaviour instead of being sent to prison.

However, a non-bailable warrant was issued against her after she failed to honour the conditions of probation on the prescribed date.

On Friday, Patkar was arrested and produced before a sessions court following which the judge orally ordered her release subject to furnishing the bond.

High court’s Justice Shalinder Kaur, however, suspended the sentence and granted her bail on a personal bond of ₹25,000. The court posted her plea against

Bombay High Court grants protection from arrest to Kunal Kamra

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ Mumbai

In further relief to Kunal Kamra, the Bombay High Court on Friday granted protection from arrest to the stand-up comedian in connection with the FIR registered against him by the Mumbai police over his “gaddar” jibe against Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

While refusing to grant a stay on the investigations against Kamra in the case, a HC bench of Justices Sarang Kotwal and SM Modak said that if the police wanted to question Kamra, they would have to do it in Chennai since Kamra resides in Tamil Nadu. After hearing arguments from both sides over a petition filed by Kamra seeking the quashing of the FIR registered against him, the HC bench granted interim protection to the stand-up comedian from arrest. HC in its order bench ruled: “The Petitioner (Kamra) shall not be arrested in connection with the case registered at Khar Police Station, Mumbai, during

pendency of this Petition. However, the investigation in this case can continue... If the Investigating Agency wants to record the Petitioner’s statement, it can be recorded at Chennai with the help of the local police, after giving notice of reasonable period to the Petitioner so that he can remain present in Chennai.” “If during pendency of this Petition the charge-sheet is filed, the concerned Court shall not proceed against the Petitioner, during pendency of this Petition. In its 34-page order, the HC bench noted there were larger issues of freedom of speech that needed to be seen in the case. While senior Advocate Navroz Seervai represented Kamra, Public Prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar appeared for the State.

In its significant observations made in its order, the HC bench noted: “Thus, there are larger issues of fundamental right of freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution canvassed by Mr Seervai against the restrictions put on that right

under Article 19(2) as canvassed by Mr Venegaonkar which included the aspect of decency, morality and public order. All these questions raised by both sides deserve serious consideration. Hence, arguable points are raised and, therefore, we are inclined to admit this petition.”

While refusing to stay the investigation and granting interim protection to Kamra from arrest, the HC bench noted: “In the background of the above discussion, we are not inclined to grant complete stay on the investigation of this case which is still in progress.

The Petitioner has also shown willingness to give his own statement. It is the case of the petitioner that he has been receiving death threats, therefore, his security is of concern. To that extent, some protection can be granted to him. Learned counsel for the petitioner has submitted that the statement can be recorded in Chennai if reasonable notice is given to the petitioner. Therefore, the investigation can continue, however, it is not necessary to arrest the petitioner.”

At the previous hearing held on April 16, 2025, the high court had said that stand-up comedian should not be arrested till it passed an order on his petition seeking quashing of an FIR registered against him by the Mumbai police over his “gaddar” jibe against Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. The HC order had come in the backdrop of the fact that the Madras High Court had extended Kamra’s interim protection till April 17, while hearing a petition seeking transit anticipatory bail in connection with the FIR lodged against him at Mumbai.

It may be recalled that based on a complaint lodged by Shinde Shiv Sena MLA Murji Patel with the MIDC Police Station on March 24, a Zero FIR was lodged against Kamra under Sections 353(1)(b), 353(2) [Public mischief] and 356(2) [Defamation] under BNS.

The FIR was later transferred to Khar police station in north-west Mumbai. Earlier on the night of March 23, the studio “the Habitat” — a venue located at

The UniContinental hotel in Khar suburbs of Mumbai where Kunal had shot his stand-up comedy — was vandalised by the Shinde Shiv Sena workers. In that show, Kamra had taken a jibe at Shinde without naming but using a modified version of a Hindi song from “Dil To Pagal Hai” — “meri nazar se tum dekho to gaddar nazar wo aaye, aaye.”

Three more FIRs were filed on March 28 under the same provisions. Additional cases were registered in Thane and Dombivli. More FIRs were registered against Kamra in Nashik, Jalgaon and Nandgaon, all of which are being probed by the Khar Police Station.

In his petition seeking the quashing of the FIR registered against him by the police, Kamra said that the continuation of the case would be a frontal attack on a “citizen’s constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression”. He asked the court whether a person’s right to comment on political developments and actions of leaders could be criminalised in this manner.

UP Government serves eviction notices to Pakis

Continued from >> P1 In Varanasi, 28-year-old Nida Khan sobbed outside the railway station. “I came for my cousin’s wedding. We were supposed to go shopping today. Now I’m heading back, heartbroken and humiliated, as if I did something wrong.” Local authorities are working round the clock to coordinate logistics, issue travel permits, and ensure dignified departures. Still, the atmosphere remains heavy. Families on both sides of the border are caught between the pain of separation and the fears of escalating tensions.

As India grapples with the security threat, it is the human cost — the mothers, daughters, and grandparents forced to leave loved ones behind — that reminds us how deeply violence scars even those who never picked up a weapon.

Delhi shuts down in solidarity with Pahalgam

Continued from >> P1 Some of the markets association held rallies in their areas to protest the Pahalgam terror attack.

Connaught Place, one of Delhi’s most coveted markets, known for its branded stores and restaurants, remained closed. So was Mukherjee Nagar, a major hub for coaching centres. The usually vibrant streets of Chandni Chowk, Janpath, and Sarojini Nagar had no teenagers thronging them. Thousands of traders took part in a march from Chandni Chowk to Red Fort, calling for urgent action.

In Chandni Chowk, trader associations displayed a poster featuring photos of the 26 victims captioned with brief descriptions. They offered floral tributes and lit candles in their memory. Many protesters wore black ribbons and carried posters that read “Delhi Bandh in protest against the massacre in Jammu and Kashmir”.

“The brutal killing of innocent people in Pahalgam has outraged the entire business community of Delhi. Over 8 lakh traders have closed their shops in protest. The attackers must face strict punishment,” BJP leader Praveen Khandelwal, who took part in the protest, said.

Daryaganj, Jama Masjid, Dariba, Chawri, Nai Sadak, Lal Kuan, Naya Bans, Khari Baoli, Naya Bazaar, Sadar Bazaar, Mori Gate, Kashmeri Gate, Malviya Nagar, INA Market, South Ex Market, Laxmi Nagar, and others observed a complete shutdown.

“This is not just a protest; it is a collective stand against terrorism. We are all united in this fight and are observing the bandh in memory of those who lost their lives in Pahalgam,” Brijesh Goyal, Chairperson of the CTI, said on Friday.

Meanwhile, Citing the Quran, Bukhari said, “To kill one human being is as if to kill all of humanity, and to save one human being is as if to save all of humanity.” Sanctity of human blood is such that taking the life of an innocent invites the “wrath” of Allah, he said addressing the people gathered at the mosque. Terrorism can never be justified or supported on any grounds, he said in a statement.

“The terrorists, claiming to be Muslims, have displayed behaviour that is utterly un-Islamic. What kind of Islam have they learned or been taught?”

The “horrifying” incident in Pahalgam has shaken the

“conscience” of India and stirred deep emotions within all the people, he said.

Killing innocent people on the basis of their religious identity is an “unforgivable crime,” Bukhari said. “People were stripped to identify their religious affiliation, and on confirming they were Hindus, these helpless and innocent individuals were shot and killed.”

The Shahi Imam said that the Pahalgam incident has nothing to do with the teachings, history or culture of Islam. “If such acts continue unchecked, it is hard to say where this will lead. India and its rich, traditional culture will never accept or allow such brutality under any circumstances,” he asserted.

Meanwhile, Palam’s 360 khap panchayat, led by its chief Chaudhary Suren Solanki staged a strong protest and took out a candle march against the dastardly incident. The march began at Ambedkar Bhavan in Palam Extension and concluded at Ramphal Chowk where a large number of men, women, youth, and elderly took to the streets holding candles to pay respect to the martyrs and displayed unity against terrorism.

Former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan passes away

Continued from >> P1

Kasturirangan got his bachelor’s and master’s degree in physics from the Bombay University and PhD in experimental high-energy astronomy while working at the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, in 1971.

He is credited with the successful launch and operationalisation of India’s prestigious launch vehicle, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), and the first successful flight testing of the all-important Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV).

Defining India’s most ambitious space-based high-energy astronomy observatory and initiating a related activities was also an important milestone under his leadership. Kasturirangan has made extensive and significant contributions to the studies of cosmic X-ray and gamma-ray sources and the effect of cosmic X-rays in the lower atmosphere.

“With his passion for knowledge, he also contributed greatly in diverse fields. He helped draft the National Education Policy, which is already making a profound impact on the shaping of the next generation. My condolences to his family and admirers,” President Murmu said in a social media post.

“Saddened to learn that Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan is no more. As head of ISRO, he played a stellar role

in the evolution of India’s space programme,” President Murmu said.

Prime Minister Modi hailed Kasturirangan as a towering figure in India’s scientific and educational journey. “I am deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. K. Kasturirangan, a towering figure in India’s scientific and educational journey. His visionary leadership and selfless contribution to the nation will always be remembered,” Modi said in a social media post.

The prime minister said Kasturirangan served ISRO with great diligence and steered India’s space programme to new heights, for which the country received global recognition. “His leadership also witnessed ambitious satellite launches and focussed on innovation,” he said.

Modi said India will always be grateful to Dr. Kasturirangan for his efforts during the drafting of the National Education Policy (NEP) and in ensuring that learning in India became more holistic and forward-looking. Kasturirangan was chairman of the drafting committee of the NEP.

Modi noted that Kasturirangan was also an outstanding mentor to many young scientists and researchers. “My thoughts are with his family, students, scientists and countless admirers. Om Shanti,” the prime minister said.

Congress leaders condoled the death

of former ISRO chairman K Kasturirangan, with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge saying he played a pivotal role in strengthening the organisation and his demise is a great loss to the scientific community as well as the country.

In a social media post, Kharge said the demise of Kasturirangan, who played a pivotal role in strengthening the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and worked on key space missions, is a great loss to the scientific community and the country.

“A Padma Vibhushan recipient, he made significant contributions in India’s space exploration and contributed in various positions in key policy making. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, colleagues and disciples,” the Congress chief said.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh noted that Kasturirangan was the third ISRO chairman and the organisation took giant strides under his leadership.

“An advisor to various governments in different areas, he was also a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha as well as a member of the Planning Commission. I recall our long and close association, especially during my ministerial tenure during 2006-2014,” Ramesh said. “Our numerous conversations over the

Identification of Pakistanis across the country announced

Continued from >> P1 The partition left India as the upper riparian and Pakistan as the lower riparian state. Two key irrigation works — one at Madhopur on the Ravi and another at Ferozepur on the Sutlej — on which Punjab on Pakistan’s side was entirely dependent, ended up within the Indian territory.

This led to a dispute between the two countries over the utilisation of irrigation water from the existing infrastructure. Following negotiations facilitated by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (now part of the World Bank Group), the Indus Waters Treaty was signed in 1960.

Under the treaty, India was granted exclusive rights to the water of the eastern rivers — the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi — amounting to an average annual flow of about 33 million acre-feet (MAF). The water of the western rivers — Indus, Jhelum and Chenab — amounting to an average annual flow of around 135 MAF was largely allocated to Pakistan. However, the treaty allowed India to utilise the water of the western rivers for domestic needs, non-consumptive uses, agriculture and hydroelectric power generation. Pakistan has rejected India’s suspension of the treaty and said any measures to stop the flow of water “belonging to Pakistan” under the pact will be seen as an “act of war”.

Demolition of terror factories in Kashmir commences

Continued from >> P1 These operations were carried out in the South Kashmir area of Pahalgam and Bandipora, Duda-Basantgarh area of Udhampur, Doda, Kishtwar and Kathua districts. An over-ground worker of terrorists was killed while two security force personnel were injured in an encounter in Bandipora district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday.

Later, the Army Chief also attended a security review meeting with the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in Srinagar.

During the meeting, LG Manoj Sinha asked the Army Chief General Upendra Divedi, to take effective steps not only to bring those responsible for the Pahalgam terror attack to justice but also to intensify efforts to crush the infrastructure of terrorism and its ecosystem.

During the discussion, Lieutenant Governor said the nation has full faith in the bravery and valour of our army, police and CAPFs and they must work in close synergy to identify perpetrators, enablers and OGWs of Pahalgam terrorist killing and pursue the entire chain in a sustained manner and neutralise them.

“Every perpetrator and supporter of Pahalgam terror attack, whatever his location or affiliation, must be hunted and they must pay the heavy price for the cowardly and dastardly act against our citizens,” the Lieutenant Governor told the top army

officials.

The meeting also reviewed security mechanisms in place, various short-term, long-term measures and integration and coordination among the various security agencies. The meeting was attended by Army Chief General Upendra Divedi, GOC-in-C Northern Command Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar, Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Pratik Sharma and GOC 15 Corps Lt Gen Prashant Srivastava.

Meanwhile, Sending out a stern warning to the local terrorists and their associates who are harbouring foreign terrorists to execute their sinister plots, the homes of two local terrorists, allegedly involved in the Pahalgam terror attack, were destroyed in powerful explosions.

According to ground reports, the homes of two local terrorists of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba-Adil Hussain Thoker of Bijbehara and Aasif Sheikh of Tral were razed to the ground late Thursday night.

To avoid collateral damage in the built-up area, the neighbours were shifted to safer locations before the houses were destroyed. The family members of these two local terrorists were reportedly picked up by the police for questioning. The lone female members were also directed to step out before the demolition was carried out. The local police authorities have not issued any statement on the demolitions till late evening.

Dignitaries gather for Pope's funeral

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Vatican City

Heads of state and royalty will start converging on Rome on Friday for the funeral of Pope Francis in the Vatican's St Peter's Square, but the group of poor people who will meet his casket in a small crosstown basilica are more in keeping with Francis' humble persona and disdain for pomp.

US President Donald Trump and Argentine President Javier Milei are among the leaders arriving Friday, the last day Argentine pope will lie in state in St Peter's Basilica before his coffin is sealed in the evening in preparation for his funeral Saturday. The Vatican said 130 delegations are confirmed, including 50 heads of state and 10 reigning sovereigns.

Paying respects
Tens of thousands of mourners have waited hours in line to bid farewell to Francis, who died Monday after suffering a stroke at the age of 88.

A higher-than-expected turnout prompted the Vatican to extend the basilica's opening hours overnight. By Friday morning, more than 128,000 people had filed past Francis' open coffin placed in front of the basilica's main altar to pay their respects.

Mourners filed past at times praying, at times holding smart phones aloft — despite instructions not to — for a photo of the late pontiff laid out in red robes, a bishop's pointed miter and a rosary entwined in his hands.

St. Peter's Basilica remained open most of the second night, closing for just a few hours. Mourners began arriving before dawn, and sprinted into the piazza when security reopened the flows.

Giovanni Guarino drove from Naples with his girlfriend to make their final



Faithful gather for a prayer for Pope Francis at the St John Lateran Basilica in Rome PFI

farewells to the Francis, moved by his work to help the young and disadvantaged.

"I hope that his successor follows the footsteps of Francis," Guarino said.

The three days of public viewing are scheduled to end at 7pm.

On Friday, after which Francis simple wooden coffin will be sealed. Cardinal Kevin Farrell will preside over the closing and sealing of the coffin in his role of camerlengo, or interim Vatican administrator. A white cloth will be placed over the pope's face, and a bag containing coins minted during his papacy will be put in the coffin along with a one-page written account of his papacy.

We will see each other again

Roman neighbours and retired flight attendants, Aurelia Ballarini, 72, and Francesca Codato, 78, arrived to pay respects to Pope Francis on Friday for different reasons. Ballarini, grappling with grief, mourns the pope's death, which has left a void in her life. Though only 16 years younger than Francis, she saw him as a grandfather figure, starting each morning

by logging onto Facebook to receive his daily greeting and respond with a few words. Codato, however, sought forgiveness.

"He gave everything, all of himself, until the end," said Ballarini, expressing her sorrow. "I spent the last two days crying. I couldn't even say the word after his passing. For me, he flew away. One day, we'll meet again." Codato, feeling immense guilt for forsaking Francis in favour of St. John Paul II, admitted,

"He was an outsider to me when he became pope." She now feels guilty after watching videos revealing Francis' deep humanity and closeness to ordinary people. "I came to ask for forgiveness, because I feel like a worm toward him," she said.

Cardinals are in discussions
The work of the conclave to choose a new pope won't start until at least May 5, after nine days of public mourning.

Cardinals have been also arriving in Rome, with 113 meeting Thursday morning to discuss church business. They will meet again Friday before taking a

break for the weekend. Cardinal François-Xavier Bustillo, who hosted Pope Francis during his last papal trip, to Corsica, last year, remembered Francis as "a free man" who "humanised the church without desecrating it".

He describes the atmosphere inside the meetings as "good", but said they were not yet "at the point of decisions; we are in discussions".

Papal burial

In keeping with Francis' embrace of the marginalised, the Vatican said a group of poor and needy people will meet the pope's coffin to pay homage to him when it arrives at St Mary Major basilica for burial on Saturday. It has already become a point of pilgrimage.

The tomb is being prepared behind a wooden barrier within the basilica that he chose to be near an icon of the Madonna that he revered and often prayed before, especially during moments of solitude.

Photos released by the Vatican on Friday show the marble tombstone flat against the pavement, with the simple engraving in Latin that he requested in his last testament: "Franciscus"

Royals and leaders

Trump, accompanied by First Lady Melania Trump, is set to arrive on Friday, after Pope Francis' coffin has been sealed.

Other confirmed foreign dignitaries attending the papal funeral include Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and First Lady Olena Zelenska, French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Prince William, Spain's King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, alongside several high-ranking Vatican officials.

Wildlife gradually returns to Eaton fire burn area

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Los Angeles

Behind the remains of a town scorched by fire, the foothills are lush with new green and filled with birdsong.

Wildlife is returning to the Eaton Fire burn area and scientists are closely tracking it four months after the Los Angeles area wildfires tore through the Angeles National Forest and destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses in Altadena. Trail cameras installed by a group of volunteers documented the first mountain lion back in the area March 26.

It was seen again as recently as two nights ago. "My first inclination was to share that to people who have lost so much during this fire and our community in Altadena, because it's a sign of hope that nature's returning, that nature's resilient," said Kristen Ochoa, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, medical school leading the effort.

Ochoa, a long-time resident of Southern California, first began documenting the plants and animals that live in the area known as the Chaney Trail Corridor in July 2024.

She founded the Chaney Trail Corridor Project and began uploading observations on iNaturalist, a volunteer-driven network of naturalists and citizen scientists that maps and shares documentation of biodiversity across the globe. Located right behind Altadena, with a trailhead only 1.6 kilometers up the road from neighborhoods that were decimated during the fires, the privately owned area adjacent to Angeles National Forest land was slated for sale and development into a sports complex. Ochoa and other volunteers set up a

network of trail cameras to showcase the biodiversity of the area and take "inventory of everything that was valuable."

Much of the land was charred and barren after the fires, and the group also lost all of its cameras, watching as photos of the flames were transmitted before they went dark. But less than two months after the start of the fires, Ochoa was able to go back out and install new ones to start documenting the landscape's recovery.

"The thing I really remember is coming here right after the fire — there was so much birdsong," Ochoa said.

Many volunteers with the group are local residents who lost their homes and have told Ochoa that witnessing nature's recovery in the area has brought hope to them as well. While the fires were intense, they burned unevenly, leaving patches of trees and a small oasis of greenery around a stream untouched, providing refuge for animals.

Although no deceased animals have been found, reports mentioned an injured bear and deer. Heavy rain following the fires aided recovery. On a recent morning, Ochoa pointed out charred San Gabriel oak trees, sprouting green growth around their bases due to their deep root systems. An invasive bloom of yellow mustard flowers has spread, potentially crowding out native plants like California sagebrush and wild cucumber, a food source for ground squirrels. The group is collaborating with UCLA scientists to study how bats and birds have fared post-fire. While setting up a trail camera, Ochoa noted bobcat scat and fresh deer tracks, with two red-tailed hawks performing a mating ritual overhead.

Pakistan Senate firmly rejects India's allegation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Islamabad

Amid growing tensions between India and Pakistan, the Senate of Pakistan on Friday adopted a resolution firmly rejecting what it described as India's "frivolous and baseless attempts" to associate Pakistan with the recent terror attack in Pahalgam.

The attack, which occurred on Tuesday in the Pahalgam area of Indian-administered Kashmir, claimed the lives of 26 individuals, most of whom were tourists.

The Resistance Front (TRF), widely considered a proxy of the banned Pakistan-based terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility for the assault. The resolution was presented by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and received unanimous backing from all political parties represented in the upper house of Parliament. The text of the resolution underlined that Pakistan remains "fully capable and prepared" to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of any aggression, including acts of "water terrorism" or military provocation.

While rejecting any link to the Pahalgam attack, the resolution stated that the targeting of innocent civilians was entirely against the values and principles upheld by Pakistan. It went on to denounce what it termed "an orchestrated and mala fide campaign" launched by the Indian government to defame Pakistan, accusing New Delhi of consistently exploiting terrorism-related incidents for narrow, domestic political gains. The resolution further criticised India's recent decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty, calling the move a provocation that amounts to "an act of war."

The treaty, signed decades ago to manage water-sharing between the two nations, has long served as a rare example of

cooperation amid otherwise strained bilateral relations. In his address to the Senate, Deputy Prime Minister Dar informed lawmakers that the Foreign Office had briefed diplomats from 26 countries regarding the developing regional situation. He reiterated that Pakistan's armed forces are fully prepared to counter any form of Indian aggression, and warned that any military misadventure would be met with a robust and proportionate response, similar to past instances, firmly underscoring the nation's unwavering commitment to defending its sovereignty and national interest.

While rejecting any link to the Pahalgam attack, the resolution stated that the targeting of innocent civilians was entirely against the values and principles upheld by Pakistan

The resolution followed a high-level National Security Committee (NSC) meeting on Thursday, during which Pakistan's top civilian and military leadership decided to put the Simla Agreement and other bilateral arrangements with India on hold. The NSC also resolved to suspend all trade with India and to close Pakistani airspace to Indian carriers, reflecting a significant escalation in bilateral tensions.

Additionally, the Pakistani government urged India to stop engaging in a "reflexive blame game" and to refrain from the "cynical, staged, managed exploitation" of events such as the Pahalgam attack in pursuit of its narrow political objectives. Meanwhile, the Indian government announced a series of retaliatory steps against Pakistan on Wednesday.

'Crimea will stay with Russia', Trump on Ukraine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kyiv

US President Donald Trump said in an interview published on Friday that "Crimea will stay with Russia," the latest example of the US leader pressuring Ukraine to make concessions to end the war while it remains under siege. "Zelenskyy understands that," Trump said, referring to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, "and everybody understands that it's been with them for a long time."

The US president made the comments in a Time magazine interview conducted on Tuesday. Trump has been accusing Zelenskyy of prolonging the war by resisting negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Crimea is a strategic peninsula along the Black Sea in southern Ukraine. It was seized by Russia in 2014, while US



President Barack Obama was in office, years before the full-scale invasion that began in 2022.

"They've had their submarines there for long before any period that we're talking about, for many years. The people speak largely Russian in Crimea," Trump said.

"But this was given by Obama. This wasn't given by Trump."

Meanwhile, Russia has continued its bombardment. A drone struck an apartment building in a southeastern Ukraine city, killing three people and injuring 10 others, officials said Friday, a day after

Trump rebuked Russia's leader for a deadly missile and drone attack on Kyiv.

A child and a 76-year-old woman were among the civilians killed in the nighttime drone strike in Pavlohrad, in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region, the head of the regional administration, Serhii Lysak, wrote on Telegram.

Russian forces fired 103 Shahed and decoy drones at five Ukrainian regions overnight, Ukraine's air force reported. Authorities in the northeastern Sumy and Kharkiv regions reported damage to civilian infrastructure but no casualties.

The war could be approaching a pivotal moment as the Trump administration weighs its options. Senior US officials have warned that the administration could soon give up attempts to stop the war if the two sides do not come to an agreement. That could potentially mean a halt of crucial US military aid for Ukraine.

Houthi rebels shoots down seven US Reaper drones in six weeks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

In under six weeks, Houthi rebels in Yemen have successfully shot down seven US MQ-9 Reaper drones, resulting in aircraft losses exceeding \$200 million — one of the most significant costs incurred by the Pentagon in its ongoing campaign against the Iran-backed group. According to US Defence officials, three of the drones were downed just in the past week, indicating an apparent improvement in the Houthis' ability to target American drones operating over Yemen. These drones were carrying out surveillance missions or attack operations when they were brought down, crashing both on land and in the sea.

The escalation follows President Donald Trump's March 15 directive to intensify US military strikes against the Houthis. Trump pledged to apply "over-

whelming lethal force" until the group halts attacks on vessels traversing a vital maritime corridor. Since then, the US has conducted over 750 strikes. A defense official noted that while hostile fire is the likely cause of the drone losses, investigations are ongoing. The official added that heightened US strike activity increases the risk to American aircraft, but emphasized that the US would take all necessary measures to protect its forces and assets in the region.

Each Reaper drone, built by General Atomics, costs approximately \$30 million and is capable of flying at altitudes exceeding 12,100 meters. Houthi leaders have publicly celebrated their success in striking the drones. One defense official listed drone losses on March 31 and April 3, 9, 13, 18, 19, and 22.

Meanwhile, concerns are mounting in the US Senate over potential civilian casu-

alties caused by the strikes. Democratic Senators Chris Van Hollen, Elizabeth Warren, and Tim Kaine recently wrote to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, questioning whether the administration is neglecting obligations to mitigate civilian harm. They specifically cited reports suggesting over 70 civilians may have died in a recent US strike on the Ras Isa fuel terminal.

Alongside drone attacks, the Houthis have launched persistent missile and one-way drone strikes at US naval vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, though none have hit their targets. In response, the US has deployed warships, jets, bombers, and drones, with aircraft now launching from two Navy carriers, the USS Harry S Truman in the Red Sea and the USS Carl Vinson in the Gulf of Aden.

Defense Secretary Hegseth, who earlier extended the Truman's deployment, is considering another extension following

a request from US Central Command. The Navy remains cautious, as prolonged carrier deployments disrupt maintenance schedules and affect sailors' time at home. Last year, the USS Dwight D Eisenhower had to remain in the region for an extended deployment during intense naval clashes — the most sustained since World War II. The Houthis, citing solidarity with Hamas amid the Gaza conflict, have escalated attacks on commercial shipping.

Between November 2023 and January 2024, they targeted over 100 merchant ships with missiles and drones, sinking two and killing four sailors, significantly impacting vital international trade through the Red Sea — a strategic corridor that typically sees \$1 trillion in annual commerce and supports livelihoods across multiple continents, including supply chains for food, energy, and medicine.

India advocates technology democratisation, offers DPI global collaboration

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ United Nations

India said it is expanding its Digital Public Infrastructure ecosystem into areas such as agriculture and smart cities and stands ready to share successes with the international community, as UN leaders commended the country for its leadership in investing in this domain.

Minister of State for the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Jitendra Prasada, said that the Indian DPI success story is a showcase to the world.

"DPI is all about empowering citizens, good governance, inclusive and sustainable growth at the societal level.

The future will not be built by machines alone but by the choices we make about how technology serves humanity," Prasada said in his keynote address at the event organised by India's Permanent Mission to the UN at the world body's headquarters on Thursday.

Prasada added that looking forward, India is expanding its DPI ecosystem into agriculture, logistics, smart cities and more. "The next wave will prioritise privacy and data protection, digital skills and literacy, cross-border DPI partnerships, sustainability and resilience.

Artificial Intelligence is going to be a force multiplier for DPI. India is deploying AI, keeping in mind our philosophy

of serving the last person at the bottom of the pyramid," he said.

Prasada said that India believes that technology must be democratised, made inclusive, affordable and advance human dignity. "That is what India's digital public infrastructure represents," he said.

President of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, Philemon Yang, commended India on the success of its digital transformation and leadership in investing in digital public infrastructure.

"I commend India on the success of its digital transformation and leadership in investing in digital public infrastructure. Indeed, digital public infrastructure holds the key to inclusion in the global digital society. And these technologies are evolving at breakneck speed," he said at the special event titled "Empowering the Digital Citizen of the Future: Towards an Integrated Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)". Yang added that digital technologies are impacting every aspect of human life and are transforming economies, reducing costs, opening new doors to education and healthcare, and empowering citizens like never before.

"In India, for example, it means 'anywhere access' to 'anytime vaccination' for any registered pregnant woman or child across the country," he said.

Yang noted that he was "privileged" to see the U-WIN digital initiative himself



earlier this year and voiced appreciation for what happens when digital public infrastructure and women and girls are at the heart of the digital revolution.

"These technologies hold vast potential to unleash progress across the Sustainable Development Goals," he said. India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the U-WIN (Universal Immunisation Win) that streamlines the entire process of vaccination services.

Prasada added that the DPI scales, serves and saves. It is not infrastructure for

a few, but it is an architecture for many.

"A global public good. The world is taking note," he said, adding that over 18 countries are exploring or adopting India's DPI — from Singapore integrating UPI to Sierra Leone piloting digital ID, and DPI elevated to a global agenda at the G20.

He said India is pushing for greater representation of the global south in AI discourse.

"The digital citizen of the future must not be a consumer of technology, but a co-creator of equity... India stands ready to col-

laborate by sharing its DPIs," Prasada said, adding that India's DPI proves that development can be fast, fair and frictionless. "When inclusion is coded into design, exclusion becomes obsolete. Let us work to build a world where digital dignity is a right, not a privilege."

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador P Harish, said that with the launch of Digital India in 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has implemented several unique digital transformation projects.

He highlighted Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana as well as the Jan Dhan Yojana-Aadhaar-Mobile the so-called JAM Trinity initiative that linked 540 million Jan Dhan bank accounts, with Aadhaar cards, and mobile phone numbers to facilitate Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) of government subsidies to needy citizens, ushering in the world's largest financial inclusion programme and reducing leakages and corruption.

Harish stressed that AI is redefining Indian agriculture by enhancing productivity, optimising resource use, and improving decision-making for 200 million farmers. "Our digital citizens of the future deserve an integrated Digital Public Infrastructure aided by AI systems, so that no one is digitally left behind. Our duty is to work for that, and in such

an endeavour, India is a friend and partner of choice for all, especially the Global South," he said. Under-Secretary-General and UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Digital and Emerging Technologies Amandeep Singh Gill said that India's experiment with DPIs is a "model" and also lauded examples from other regions like Brazil, Southeast Asia, and Africa. "We now have enough evidence that DPIs work. They work at scale and they work in a deeply transformative manner," Gill said. Gill added that "we are looking at how interoperability across DPIs can improve intra-regional, inter-regional trade and scale for digital entrepreneurs."

"There is great potential in these challenging times when global trade is under pressure to build resilience and intra-regional scale for entrepreneurs by linking together DPIs and by reimagining them, by building them in more of an interoperable way," Gill added.

The event featured a presentation by Founding CTO of Aadhaar and CEO of Khosla Labs Srikanth Nadhamuni on how India is leveraging artificial intelligence to enhance the impact of its DPI and highlighted that India's inclusive approach to AI and DPI — built as global digital public goods — can serve as a transformative model for countries, offering innovative solutions for sectors like healthcare, education, and agriculture.

Aim for higher production: Goyal to steel industry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said the target of achieving 500 million tonnes (MT) of steel production is a 'sub-optimal' one and the industry should aim for a higher target amid increasing per capita consumption of the metal in the country. The minister was delivering his keynote address at the 6th edition of Steel India 2025 event, hosted jointly by the Ministry of Steel and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci), which started on Thursday.



Union Minister Piyush Goyal

FILE PHOTO

"Clearly 500 million tonnes (of steel production) is a sub-optimal target. We should, I think aspire at least to go up to the level of our nearest competitor. And why can we not aspire to be the world's largest manufacturer of steel by 2047," Goyal exhorted the industry.

Referring to the steel industry as the 'backbone' of the country's economy, the minister emphasised the crucial role of steel in the nation's journey toward becoming a developed and prosperous country.

Steel is an essential component in nearly every sector of life, be it shipping, ship-building, railways, defence, automobiles, infrastructure across the country, it is there in every walk of life," he said.

The minister also urged for continued growth and innovation, questioning if the country should be satisfied with its current status.

He emphasised the need for collective action within the steel sector to further elevate India's position on the global stage. Stressing the potential for expanding steel's use in new sectors, particularly in the construction of prefabricated buildings,

he pointed out that many developed nations have adopted precast prefabricated building structures and suggested that India should consider introducing such practices, especially in urban areas.

While acknowledging that prefabricated buildings may initially be more expensive, Goyal proposed that the steel industry invest in research and development (R and D) to minimise the cost differences.

Government notifies rules for GST Appellate Tribunals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The government has notified the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, which provide for mandatory e-filing of applications and conducting hearings in a hybrid mode.

The rules also provide that any urgent matter filed by an applicant before 12:00 noon shall be listed before the Appellate Tribunal on the following working day, if the application is complete in all respects.

In exceptional cases, the application may be received after 12:00 noon but before 3:00 pm for listing on the following day, with the specific permission of the Appellate Tribunal or President.

The benches of GSTAT, a crucial body for resolving GST-related disputes, would sit from 10:30 am to 01:30 pm and from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, subject to any order made by the President.

The administrative offices of the Appellate Tribunal will remain open on all working days from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm, according to the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 2025.

In May last year, the government had appointed Justice (Retd) Sanjaya Kumar Mishra as the first President of the GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT).

Mishra was a former Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court and selected by a Search-cum-Selection Committee headed by the Chief Justice of India.

The GSTAT is the Appellate Authority established under the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017, to hear various appeals under the said Act and the respective State/Union Territories GST Acts against the orders of the first appellate authority. It consists of a principal bench and various state benches. As per the approval of the GST Council, the government has notified the Principal Bench, to be located in New Delhi, and 31 state benches at various locations across the country. The process for the appointment of judicial members and technical members is already in progress.

The tribunal will ensure swift, fair, judicious and effective resolution to GST disputes, besides significantly reducing the burden on higher courts.

The establishment of the GSTAT would further enhance the effectiveness of the GST system in India and foster a more transparent and efficient tax environment in the country.

Senior Partner at AMRG & Associates, Rajat Mohan, said, with a total of 11 Chapters, 70 Rules, and 4 Statutory Forms, this legal framework covers the full procedural and administrative lifecycle of GSTAT appeals.

UK's carbon storage project HyNet gets green light

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The UK government has given green light to a major carbon storage project, where Essar Energy Transition (EET) will play an anchor role, EET said on Friday.

The North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA) has granted Eni three carbon storage permits for the Liverpool Bay CCS, a CO2 transportation and storage system designed to support the HyNet industrial cluster. It will capture CO2 from major industrial emitters in north-west England and north Wales. Phase one of HyNet aims to store 109 million tonnes of CO2 in the East Irish Sea, 20 miles off the coast of Liverpool, over the course of 25 years - equivalent to removing 60.1 million cars from the road for a year.

"EET congratulates Eni and the UK Government on achieving financial close on the core carbon transport and storage project of the HyNet Industrial Cluster (the Liverpool Bay CCS). We are delighted that Eni's construction phase will now begin on the infrastructure enabling HyNet; vital to massive reductions in carbon emissions and enabling much needed investment, protecting and growing jobs and industries across North West England and North Wales," it said in a statement.

EET's Hydrogen Production Plant (HPP1) project is one of the four initial projects that will provide carbon to this infrastructure for permanent storage. HPP1 is expected to be the UK's first large scale low-carbon hydrogen production plant with a capacity of 350 MW and capturing some 600,000 tonnes of CO2 per annum - equivalent to taking 125,000 cars off the road.

EET's Stanlow Manufacturing Complex is located at the heart of HyNet, anchored by the EET Fuels refinery which is a major offtake and enabler of HPP1.

EET's projects are transforming Stanlow into a world-leading energy transition hub that can capture around 2 million tonnes of carbon from the refinery through its wider decarbonisation programme, which includes electrification and carbon capture, as well as further Hydrogen Production Plant (HPP2) and development of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF).

India could grow at 6.5 per cent in FY26: EY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Indian economy could grow at 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal as lower prices of crude oil are expected to ease inflationary pressure and support domestic growth, despite intensifying global trade tensions, EY said on Friday.

The 'EY Economy Watch' report for April identifies four key interlinked effects which would have a bearing on India's growth - reduced exports, global slowdown, falling crude oil prices, and the impact of global excess production capacities. "With suitable fiscal and monetary policies, India may be able to sustain a real GDP growth at about 6.5 per cent in FY26 as also in the medium term, while maintaining a CPI inflation below 4 per cent."

"We also expect global crude prices to remain in the range of \$ 60-65/bbl in FY26, which may be to India's advantage," EY India Chief Policy Advisor D K Srivastava said.

It said exports may slow due to higher tariffs and weakening global demand, but the overall GDP impact may be limited, given the subdued role of net exports in India's recent growth experience. Global slowdown may constrain growth worldwide, but India's relatively strong fiscal space and monetary flexibility provide scope for calibrated stimulus.

Excess production capacities in major exporting nations could lead to dumping risks, requiring India to consider targeted anti-dumping measures.

Falling crude oil prices dropping from \$ 75/bbl in early April to \$ 65/bbl by mid-month, and remaining within an expected range of \$ 60-65 during FY26, is expected to support domestic growth while easing inflationary pressures. "India's response to these global disruptions must be strategic and multi-pronged. We see the potential for India to emerge relatively stronger, provided it continues to manage its macroeconomic fundamentals well through a growth-oriented fiscal policy and accommodative monetary stance," Srivastava said.

EY Economy Watch suggests that India's short-term strategy could include switching part of its crude oil imports to the US thereby improving trade balance and lowering its reciprocal tariff rate. A comprehensive bilateral trade agreement, expected by September-October 2025, could further enhance trade stability with the US.

From a medium to long-term perspective, the EY Economy Watch underscores the importance of accelerating reforms in land and labour, investing in education, skilling and emerging technologies like AI and GenAI, and expanding PLI coverage. The EY report also recommends that India should deepen trade ties with the UK, EU, and select regional partners.

"With proactive macroeconomic management and external sector realignment, India appears well-positioned to maintain growth momentum despite global headwinds," the report said.

EY's India growth projections for 2025-26 are within the range of 6.2-6.7 per cent projected by global agencies. The economy is estimated to have grown at 6.5 per cent in the last fiscal (2024-25). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank project growth to be 6.2 per cent and 6.3 per cent, respectively in FY26.

While the RBI and S&P Global Ratings project FY26 growth at 6.5 per cent, the OECD and Fitch Ratings forecast GDP expansion at 6.4 per cent amid the ongoing tariff war and uncertainty over the US trade policy.

On April 2, US President Donald Trump had announced reciprocal tariffs or taxes on imports from other countries to match the duties levied by those countries on imports from the US.

On April 9, the US administration authorised a 90-day pause on the implementation of most reciprocal tariffs, reverting to a universal rate of 10 per cent on almost all targeted countries, while raising tariffs on most goods from China to 145 per cent. On April 16, the US further hiked tariffs on exports from China to 245 per cent.

Maruti Suzuki Q4 net profit dips 1 per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Auto major Maruti Suzuki India on Friday said its consolidated net profit declined by 1 per cent year-on-year to ₹3,911 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025, on account of higher expenses.

The country's largest carmaker reported a net profit of ₹3,952 crore in the January-March quarter of FY24.

Total revenue increased to ₹40,920 crore in the March quarter last fiscal as compared with ₹38,471 crore in the year-ago period, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said in a regulatory filing.

The company said its total expenses during the fourth quarter rose to ₹37,585 crore against ₹34,624 crore in Q4 FY24, an increase of 8.5 per cent.

On a standalone basis, the company said its net profit declined to ₹3,711 crore as compared with ₹3,878 crore in the same

quarter a year ago.

Net sales rose to ₹38,849 crore against ₹36,697 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.

The company said its sales stood at 6,04,635 units in the January-March period, the highest ever in any quarter.

The domestic sales grew by 3 per cent while exports grew by 8 per cent, resulting in an overall growth of 3.5 per cent, it added. Domestic sales stood at 5,19,546 units and exports at 85,089 units in the fourth quarter, the auto major stated.

For the full year ended March 31, 2025, the maker of models like Swift and Grand Vitara reported a consolidated net profit of ₹14,500 crore, up 7.5 per cent, as compared with ₹13,488 crore in 2023-24 fiscal. Revenue rose to ₹1,52,913 crore in FY25 on a consolidated basis against ₹1,41,858 crore in FY24.

On a standalone basis, the company said it achieved its all-time high net profit of

₹13,955 crore in FY25, up 6 per cent from ₹13,209 crore in FY24. Net sales rose to ₹1,45,115 crore last fiscal, a growth of 7.5 per cent over ₹1,34,938 crore in FY24.

Last fiscal, the carmaker said it sold a total of 22,34,266 vehicles during the last fiscal, comprising 19,01,681 units in the domestic market and 3,32,585 units in the export market.

MSI said it recorded its highest ever annual total sales and exports in FY25.

The company continued to be the top exporter for the fourth consecutive year, now contributing nearly 43 per cent of total passenger vehicle exports from India.

It, however, noted that domestic market growth was quite muted in the last financial year.

"For the company, a modest domestic sales growth of 2.7 per cent was compensated by a healthy 17.5 per cent export growth, leading to an aggregate growth of 4.6 per cent for the year," MSI said.

Assam CM, Norway discuss areas for future alliance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

Avenues for collaboration between Assam and Norway in sectors ranging from green energy to sustainable aviation fuel were explored in a meeting between Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the European nation's ambassador to India May-Elin Stener.

Elin Stener had met the Assam chief minister here on Thursday evening during a visit to the state. "Pleased to have met @NorwayAmbIndia, H.E May-Elin Stener this evening.

We discussed a wide array of issues of common interest — Bio refinery, green ammonia, etc and explored possible collaboration between Norway and Assam in areas of green energy and other emerging sectors," Sarma said in a social media post.

Another post by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said the discussions focused on areas of mutual interest such as bio-refinery, green ammonia and sustainable aviation fuel.

Sarma highlighted Assam's green energy initiatives and explored avenues for future collaboration with Norway.

"HCM also apprised the Envoy of Assam's natural and cultural richness, including its 3 World Heritage Sites, and welcomed her keen interest in visiting Kaziranga National Park," the CMO added. Ambassador Elin Stener, also in a post on the micro-blogging site expressed interest in future collaborations.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma highlighted Assam's green energy initiatives and explored avenues for future collaboration with Norway

"Thank you Hon'ble Chief Minister @himantabiswa for the good meeting. We look forward to future discussions in areas of common interest," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

AP government to adopt AI for better governance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Amaravati

The Andhra Pradesh government is identifying Artificial Intelligence Champions from 20 state departments through an AI workshop organised in partnership with Wadhvani Centre for Government Digital Transformation (WGDT), official sources said.

The selected departments will cover 80 per cent of government operations with Artificial Intelligence and the officials will convert 100-150 Artificial Intelligence projects into Proofs of Concept (PoCs) and scalable solutions.

"Departments will nominate senior officers as Artificial Intelligence Champions, supported by Artificial Intelligence Catalysts," Real Time Governance Society (RTGS) Secretary Bhaskar Katamani said during the workshop's second-day, according to a press release.

These officers will undergo a struc-

tured four-day training programme with support from Wadhvani Centre for Government Digital Transformation and the information technology (IT sector) Department to solve department-specific challenges through Artificial Intelligence.

Inspired by National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), this initiative aims to build a new cadre of Artificial Intelligence-driven leaders within the public administration framework for digital transformation.

Workshops, mentorship sessions, and real-time project development will empower each team, including directors and enthusiastic mid-level officers trained to implement Artificial Intelligence innovations.

This strategic move underlines the state's vision of 'Minimum Government - Maximum Governance' through ethical, efficient, and impactful use of emerging technologies in governance.

Rupee falls 7 paise, closes at 85.40 per US Dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled for the day lower by 7 paise at 85.40 against the US dollar on Friday, amid heightened geopolitical tensions and a negative trend in the domestic markets.

Forex traders said escalated geopolitical tensions, following a terror attack in Pahalgalam, Jammu and Kashmir weighed on market sentiment.

Moreover, a muted trend in domestic equities and positive US dollar indexed investors' sentiment further.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.17 and moved between the intra-day high of 85.08 and the low of 85.65 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 85.40 (provisional), registering a fall of 7 paise over its previous closing level.

On Thursday, the rupee gained 12 paise to close at 85.33 against the USD.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias amid heightened geopolitical tensions and weak tone in the domestic markets. However, persistent FII inflows, overall weakness in the US dollar may prevent a sharp fall in the rupee. \$-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 85 to 85.90," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

On Tuesday, at least 26 persons — mostly tourists — were killed by terrorists at the Baisaran meadows in Pahalgalam in one of the worst terror attacks on civilians in Kashmir in the past many years.

In a stern message, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India will identify, track and punish every terrorist and their backers who were responsible for the attack in Pahalgalam 'beyond their imagination'.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.24 per cent at 99.61.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.66 per cent to \$ 66.11 per barrel in futures trade.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 588.90 points or 0.74 per cent to 79,212.53, while the Nifty fell 207.35 points or 0.86 per cent to 24,039.35.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹8,250.53 crore on a net basis on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Forex traders said a prospective trade agreement with the US boosts India's strategic edge.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said he expects India to strike the first bilateral trade deal to avoid President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs.

Gold prices drop to ₹95,073 per 10 grams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Gold prices retreated by ₹839 to ₹95,073 per 10 grams in futures trade on Friday as the US dollar strengthened amid a potential de-escalation of the US-China trade war.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold contracts for June delivery dropped by ₹839 or 0.87 per cent to ₹95,073 per 10 grams in a business turnover of 18,007 lots.

In addition, the August contract of the precious metal dipped ₹760 or 0.79 per cent to trade at ₹95,858 per 10 grams on the bourse.

Analysts attributed the fall in gold prices to weak global cues.

On the global front, gold futures slipped by \$ 40.26 or 1.20 per cent to \$ 3,308.34 per ounce in New York.

"Gold prices are under pressure as the US dollar strengthens on hopes of progress in US-China trade talks," Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta said.

In a notable shift, China is considering exempting some US imports from its steep 125 per cent tariffs and has asked businesses to identify products that could qualify — the strongest indication yet that Beijing is growing increasingly anxious about the economic fallout of the trade war.

This development is easing safe-haven demand for gold as investors anticipate a potential thaw in tensions. If this trend persists, gold may remain on the back foot in



the near term, he said.

On the geopolitical front, escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, creating a volatile environment where investors are looking to hedge against volatility and geopolitical instability.

Mehta further said that attention will turn to the upcoming IMF's meeting this weekend, where any indications of further policy easing or extended global uncertainty could enhance gold's appeal and reinforce safe-haven demand.

According to HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saumil Gandhi, traders are looking forward to US macro-

economic data, including the Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index and 1-year inflation expectations to be released later in the day. The data release will gauge the strength of the economy and potential future monetary policy decisions by the US Federal Reserve.

Additionally, trade-related comments may have an impact on the overall market direction, Gandhi said.

Meanwhile, gold prices in spot markets in Mumbai dropped by ₹655 to ₹95,631 per 10 grams (99.9 purity). The standard gold (99.5 purity) declined by ₹652 to ₹95,248 per 10 grams.

Sensex, Nifty fall after India, Pakistan border tensions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined sharply on Friday due to selling in Axis Bank and growing tensions along the Indo-Pak border following the terror attack at Pahalgalam in Jammu & Kashmir.

Wiping out all early gains, the 30-share BSE barometer tanked 588.90 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 79,212.53. During the day, it dropped 1,195.62 points or 1.49 per cent to 78,605.81. Falling for the second day, the NSE Nifty tumbled 207.35 points or 0.86 per cent to 24,039.35.

Experts said worries over growing geopolitical tensions after Tuesday's Pahalgalam terror attack weighed on market sentiment.

Investor sentiment turned cautious amid escalating tensions along the Indo-Pak border. Mid and smallcap stocks bore the brunt of the sell-off, driven by their elevated valuations and growing concerns over potential earnings downgrades following a muted start to the earnings season," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

A Sacred Step

A powerful dance drama that brings the Ramayan to life with grace, strength, and deep emotion, says SAKSHI PRIYA

CULTURAL CELEBRATION

Ms. Rekha Gupta, the Chief Minister of Delhi, whose presence added prestige to the event and highlighted the cultural significance of the evening. Her support for the arts is well-known and her attendance at this dance drama reflected her dedication to promoting India's rich cultural heritage.

There are moments when art stops being performance and becomes prayer. When the movement of feet, the strength of hands, and the silence between gestures speak louder than words. **Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram**, presented by the Urvashi Dance Music Art & Cultural Society, was one such offering. The dance carried with it the weight of legacy, the fire of devotion, and the strength of truth.

It began in silence — no fanfare. Just the stage slowly lighting up to the sound of a conch, a chant rising through the Kamani Auditorium and the sight of dancers entering barefoot, as if walking into a sacred space. From that very first moment, the performance became an experience. Among the distinguished guests in attendance was Ms Rekha Gupta, the Chief Minister of Delhi, whose presence highlighted the cultural significance of the evening. Directed with remarkable sensitivity by Dr Rekha Mehra, the production traced the arc of the Ramayan from

Ram's birth in Ayodhya to his return as king, through classical dance, dramatic expression and layered symbolism. Guru Ajay Bhatt and Aamrapali Bhandari's choreography respected the epic's soul.

Every movement was chosen with care. Ram's journey began with the celebration of his birth in Ayodhya. The air was alive with movement and colour. But celebration gave way to duty. Ram's departure into vanvasa was a haunting moment, his farewell to Kaushalya staged with restraint, as dancers encircled him like time closing in. The lighting shifted to capture the weight of sacrifice.

The forest scenes were among the most visually captivating. With nothing more than cloth, shadow and body formations, the dancers created rivers, trees, and wild animals. Sita stood tall with presence and dignity, while Lakshman reflected Ram's sense of duty with measured steps.

Then came the heart of the epic — Ravan's entrance. Played with authority and presence, his character carried pride and ego that ultimately led to his fall. The abduction of Sita was staged in stillness: a tight spotlight, the sudden clash of cymbals, and her hands rising in despair.

No cries — only silence, and it was deafening. Hanuman's scenes brought a shift in energy. His entry was spirited and charged, with leaps and spins that filled the stage. The youngest performing alongside the seasoned artists, especially in the search for Sita, held their own with focus and honesty, proving that emotion carries more weight than age or training.

AND THEN THE WEDDING SEQUENCE

Of all the moments, this stood out as the most poetic. Ram and Sita's swayamvar was staged with dignity. The breaking of Shiva's bow was done through a symbolic gesture — the clap and sudden illumination. But it was what followed that left the audience completely still: the phoolon ki baarish. There were no real flowers, yet one could see them. Each dancer opened their palms to the sky, then turned their hands downward, releasing imaginary petals in slow motion. It was the suggestion that created magic. The hall watched in stillness, as if the gods themselves were blessing the union. The battle between Ram and Ravan was marked by strong choreography, precise and deliberate, reflecting the conflict both within and around. And when Ram returned to Ayodhya, it was the sight of the people lighting lamps, forming the deepmala with their bodies that brought home the meaning of Diwali. The dialogues were few, spoken with clarity at the right moments — Ram's declaration of duty, Sita's quiet resolve, Hanuman's pledge. The lighting throughout was purposeful — never overpowering, always in line with the mood of each scene. This was the Ramayan performed with clarity, discipline and respect. Dr Mehra and her team brought together talent, tradition and a deep sense of purpose.

DEVOTION CAPTURED IN EVERY STEP AND MOTION

Every scene, every expression, every beat of the foot was in service of the story. What stayed was the feeling that something timeless had passed before our eyes, an offering of art, devotion and truth that will remain with those who witnessed it.



Art as a form of Reflection

A moving journey through colour and memory, where quiet forms speak to something deeply human

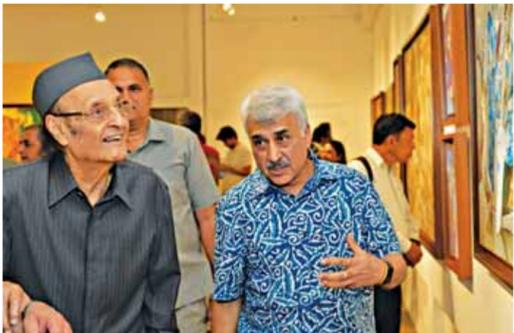
BY TEAM VIVA

Art, in its purest form, communicates feelings that words cannot capture. Through the play of form, colour, and texture, it creates a space for personal reflection. The exhibition, **Beyond Myth & Metaphor** by Shabir Hussain Santosh and curated with an essay by Archana Khare Ghose, is being held at Shridharani Gallery, New Delhi and is presented by Sanchit Art.

It invites the viewer into a world where myth is not retold but felt. Santosh's paintings do not aim to deliver a heavy narrative; instead, they evoke a deeper feeling, a subtle undercurrent of emotion that emerges through his use of abstract forms. He doesn't seek to tell stories in the traditional sense. Instead, he captures the essence of myth in a way that goes beyond its literal meaning. The figures in his paintings are often soft, undefined, allowing for a sense of fluidity and openness. The colours employed are particularly striking. Warm, earthy reds and glowing yellows are infused with a quiet energy, evoking both the warmth of the earth and the depth of memory.

Standing in front of these paintings, viewers often find themselves captured by the quiet stillness of the artwork. They stare, perhaps searching for a clearer understanding of what the painting is about, but it is precisely this uncertainty that makes the work so compelling. The figures are often incomplete or fragmented, and yet they evoke such a powerful emotional response.

Artist ability to convey such powerful emotions with the simplest of forms speaks volumes about his understanding of the human condition. His work is not about spectacle but about evoking a quiet space for thought and reflection.



EXHIBITION THAT ENCOURAGES SLOWING DOWN AND ALLOWING THE EMOTIONS IN THE PAINTINGS TO TAKE ROOT. IT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC UNTIL APRIL 30, 2025. GO SEE IT - NOT TO UNDERSTAND EVERY DETAIL, BUT TO FEEL THE MESSAGE.



The Rediscovery of a 17th-Century Masterwork

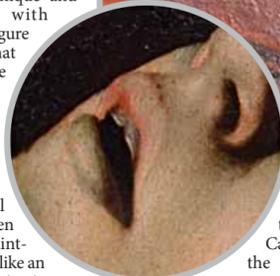
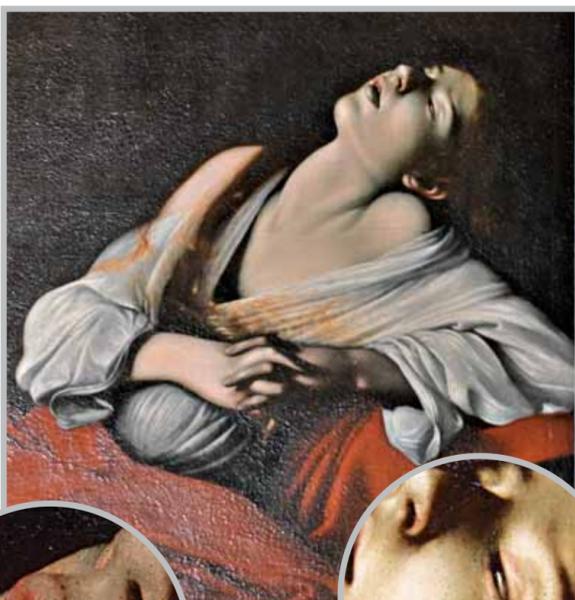
BY TEAM VIVA

Art, in its essence, is an exploration of human emotions, experiences, and ideas. **Caravaggio's *Magdalene in Ecstasy*** offers a vivid representation of these elements, capturing a raw and sincere moment in a remarkable way. This painting, rediscovered after centuries, provides an intimate view into the depths of Mary Magdalene's emotional state, offering more than just a visual experience, but a deep reflection on penitence and spiritual devotion.

Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy (1606), 40.75 in x 36 in, showcases the artist's masterful use of chiaroscuro — the dramatic contrast between light and shadow — which imbues the painting with both realism and emotional intensity. Roberto Longhi, a key researcher of Caravaggio, noted that the subject was interpreted in a unique and innovative manner, with Caravaggio placing the figure in a diagonal position that draws the viewer into the 17th century.

The rediscovery of this painting is a remarkable event in the art world. Mina Gregori, an expert in Caravaggio's work, recalled the emotional experience she had when first encountering the painting, describing how it felt like an act of devotion. This painting is not only significant for its artistic merit but also for its historical value in understanding the role of images and faith during the Counter-Reformation period.

One of the most notable aspects of *Magdalene in Ecstasy* is the rendering of the hands. Caravaggio's attention to detail in these hands, with their vivid colours and naturalistic depiction, is considered one of the defining elements of the original painting. These hands, full of tension, convey a deep sense of emotion that goes beyond technique, showing the artist's ability to bring life into his work. The face of Magdalene is another focal point of the painting. The careful blending of light



and shadow on her face gives it an inner mobility, which, in turn, heightens the emotive impact of the piece. Caravaggio's treatment of the eyes, especially the tears, merging the emotional depth of the subject with the natural world around her. The striking red hair of Magdalene, cascading over her shoulder, is depicted with equal intensity. Caravaggio's use of light to highlight this feature contributes to the painting's dramatic effect, and the folds of her red cloak, executed with bold, vigorous brushstrokes, further emphasise the dynamic tension within the composition. The cross and skull, symbols of death and devotion, are placed strategically in

HISTORIC BAROQUE MASTERPIECE

In an exciting cultural milestone, *Magdalene in Ecstasy* will be unveiled in New Delhi as part of a historic exhibition. The Cultural Centre of the Italian Embassy, in partnership with The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, proudly announces the arrival of Caravaggio's masterpiece in Delhi on the occasion of the visit of Italian Deputy Prime Minister Antonio Tajani and Minister for University and Research Anna Maria Bernini. The exhibition will be opened to the public at KNMA Saket till May 18, 2025. The rediscovery of this work is a powerful reminder of the timeless nature of Caravaggio's art. His ability to capture the essence of human emotion, through light, shadow, and form, continues to resonate with modern viewers, offering them a glimpse into the complexities of the human soul.

the painting to prompt reflection. The positioning of these elements invites the viewer to contemplate not only the life of Magdalene but also the broader themes of redemption and eternal life.

The crown of thorns, situated above Magdalene, speaks to her sacrifice and connection to the suffering of Christ, urging viewers to meditate on the spiritual significance of her actions.

Through his masterful technique and vivid portrayal of the human experience, he conveys not only the visual appearance of his subjects but also their internal emotional state. In *Magdalene in Ecstasy*, every brushstroke carries the weight of human struggle, spirituality, and devotion.

PBKS vs KKR: High-stakes clash in IPL 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kolkata

The man who led them to glory just a season ago could now stand in the way of Kolkata Knight Riders' (KKR) playoff qualification when the side hosts the Shreyas Iyer-led revamped Punjab Kings (PBKS) in a high-stakes IPL clash here at the Eden Gardens on Saturday.

Twelve months ago, Iyer had led KKR to their first IPL title in a decade. On Saturday, he returns in opposition colours, at the helm of a rejuvenated Punjab side chasing a playoff spot.

Let go by KKR in one of the most surprising off-season moves, Iyer has found both comfort and purpose in Punjab Kings.

Reuniting with his old Delhi Capitals mentor Ricky Ponting, the duo has steadied PBKS into the top five of the table with five wins from eight games.

The partnership has given Iyer the space to lead confidently and he has tallied 263 runs with three half-centuries so far. However, he comes into the weekend game, carrying three single digit scores.

Saturday offers him the perfect chance to make a statement — much like KL Rahul did the other against his former franchise Lucknow Super Giants with a composed 57 not out.

Iyer too could have a Rahul-like moment under the Eden lights. KKR, on the other hand, are in desperate need of momentum.

With five defeats in eight matches, another stumble could tighten their already narrow path to the playoffs.

Their top-order remains unsettled, the middle-order erratic, and the spin attack ineffective on a surface they once called their fortress.

KKR's middle-order trio of Russell, Rinku and Ramandeep has failed to deliver the finishing punch this season, prompting calls for a shake-up.

The team may be forced to bring in Caribbean all-rounder Rovman Powell, whose power-hitting and handy pace can add much-needed spark and balance.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi, one of the few bright spots in KKR's batting, might once again look to negotiate the tricky phase when the likes of Arshdeep Singh (Punjab's leading wicket-taker with 11 scalps) and



Yuzvendra Chahal operate.

Skipper Ajinkya Rahane too will be under the scanner, having anchored the innings well at times but struggled to shift gears and finish games.

claiming the wickets of Rahane, Raghuvanshi, Rinku Singh, and Ramandeep Singh in a devastating spell.

With Marco Jansen providing the early menace and new find Nehal Wadhwa managing tidy finishes, PBKS certainly look a more confident and well-rounded outfit.

For KKR's bowling unit, Harshit Rana's duel with PBKS opener Priyansh Arya could set the tone. Arya smashed a century against Chennai Super Kings earlier this season.

Despite their troubles, KKR are, however, still alive in the playoffs race.

Winning five of their remaining six games could be sufficient, but anything less would leave them dependent on other results.

For this to happen, KKR must fix their home record, which is just one win from four matches here.

The much-publicised friction with Eden curator Sujan Mukherjee over pitch preparations has drawn unwanted attention and debates over spin-friendly surfaces, fairness, and even calls from commentators to consider shifting base.

Despite it being slow and grippy, which is exactly what KKR wanted, Sunil Narine has taken just two wickets at the Eden. Varun Chakravarthy (4) has been marginally better, while Moeen Ali has failed to strike in two matches.

Teams

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

PBKS: Shreyas Iyer (c), Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Marcus Stoinis, Nehal Wadhwa, Prabhsimran Singh, Glenn Maxwell, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Yash Thakur, Harpreet Brar, Vishnu Vinod, Marco Jansen, Lockie Ferguson, Josh Inglis, Xavier Bartlett, Kuldeep Sen, Pyla Avinash, Suryansh Shedge, Musheer Khan, Harnoor Pannu, Aaron Hardie, Priyansh Arya, Azmatullah Omarzai.

SRH outplay CSK by 5 wkts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Pacer Harshal Patel made the best use of a sluggish Chhapauk surface as Sunrisers Hyderabad put Chennai Super Kings on the brink of exit door by winning the battle of back-benchers by five wickets in the Indian Premier League here on Friday.

Harshal, a fine exponent of the slower delivery and the knuckle ball, took 4 for 28 as Chennai Super Kings endured another poor outing with the bat and were bowled out for 154 in 19.5 overs.

Despite getting assistance from the dew-laden surface, SRH made a heavy weather of the chase before finally knocking off the target in 18.4 overs.

Ishan Kishan (44 off 34 balls), after his brain fade against Mumbai Indians, played a responsible hand at the top before Kamindu Mendis (32 not out off 22 balls) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (19 not out off 13 balls) got the visitors two points with a 49-run stand. This was SRH's first win at this venue.

With six points from nine games, SRH's play-off qualification hangs by a thread as they need to win all their five matches and that too by a fair margin to end on 16 points, which is a safe cut-off.

SRH leapfrogged Rajasthan Royals to the eighth position in the 10-team table as Mahendra Singh Dhoni's men remain at the bottom of the heap.

For CSK, their seventh defeat in nine games practically ends their hopes as they now need wins in the next five games and hope that the play-off cut-off remains at 14 for the fourth-placed team.

The confidence of CSK batters has been shot to pieces and the lack of a collective effort from their bowlers only compounded the problems.

Harshal, who cleverly used the change of pace, was complemented well by skipper Pat Cummins (2/21), ambidextrous spinner Kamindu (1/26),



veterans Mohammed Shami (1/28) and Jaydev Unadkat (2/21).

Dewald Brevis (42 off 25) was the top scorer while Deepak Hooda (22 off 21) played some lofty shots towards the end to take CSK past 150-run mark.

Sent into bat, CSK witnessed a horrendous start as they lost Shaik Rasheed in the first ball off Mohammed Shami, caught by Abhishek Sharma at first slip. It was a perfect Test match delivery, pitched on length outside off and shaped away with the batter just poking at it. Young Ayush Mhatre (30 off 19) was, however, going great guns, picking up boundaries at will with his attacking batting against Shami, SRH skipper Cummins and Unadkat.

At the halfway mark, CSK reached 76 for four in 10 overs. But Shivam Dube (12 off 9) and Brevis (42 off 25) had other plans as they took the attack to the opposition with their power hitting.

While Dube hit Shami for two exquisite boundaries through covers in the 11th over, Brevis clobbered Mendis for three maximums in the next over to keep up the run rate.

Drafted into the side, Brevis was in destructive mood as he clobbered Harshal for another six before being brilliantly caught by a diving Kamindu at long off.

However, CSK lost wickets in a heap as Dube was holed out by Abhishek at long-on off Unadkat in the next over.

In came Dhoni in his 400th T20 match, but he too failed to fire as the veteran batter slashed a Harshal delivery straight to Abhishek at point.

Towards the end, Hooda tried his best to lift the innings and managed to take CSK past 150.

Getting hate for inviting Nadeem to NC Classic: Neeraj

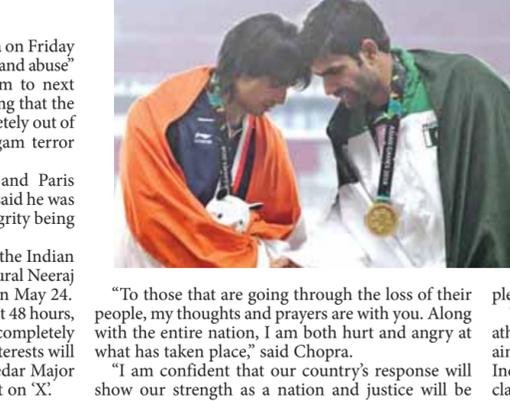
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Indian javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra on Friday said he has been bombarded with "hate and abuse" for inviting Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem to next month's NC Classic in Bengaluru, clarifying that the Olympic champion's presence was "completely out of question" in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack.

The Tokyo Olympics gold-medallist and Paris Games silver-winning star from Haryana said he was deeply hurt to see his and his family's integrity being questioned in abusive social media posts.

Chopra invited Nadeem, who defeated the Indian in Paris last year to win gold, for the inaugural Neeraj Chopra Classic to be held in Bengaluru on May 24.

"After all that has taken place over the last 48 hours, Arshad's presence at the NC Classic was completely out of the question. My country and its interests will always come first," Chopra, who is a Subedar Major in the Indian Army, said in a lengthy post on X.



"To those that are going through the loss of their people, my thoughts and prayers are with you. Along with the entire nation, I am both hurt and angry at what has taken place," said Chopra.

"I am confident that our country's response will show our strength as a nation and justice will be

erved," he added. Nadeem had declined to come citing other commitments. The 27-year-old Chopra said he is well aware of the chatter surrounding his invitation to Nadeem after the Pahalgam attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were gunned down by terrorists.

"...Most of it has been hate and abuse. They haven't even left my family out of it," said Chopra.

"I usually am a man of few words, but that doesn't mean I will not speak up against what I think is wrong. More so when it comes to questioning my love for our country, and the respect and honour of my family," he wrote. Chopra said invites for NC Classic were sent out on Monday, a day before the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

"The invitation I extended to Arshad was from one athlete to another — nothing more, nothing less. The aim of NC Classic was to bring the best athletes to India and for our country to be the home of world-class sporting events.

Barcelona, Real Madrid meet in Copa del Rey final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Barcelona

Barcelona and Real Madrid meet in the Copa del Rey final on Saturday with more than just the trophy on the line for the fierce Spanish rivals.

Barcelona wants to grab the first piece of a potential treble of major titles in the Copa del Rey final on Saturday with more than just the trophy on the line for the fierce Spanish rivals.

It could also be the last trophy for Carlo Ancelotti, who many Madrid watchers speculate could leave the powerhouse this summer, possibly to take over the Brazil national team.

Madrid arguably has more at stake. Out of the Champions League, the cup is its best chance to salvage the campaign with some silverware. It is also alive in La Liga, but it needs to overhaul a four-point deficit to Barcelona with five games left — a home stretch that includes yet another clasico.

For Barcelona, a title won at the expense of Madrid would give it a huge momentum boost for Inter's visit on Wednesday as the Catalan club pursues its first European Cup in a decade.

Barcelona dominated their other two meetings this season, beating Madrid 5-2 in the Spanish Super Cup final in January after winning 4-0 at Madrid in the league in October.

The third clasico of the season will be played before 70,000 fans in Seville's La Cartuja Stadium, where King Felipe VI will award the trophy to the winners. This is the first Copa del Rey final

between Spain's biggest clubs since 2014. Barcelona holds a record 31 Spanish cups. Madrid has 20, third place all time.

Filling in for Lewandowski

Flick's biggest task will be filling in for the injured Robert Lewandowski, who picked up a left-thigh injury last weekend. The Poland striker is producing another stellar season with a team-high 40 goals across all competitions.

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
UNDER SECTION SARFAESI ACT 2002

Bank of India
Relationship beyond banking

Zonal Office
128/24 Om Laxmi Tower, H-Block, Kidwai
Nagar, Kanpur-208011, Tel: 0512-2985004

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with rule proviso to 8 (6) of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of India. Secured Creditor will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on below mentioned date for recovery of mentioned amount in demand notice issued due to the Bank of India, secured creditor from below mentioned borrowers / guarantors. The details of the property as given below, reserve price and EMD amount are marked against all the properties.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower / Guarantors, Demand Notice date, Amount & Possession Date/Type of Possession	Description of Mortgage Properties & Owner of Property	Reserve Price (in Lakh) Earnest Money Deposit (in Lakh) Incremental Bid Amt
Branch: Guru Teg Bahadur Branch, 120/567, Shivaji Nagar, Guru Teg Bahadur Marg, Kanpur-208005			
1.	Borrower: Smt. Raju Devi Sharma W/O Chandra Bhan Sharma Co-Borrower: Mr. Chandra Bhan Sharma Guarantor: Mr. Anuragh Panday s/o Shyam Narayan Demand Notice Date: 31.12.2022 Amt.: Rs. 51,96,589.81 + Interest w.e.f. 31.12.2022 + other charges Possession Notice: 03.05.2023/Symbolic	Land and building situated entire Ground Floor G over Premises No-A 297 Scheme No.2 Awaz Vikash Hanspuram Kanpur Nagar Owner: Mrs Raju Devi Sharma Area: 207.55 Sq mtr along with undivided proportionate share of land 53.75 Sq mtr Boundaries of Premises: East: 9.0 Mtr wide Road, West: Plot No A-296, North: 24.00 Mtr wide Road, South: Plot No. G1, G2	Rs. 59.94 Rs. 6.00 Rs. 50,000/-
Branch: C. P. Mission Compound Branch, Plot No. 803/6, Gwallior Road P&T Colony, Jhansi (U.P) PIN Code-284003			
2.	Borrower: Mr. Jai Prakash S/O Ashok Co-Borrower: Mrs. Geeta W/O Ashok Guarantor: Mr. Neeraj Shivastav S/O Vishan Swaroop Demand Notice Date: 04.05.2019 Amt.: Rs. 8,19,144.80 + Interest w.e.f. 04.05.2019 + other charges Possession Notice: 02.08.2019/Symbolic	All land and building situated at Arzi No. 1755, Mauja Lahar Gird, Brahm Nagar, Jhansi Area: 900 Sq. Ft. Boundaries of Premises: East: Plot of Mr. Mukesh, West: House of Mr. Ram Pal, North: Plot of Mrs. Najma and Others, South: Way 4.57 Mtrs.	Rs. 09.21 Rs. 0.92 Rs. 25,000/-
3.	Borrower: Mr. Santosh Vishwakarma S/O Pukhu Lal Co-Borrower: Mrs. Kiran Vishwakarma W/O Santosh Kumar Guarantor: Mr. Moti Lal Kushwaha S/O Lt. Ram Prasad Kushwaha Demand Notice Date: 10.05.2019 Amt.: Rs. 7,87,553.56 + Interest w.e.f. 10.05.2019 + other charges Possession Notice: 02.08.2019/Symbolic	All land and building situated at Dadiyapura I, Madras Pukhu Lal Area: 795 Sq. Ft. Boundaries of Premises: East: House of Mrs. Kalawati Mishra & Others, West: House of Makhhan Lal Vishwakarma, North: Boudry Wall Mahakaleshwar Mandir, South: Rasta 15 Ft.	Rs. 12.92 Rs. 1.30 Rs. 25,000/-
Branch: Manik Chowk Branch, Dr. Dayasagar Compound, Manik Chowk, Jhansi (U.P) PIN Code-284002			
4.	Borrower: 1. Mr. Narendra Chaurasiya S/O Balmukund Chaurasiya 2. Mrs. Pushpa Chaurasiya W/O Mr. Narendra Chaurasiya Demand Notice Date: 08.05.2024 Amt.: Rs. 14,61,022.02 + Interest w.e.f. 08.05.2024 + other charges Possession Notice: 25.07.2024/Symbolic	EMD of All Residential Plot Situated at Arzi No. 319 M, Mouja Navagan, Near Church ITI College, Tehsil, City & Distt. Jhansi (UP) Owned by Mr. Narendra Chaurasiya & Mrs. Pushpa Chaurasiya Area: 62.45 Sqmtr Boundaries of Premises: East: House of Dwivedi, West: House of Sharma Ji, North: House of Mukesh Sen, South: Way of 6.10Mtr. Wide	Rs. 14.40 Rs. 1.44 Rs. 25,000/-
Branch: Lal Banglow Branch, 98 A Chandra Nagar Lal Banglow, Kanpur-208007			
5.	Borrower: 1. M/s Jagdambey Corporation of India (Prop. Jawaharlal Sarin) 2. Mr. Jawaharlal Sarin Guarantor: 1. Mrs. Veena Sarin 2. Mr. Jaswant Rai Demand Notice Date: 21.05.2022 Amt.: Rs. 48,39,372.90 + Interest w.e.f. 21.05.2022 + other charges Possession Notice: 28.07.2022/Symbolic	All land and building situated at premises No.38A on arazi no. 253 (min) Muzaffarpur Pardevanpur Kanpur. Admeasuring area 176 sq. Mtrs Owned by Mr. Jawaharlal Sarin Bounded as under: East: 15' wide road thereafter open land owned by trust, West: 10' wide common passage thereafter ahata of Smt Ram Payari Devi, North: Land of Radha Krishna Temple, South: Remaining part of same house	Rs. 60.07 Rs. 6.00 Rs. 50,000/-
Branch: Auraiya Branch, Vinayak Plaza Kanpur Road Auraiya, Distt. Auraiya-206122			
6.	Borrower: Mr. Vipin Kumar s/o Lakhna Lal Co-Borrower: Mrs. Pooja w/o Vipin Kumar Guarantor: Mr. Lal Girish Chandra s/o Ramnath Kumar Demand Notice Date: 01.08.2022 Amt.: Rs. 4,02,467.91 + Interest w.e.f. 01.08.2022 + other charges Possession Notice: 04.12.2023/Symbolic	EQM of Property situated at Survey no. 718, Kakhavato Pargana Auraiya UP admeasuring area 89.776 Sq meters in the name of Mrs. Pooja w/o Vipin Kumar Area:- 89.776 Sq mtr Or 966.00 Sqft. Boundries of Premises: East:-Road 20 Feet, West: Plot Seller:- Land Digar, South:- Plot Om Prakash-	Rs. 26.10 Rs. 2.61 Rs. 25,000/-

Last date for submission of EMD for all the above properties is 27.05.2025 by 04.00 PM
E-Auction of above mentioned properties will be held on Date 27.05.2025 Time at Morning 11 AM to 5.00 PM
(with unlimited extension of 5 min. interval)

Terms and Conditions of Sale :- 1. This e-Auction is being held on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER IT IS" basis. 2. The property being auctioned by the Authorised Officer is free of charge till the maximum information and belief, yet the intending tenderer should independently enquire all the encumbrances, title claim statutory dues (Customs and Excise Tax / Income Tax) before participating in the e-auction and or any other government agency etc. All assets are being sold with all current and future encumbrances known or unknown. The Authorised Officer will not be liable for any claim rights and liabilities of any third / third party. 3. It is the responsibility of the tenderers to inspect the property and satisfy self completely before participating in the e-auction. You can contact the concerned branch of Bank of India for property inspection. 4. Interested tenderers will be able to get their User ID and Password free of cost by registering on the web portal <https://www.BAANKNET.com> and EMD can be deposited through this portal. 5. After registration in the web portal, the interested bidder should upload the following documents in the web portal before submitting the tender. 1. Copy of PAN Card 2. ID Proof (KYC) like Self Attested Aadhar Card / Voter ID - Card / Driving License / Passport etc. 6. Only tenderers having valid User ID, Password will be able to participate in the e-auction process. 7. Only those interested bidders who have made EMD payment by 27.05.2025 within the stipulated time will be able to participate in the e-auction process. 8. If the reserve price of the property is up to Rs. 50 lakh the incremental value bid will be in multiple of 25000 and if reserve price is above 50 lakh it will be Rs. 50000. 9. The highest bidder shall be declared the successful bidder with the permission of the authorized officer. The information of which will be given - to him by electronic mail on his email address. 10. The Authorized Officer will not be bound to accept the highest bid and the Authorized Officer will have the right to accept/reject any bid. 11. EMD amount of successful bidder will remain in BAANKNET Wallet and all unsuccessful bidder's amount can be withdrawn from BAANKNET. No interest will be payable by BAANKNET on the EMD amount. 12. The successful bidder will have to deposit 25% (including EMD amount) of the selling price (i.e. maximum bid amount) immediately. He has to deposit the remaining balance amount within 15 days. In case successful bidder failed to deposit bid amount in prescribe time the amount deposited will be forfeited without any prior notice. 13. Bidders are advised to go through the detailed terms and condition at <https://www.bankofindia.co.in>, <https://www.BAANKNET.com> before submitting the tender. 14. TDS tax will be payable by the successful bidder on the maximum sale price under Income Tax Act 1941 (A), if the selling price exceeds Rs. 50 lakhs or more and additional GST will be payable (wherever applicable) on the sale price as per Government rules. 15. The intending tenderer should have proper resources related to the bid, no objection will be accepted in this regard. 16. Bids above reserve price will be accepted.

30 days sale notice to borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors

The above mentioned borrower / depositor / mortgagor is informed to pay the amount mentioned in section 13(2) before the date of auction. In case of failure to deposit the amount, the property will be auctioned and the balance amount along with interest and cost will be recovered from you or the borrower can also participate in the auction organized by the bank on the above date to recover the amount due in this account.

Date: 26.04.2025 Place : Kanpur Authorised Officer: Bank of India

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