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TERROR RETURNS TO KASHMIR, TOURISTS MASSACRED

AFTER NEARLY FOUR DECADES, PAHALGAM CARNAGE RIPS APART SEMBLANCE OF NORMALCY

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Srinagar

At least 26 tourists, holidaying in the famous tourist hotspot of Pahalgam in the Kashmir valley, were killed and several others were injured when a group of heavily armed terrorists, dressed in combat uniform, opened indiscriminate fire on them after verifying their religious identities on Tuesday afternoon.

After the February 14, 2019, Pulwama attack on a CRPF convoy, in which 40 jawans were martyred, Tuesday afternoon's attack is the most provocative strike on Indian soil by the terrorists sheltered by their Pakistan-based handlers operating from across the Line of Control.

The tensions between India and Pakistan may further escalate as the attack comes close on the heels of recent posturing by the Pakistan Army Chief, Asim Munir, on Kashmir. Last week, India rubbished Munir's remarks describing Kashmir as the "jugular vein" of Pakistan and said Islamabad's only link with Jammu and Kashmir is the vacation of illegally occupied parts of the union territory.

Condemning the terror attack on tourists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that those behind the heinous act will be brought to justice. PM Modi also directed Home Minister Amit Shah to visit the attack site in Pahalgam.

In a post on X, the prime minister said, "They (terrorists) will not be spared! Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable, and it will get even stronger."

The attack also coincided with the first official visit of US Vice President JD Vance to India.

According to eyewitness reports, the 'gruesome' attack took place around 1430hrs when a large number of tourists, after taking horse rides and absorbing themselves in the pristine beauty of Kashmir valley, were relaxing and breaking bread with their loved ones in the picturesque Baisaran meadow, half-an-hour trek from Pahalgam. In a viral video, one of the attack survivors claimed that while they were having snacks, an armed man, dressed in a combat uniform, arrived and sprayed bullets at them after verifying the religious identities of the tourists present. Tourists, with their heads punctured with bullets, were also seen writhing in pain in the picturesque meadow of Baisaran.

As gunshots rang out, there was panic, and tourists ran for cover, but there was no place to hide in the wide, open space, said another woman tourist.

It appears the terror attack was broadly aimed at shattering the peace prevailing in the Valley at a time when tourist footfall was skyrocketing and common Kashmiris were reaping rich dividends of peace after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A. In 2023, 2,11,80,011 tourists visited J and K, and in 2024, the number increased to 2,35,90,081.

Since March 26, over 8.25 lakh tourists have visited Asia's largest tulip garden in Srinagar to see the blooming flower carpet of 17 lakh tulips of 74 varieties.

Tourists camping in Pahalgam vacated their hotel rooms in the aftermath of the gruesome terror attack. The local authorities facilitated their safe travels to instill confidence among them.

The terror attack ahead of the beginning of the Amarnath yatra is bound to affect the tourist season in the coming weeks.

The entire district administration and police force were mobilised and ambulances pressed into service. A chopper also helped evacuate those injured.

Till late Tuesday evening, the exact number of tourists killed in the terror attack was not confirmed by the police. The toll is still being ascertained, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said while describing the terror attack as "much larger than anything we have seen directed at civilians in recent years".

"I'm shocked beyond belief. This attack on our visitors is an abomination. The perpetrators of this attack are animals, inhuman and worthy of contempt. No words of condemnation are enough. I send my sympathies to the families of the deceased," he said.

Before heading to Srinagar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah briefed the prime minister, who is on a visit to Saudi Arabia, said he was leaving for Srinagar to hold an urgent security review meeting with all agencies.

"Anguished by the terror attack on tourists in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. My thoughts are with the family members of the deceased. Those involved in this dastardly act of terror will not be spared, and we will come down heavily on the perpetrators with the harshest consequences," Shah said in a post on X.

Amit Shah also chaired a meeting at his home in Delhi, which was attended by Intelligence Bureau Chief Tapan Deka and Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, the sources said. CRPF chief Gyanendra Pratap Singh, J and K Director General of Police Nalin Prabhatand some Army officials also joined the meeting through video conferencing. Mr Shah also spoke to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, they added.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in a post on X said Deeply anguished by the news of terrorist attack in Pahalgam (Jammu and Kashmir). This dastardly attack on innocent civilians is an act of cowardice and highly reprehensible. My thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families.

Meanwhile, a massive anti-terrorist operation has been launched to hunt down the assailants, and security forces have fanned out in all directions.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who accompanied the Home Minister in a special flight from New Delhi Tuesday, said, "I strongly condemn the cowardly terror attack on tourists in Pahalgam. I assure the people that those behind this despicable attack will not go unpunished."

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Security personnel rushing to the spot after terrorists attacked a group of tourists at Pahalgam, in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, April 22 (left); Injured being shifted to a hospital in Anantnag district (right) PTI

CHRONOLOGY OF RECENT TERROR ATTACKS

- **August 14, 2024:** Doda encounter (one officer, one terrorist killed)
- **August 10, 2024:** Anantnag encounter (four jawans killed and four injured)
- **July 27, 2024:** Kupwara encounter (one security personnel killed)
- **July 22 2024:** Rajouri encounter (one security personnel injured)
- **July 15, 2024:** Doda encounter (four soldiers, one policeman killed)
- **July 9, 2024:** Kathua encounter (five jawans killed)
- **June 13, 2024:** Gandoh encounter (one policeman injured)
- **June 12 2024:** Chattergala encounter (one terrorist killed)
- **June 9, 2024:** Reasi terror attack (nine pilgrims killed)

The ByStander

ECI objects to Rahul's swipe on poll body in US

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

Taking exception to Leader of Opposition and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent remarks about poll process in the country, the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday rejected his allegations, saying any misinformation being spread, by anyone, is not only a sign of disrespect towards law, but also brings disrepute to the thousands of representatives appointed by their own political party and demotivates lakhs of election staff who work untiringly and transparently during elections.

"After any unfavourable verdict by the voters, trying to defame the Election Commission by saying that it is compromised is completely absurd. The entire nation is aware that each election process including the preparation of electoral rolls, polling and counting etc. are all held by Government staff and that too in the presence of authorised representatives formally appointed by Political Parties/ Candidates from polling station upto constituency level," the ECI said.

On Monday, Rahul alleged in Boston, US, that, in simple terms, more people voted in the Maharashtra Assembly election than there were adults in the state. "The Election Commission gave us a voting figure for 1730hrs, and between 1730hrs and 1930 hrs, 65 lakh voters voted. This is physically impossible. For a voter to vote, it takes approximately three minutes and, if you do the math, it would mean that there were lines of voters till 0200hrs- but this did not happen," he had said.

Continued on >> P2

VP escalates attack on SC after BJP

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ New Delhi

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday hit out at his critics for questioning his remarks on a recent Supreme Court order, asserting that every word spoken by a Constitutional functionary is guided by supreme national interest. He also asserted that Parliament is supreme.

This is the third of its kind remarks in recent times questioning the role and supremacy of judiciary and legislative which includes twice by the Presiding officer of Ràjya Sabha and certain BJP leaders including vocal Lok Sabha MP Nishikant Dubey. All faced severe criticism by the Opposition parties while BJP chief J P Nadda distancing itself over the controversial remarks by party members which also led slamming by the legal experts. In a related development, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Tuesday said everything the Supreme court said was consistent with the country's constitutional values and guided by national interest.

Sibal's remarks in a social media post came soon after Dhankhar asserted that every word spoken by a constitutional functionary was guided by supreme national interest.

Addressing a Delhi University event, Dhankhar also said efforts of forces working against the country to tarnish and run down institutions should be neutralised, "be it that of the presidency".

Asserting that Parliament is supreme, Dhankhar said, "There is no visualisation in the Constitution of any authority above Parliament. Parliament is supreme... Let me tell you, it is as supreme as every individual in the country."

He also underscored that there should be "no doubt" that the Constitution is for the people and its repository of safeguarding is that of the elected representatives. "They are the ultimate masters as to what the Constitution's content will be," he said.

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DDA notice to Signature Apartment residents

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has served a notice asking residents of Signature View Apartments in Mukherjee Nagar to vacate their flats at the earliest, as the deadline for evacuation, March 23, has passed.

An e-tender for its demolition was issued on March 17, shortly after the authority released standard operating procedures for the residents and the Resident Welfare Association (RWA) to coordinate the evacuation. In the notice dated April 15, the DDA stated, "The high court had mandated that all occupants vacate their flats between December 23, 2024 and March 23, 2025. That period has now lapsed." The DDA urged residents to vacate their flats at the earliest for their safety and to allow for the demolition and reconstruction of the building. It has asked the RWA to coordinate with all residents for a timely evacuation. It has claimed that information on the reconstruction schedule and process for compensation will be shared in due course.

Interestingly, residents of Signature View Apartments in Mukherjee Nagar are caught in a financial bind as they await rent compensation from the Delhi Development Authority

The authority also stated that it is committed to complying with the court's directive regarding rent assistance, although it plans to appeal certain aspects of the ruling. The DDA had classified the 336-flat residential complex as a "dangerous building" due to structural safety concerns. The apartment complex, declared unfit for habitation by an IIT Delhi report in 2022, was ordered in January 2023 by the lieutenant governor to be vacated and rebuilt. However, residents claim that despite months of waiting, no concrete action has been taken. Many have already vacated, while others remain trapped in deteriorating buildings.

Many families are struggling to relocate without the promised financial aid, deepening their uncertainty. Interestingly, residents of Signature View Apartments in Mukherjee Nagar are caught in a financial bind as they await rent compensation from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), even as the agency moves ahead with demolition plans for their structurally unsafe homes.

RWA president Amrendra Singh Rakesh said 111 residents have already vacated their flats but have not received the promised rent compensation.

"Residents were assured of financial aid once they moved out. But even after 111 families vacated, no payments have been made," Rakesh said. He added that the delay has left residents uncertain about whether they will receive the promised compensation. For many, the uncertainty surrounding the payments is preventing them from moving out. One of the resident, who still resides in the complex, is reluctant to vacate without a clear guarantee of financial support.

Continued on >> P2

A Royal wedding: British MP ties knot in desi style

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

In an age when many couples opt for picturesque weddings in the Alps or the Amalfi Coast, a British MP returned to his roots with an emotional, culturally rich celebration that unfolded in the heart of Uttar Pradesh.

Navendu Prabhat Mishra, 36, a two-time elected Labour Party Member of Parliament from Stockport in the United Kingdom, tied the knot with Garima Tiwari of Bhopal in a spectacular Sanatan-style wedding in Lucknow on Sunday.

From the earthy fragrance of turmeric during the haldi ceremony to the soulful beats of dhol echoing through a five-star hotel in Ansal Golf City, everything about the wedding exuded the charm of a quintessential Indian celebration.

But what made it even more special was the groom himself-a rising British politician, clad in a cream-colored sherwani, touching the feet of elders, offering folded-hand greetings to guests, and joining the pheras with a sincerity that moved many to tears.

"This is not just a wedding. It is a celebration of heritage. It is rare to see someone who has achieved so much internationally come back and honour his roots in such a heartfelt way," said Arvind Tiwari, a relative of the bride.

Navendu Mishra, who moved to the UK from Mumbai in 2003 and has since become a prominent voice for the Indian diaspora in British politics, insisted on celebrating his marriage in India, not just for nostalgia, but to reconnect with family, tradition, and home.

"Weddings are deeply personal. My parents always wanted to celebrate it here, amidst family, culture, and tradition. Lucknow felt right-it is close to where we belong. We had guests from our village, family members I had not seen in years. If we had done this in London or Stockport, it would have lacked that soul. What happened here was beyond my imagination," Mishra said, visibly emotional after the wedding rituals.

The bride, Garima Tiwari, hailing from Bhopal but originally from Deoria district in Uttar Pradesh, looked radiant in lehenga, complimenting the traditional grandeur of the ceremony. A banker by training and an alumna of a Glasgow university, Garima met Navendu through family connections, and their bond grew stronger over shared values and cultural sensibilities.

"Despite being born and raised miles apart, they both have strong emotional ties to their roots. This wedding is proof that no matter how far you go, the pull of home is eternal," said Nilendra Pandey, Navendu's maternal uncle.

Garima's father, Harendra Tiwari, a retired officer from the Horticulture Department in Madhya Pradesh, called the wedding "a moment of pride for both families and a message to younger generations about the timelessness of our traditions."

As celebrations unfolded, the venue saw an eclectic gathering of dignitaries and loved ones.

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Women outshine men in UPSC examination results

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Shakti Dubey has topped the civil services examination 2024, with Harshita Goyal and Dongre Archit Parag getting the second and third ranks, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) announced on Tuesday.

Topper Dubey holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry from the University of Allahabad. She qualified for the examination with political science and international relations as her optional subject, the commission said in a statement.

Goyal has a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the MS University of Baroda. She qualified for the exam with political science and international relations as her optional subject.

Parag, a Bachelor of Technology graduate in electrical and electronics engineering from Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), Tamil Nadu, had philosophy as his optional subject, according to the civil services exam results declared by the UPSC.

Shah Margi Chirag, who has a Bachelor of Engineering degree in computer engineering from Gujarat Technological University, Ahmedabad, secured the fourth rank with sociology as her optional subject. Aakash Garg, who has a Bachelor of Technology degree in computer science from the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi, got the fifth rank with sociology as his optional subject.

The top five successful candidates comprise three women and two men.

The civil services examination is conducted annually in three stages — preliminary, main and interview — by the UPSC to select officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others.

The civil services (preliminary) examination 2024 was conducted on June 16 last year. A total of 9,92,599 candidates applied for this examination, out of which 5,83,213 candidates actually appeared in the test.

The civil services examination 2024 was conducted on June 16 last year. A total of 9,92,599 candidates applied for it, out of which 5,83,213 candidates actually appeared

A total of 14,627 candidates qualified for appearance in the written (main) examination, which was held in September 2024. Out of these, 2,845 candidates qualified for the personality test or interview, which were held between January 7 and April 17 this year.

Of them, 1,009 candidates — 725 men and 284 women — have been recommended by the UPSC for appointment to various services.

Out of the total successful candidates, 335 are from the general category, 109 from the economically weaker sections, 318 from other backward classes, 160 from scheduled castes and 87 from scheduled tribes, according to a statement issued by the commission.

Continued on >> P2

Helpless Mamata asks teachers to return home

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

As her Government continued to sink in the recruitment quagmire — in an election year — with thousands of judicially sacked school staff including teachers camping for the past more than 36 hours outside the West Bengal State School Service Commission — braving sweltering heat — demanding the publication of the list of "eligible" and "ineligible" candidates Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday appealed to the protesting employees to go back to their schools and "stop bothering about "tainted and non-tainted candidates till you get your salaries."

Even as a teeming army of dismissed school staff continued their sit-in demanding their jobs back from the Government and publishing list of the "tainted" and "untainted" employees the Chief Minister said, "it is not the duty of the teachers to bother about untainted or untainted staff… till they are getting their salaries… their job is to teach… we are here… the Government is here… the Court is here to distinguish between tainted and non-tainted… you (teachers) don't need to bother about who is tainted and who is not." Banerjee was speaking at an administrative programme in Midnapore.

"I stand by your side and am trying to find out a solution… we assure that your jobs are safe for now, and you will get your salaries. Please return to your classes," Banerjee said reminding how in BJP ruled State Madhya Pradesh 69,000 candidates had lost their jobs in Vyapam Scam.

About 25,762 school employees lost their jobs as the Supreme Court early this month declared void the entire recruitment panel of 2016. The Court termed recruitment process a "tainted" one after the SSC failed to submit the list of candidates who had cleared the exams through questionable means. The Apex Court judgment came in an appeal filed against an earlier Calcutta High Court order which had cancelled the entire panel on charges of rampant corruption in appointment process.

The Court also directed the Government to hold fresh recruitment exams. Subsequent to the order the State Government had again petitioned the Apex Court to consider reinstating the teachers for now as mass removal of them from service would hamper the entire academic calendar and put students in trouble. Consequently to the Court granted a nine-month relaxation and allowed the present teachers to continue till December 31.

The teachers however would not relent saying they had tried to keep faith in the Chief Minister for the past several years but in vain. "We believed in her but she has always bluffed us… we are in a big trouble and we are not going to leave this place till the Government shoots us down," the teachers said.

When contacted Education Minister Bratya Basu advised the agitating teachers to return home and allow the Government to do its bit. He said "you (the teachers) should not do anything that will jeopardize your cause … you should not come into the provocation of vested interests like CPI(M) or BJP … you should not walk into any trap … this may invite contempt of court."

TN Governor calls for V-Cs meet, invites Vice President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Chennai

Amidst frosty ties with the ruling DMK dispensation and against the backdrop of the Supreme Court ruling in favour of the Tamil Nadu government, Governor RN Ravi has convened a meeting of Vice Chancellors of state universities, choosing to invite Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar for the inaugural session in the alluring hilly Nilgiris district for the week-end.

The meeting scheduled for April 25 and 26 has already triggered a negative response from the political parties here, particularly the Left, which has appealed to the V-Cs to boycott the meeting.

A source said to media that the Vice President is scheduled to address the V-Cs during the inauguration and after attending various other programmes, he would visit Coimbatore on April 27 before leaving for the national capital.

According to a communique from the Raj Bhavan here, the annual conference of the Vice Chancellors of state, central and private universities/institutions of Tamil Nadu, was being organised at the Raj Bhavan, Udhagamandalam, for the fourth consecutive year. "The Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankar has consented to be the chief guest and inaugurate the conference on April 25. RN Ravi, Governor-Chancellor of state universities of Tamil Nadu will preside over the conference," the release stated.

The conference aimed to have detailed deliberation and interactive sessions on a gamut of issues covering implementation of national credit framework, academic collaborations among universities, use of Artificial Intelligence to maximise learning outcomes, financial management in educational institutions, research excellence, promoting entrepreneurship, capacity building for learners, etc.

There would be a special address by Principal Scientific Adviser to Government of India Prof Ajay Kumar Sood, on "Frontiers in Science and Technology." It may be recalled that Dhankar had expressed his resentment against the apex court ruling and said Article 142 has become a nuclear missile against democratic forces available to judiciary 24x7.

"We cannot have a situation where you direct the President of India and on what basis? The only right you have under the Constitution is to interpret the Constitution under Article 145 (3). There it has to be five judges when Article 145 (3) was there, the number of judges in the Supreme Court was eight, 5 out of 8, now 5 out of 30 odd more," he said recently. The V-Cs meeting is being held after the Supreme Court's verdict that the 10 bills re-adopted by the state assembly, including those on appointing V-Cs and another elevating the chief minister as Chancellor of universities, were deemed as having received the assent.

A week ago, Chief Minister MK Stalin had addressed the V-Cs and registrars of state-run universities. Condemning the Governor for convening the meeting, VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan, an ally of the DMK, said as per the Supreme Court verdict, the CM assumed powers to nominate the Vice Chancellors of state universities and that Ravi had hardly any role to play in this regard now.

Another ally, TNCC president K Selvaperunthagai, said his party would initiate contempt proceedings against Ravi and also stage black flag demonstration during the Vice President and Governor's visit to Nilgiris on April 25.

'Sharbat jihad': Will take down videos, Ramdev tells HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Yoga guru Ramdev on Tuesday assured the Delhi High Court that he will immediately remove videos and social media posts relating to his purported "sharbat jihad" remarks on Hamdard's Rooh Afza. His statement came shortly after the court observed that the remarks shook its conscience and were indefensible. The counsel for Hamdard apprised the court that recently, while promoting Patanjali's 'gulab sharbat', Ramdev claimed that the money earned from Hamdard's Rooh Afza was used to build madrasas and mosques.

Ramdev defended his remarks, saying he did not name any brand or community. Justice Amit Bansal, who was hearing the plea by Hamdard National Foundation India against Ramdev's Patanjali Foods Ltd., said, "It shocks the conscience of the court. It is indefensible. You (counsel for Ramdev) take instructions from your client otherwise there will be a strong order." Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Sandeep Sethi, representing Hamdard, said the case goes beyond disparagement and it was a case of creating "communal divide". "This amounts to hate speech. He says it is a sharbat jihad. He should carry on his business. Why is he troubling us?" Rohatgi said.

When the case was again taken up after some time, Ramdev's counsel submitted that he would immediately take down all advertisements, in print or video format, and social media posts relating to his controversial remarks.

AI plane took wrong taxiway in December 2024: Air Accidents Investigations Bureau

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In its final report, Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has mentioned situational awareness deficit and non-adherence to Air Traffic Controller's (ATC) instructions as among the probable causes for the incident at Goa's Manohar International Airport in December 2024. The final report stated that situational awareness deficit of the cockpit crew and failure to fully adhere to the air traffic controller's instructions probably led to an Air India aircraft taxiing on a wrong taxiway before aborting the take-off at the Airport.

The serious incident involving an A320 aircraft of Air India that was to operate the flight AIC2592 from Goa to Hyderabad on December 5, 2024, and there were a total of 158 people, including 7 crew members onboard the plane.

After ATC cleared the taxiing of the aircraft to the holding point of runway RWY28 via taxiway TWY A5, the plane received line up and take-off clearance. However, the aircraft lined up on taxiway TWY A which was parallel to runway RWY28.

As the aircraft started take-off roll on the wrong runway, ATC instructed the crew to abort the take-off and the aircraft was taxied back to the bay.

AAIB said the issuance of take-off clearance by ATC likely caused the crew's cognitive focus to shift entirely toward executing the take-off. At the time of incident, the aircraft was in contact with Tower on frequency 119.4 MHz.

There was two-way communication between both the aircraft and ATC. No abnormality was reported in any communication system. CVR recording and ATC recording were obtained with transcript.

"This shift may have diminished their situational awareness, resulting in expectation bias or cognitive overload, which prevented them from recognising the visual cues indicating they were at the TWY intersection instead of RWY intersection," the report said and added that both take-off clearance was issued by ATC and take-off checks completed by crew on TWY E near TWY intersection.

"The flight crew did not fully adhere to the ATC taxi instructions and failed to enter TWY A5 before lining up. If the crew had completed the taxi instructions and properly entered TWY A5 before turning for LINEUP, the incident could have been avoided," it noted.

Mentioning about the contributing factors for the incident, AAIB said the Pilot Monitoring (PM) was busy with head down as he was trying to login on Electronic Flight Bag (EFB) to bring the display back to 'on' mode to initiate the lineup checklist and did not check the departure runway when Pilot In Command (PIC) was incorrectly lining up on Taxiway A.

Also, it said the airport is not equipped with an Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control System (A-SMGCS) which might have improved situational awareness for ATC with this topography.

AAIB has also made safety recommendations in the 22-page final report, including asking all operators to encourage their crew to cross-check their position using the AMM (Aircraft Moving Map) functionality of the EFB, if available as an additional measure alongside primary navigational instruments before take-off.

EFB systems include real-time GPS positioning and airport charts along with AMM, which allow flight crew to cross-check their actual position on the airfield against the planned taxi route and assigned runway.

According to AAIB, this verification process is a vital step in preventing errors such as taxiing to or departing from the wrong RWY/TWY, enhancing overall situational awareness and safety.

Bengal CM lays foundation stone for power plant

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

After years of industrial drought — and after hosting about half-a-dozen 'futile' business summits — Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee finally had a big reason to smile aloud in an election year. The reason: her State on Monday witnessed a big ticket investment in the power sector.

Banerjee on Monday layed the foundation stone of a 1600 MW thermal power plant worth ₹16,000 crore. The power plant — reportedly the biggest greenfield investment in eastern India — will be set up by the JSW Energy.

The setting up of the power plant at Salboni in the jangal mahal area of West Midnapore once afflicted by the Maoist terror, is also likely to afford Banerjee a point to attack the Left for failing to control the ultra Red menace which she finally put down successfully.

Calling the Salboni project "a dream for JSW," JSW chairman Sajjan Jindal said the strategic location of the plant would be of immense help to the company's goals

Terror returns To Kashmir, tourists...

Continued from >> P1

Altaf Ahmad Wani, National Conference MLA from Pahalgam, described the attack as "cowardly" and said targeting innocent persons is against the teachings of Islam.

"The perpetrators of this dastardly act will be dealt with an iron fist," he said.

During his recent visit to J and K in the first week of April, the Home Minister in Srinagar chaired a high-level security review meeting, where he gave orders for the complete eradication of terrorism with special focus on the Jammu division. He also gave directions to ensure zero tolerance to infiltration.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti also condemned the attack on tourists and said, "Such violence is unacceptable and must be denounced".

"Historically, Kashmir has welcomed tourists warmly, making this rare incident deeply concerning. A thorough investigation is needed to bring the perpetrators to justice and examine potential security lapses. Ensuring visitor safety is paramount, and steps must be taken to prevent future attacks," she added.

DDA notice to Signature Apartment residents

Continued from >> P1

"We don't know if we will get the rent compensation," he said. According to the e-tender, the selected agency will be responsible for dismantling the existing structures, and transporting the debris to a Municipal Corporation of Delhi-approved dumping site. In its order on November 2024, the Delhi High Court had instructed the DDA to ensure the evacuation within three months and to provide rent assistance without delay.

Earlier this month, over 150 residents stormed into the DDA office in INA demanding action on the long-delayed vacating and reconstruction of Signature View Apartments, which have been deemed "unsafe." Security personnel attempted to block their entry, leading to a brief skirmish in which a glass divider was shattered.

A Royal wedding: British MP ties knot in desi style

Continued from >> P1

UK MP Virendra Sharma graced the occasion, as did Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, state minister Satish Sharma, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Pankaj Modi, Nepal's Pashupatinath Temple representative Ravi Lamichhane, and former Tamil Nadu BJP president K. Annamalai. Several senior IAS and IPS officers were also in attendance, adding a political gleam to the already glitzy event.

"It felt like a mini India-UK cultural summit," quipped a guest.

Navendu, known for his rise through trade union activism in the UK, was first elected to the British Parliament in 2019. Since then, he has championed issues of social justice and minority representation, especially among the Indian community in Britain.

Yet, in the midst of his global political life, it was the rituals of kanyadaan, pheras, and ashirwad that seemed to bring the MP his brightest smiles.

"Today, he wasnot a politician. He was a son, a nephew, a cousin, and a groom-soaking in love, rituals, and tradition. It was a wedding soaked in sincerity," said a family member.

As the fireworks lit up the Lucknow sky on Sunday night, one thing was clear: this wasnot just a wedding. It was a homecoming of the heart.

ECI objects to Rahul's swipe on poll body in US

Continued from >> P1

The poll body further stated that all Indian elections are held as per Law. The scale and accuracy with which elections are held in India are widely acclaimed across the world.

Rejecting the claims, the EC underlined that during Assembly Elections in Maharashtra 6,40,87,588 electors, who reached the polling station from 7 am to 6 pm, voted. About 58 lakh votes were polled per hour on an average. Going by these average trends, nearly 116 Lakh voters could have voted in last two hours.

"Therefore, casting of 65 lakhs votes by electors in two hours is much below the average hourly voting trends. 2. Further, in every polling booth, the voting progressed in front of the polling agents formally appointed by candidates/political parties. INC's nominated candidates or their authorized agents have not raised any substantiated allegations with regards to any kind of abnormal voting at the time of scrutiny before the Returning Officer (RO) and the Election Observers on the next day," the EC said in a statement.

The poll body further stated that electoral rolls in India including Maharashtra are prepared as per the Representation of People Act, 1950 and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. As per law, either just before the elections and/or once every year, Special Summary Revision of the Electoral Rolls is conducted and a final copy of the Electoral Rolls is handed over to all the National/State political parties, including Indian National Congress (INC).

"After the finalisation of these Electoral Rolls during Maharashtra elections, as against 9,77,90,752 Electors, only a total of 89 appeals were filed before the 1st appellate authority (DM) and only first appeal was filed before the Second appellate authority (CEO). Therefore, it is amply clear that there was no grievance of INC or any other political parties before the conduct of Maharashtra Assembly Elections in 2024," it said

During the revision of Electoral Rolls, for 1,00,427 Polling Booths, along with 97,325 Booth Level Officers appointed by the EROs, 1,03,727 Booth Level Agents were also appointed by all Political Parties, including 27,099 by INC.

Therefore, these unsubstantiated allegations raised against the Electoral Rolls of Maharashtra are affront to the rule of law. 6. The Election Commission had brought out all these facts in its reply to INC on 24th December 2024 itself which is available on ECI's website. It appears that all these facts are completely being ignored while raising such issues again and again," it added.

VP escalates attack...

Continued from >> P1

The Supreme Court recently prescribed a three-month timeline for the President of India to decide on bills reserved by Governors for her nod.

Reacting to the directive, Dhankhar had said the judiciary cannot play the role of a "super Parliament" and get into the domain of the executive.

He said every word spoken by a constitutional functionary is guided by the supreme sublime interest of the nation.

"I find it conceivably intriguing that some have recently reflected that constitutional offices can be ceremonial or ornamental. Nothing can be far distanced from a wrong understanding of the role of everyone in this country — constitutional functionary or a citizen," he said.

Stating that every one of them has a role, he said, "The soul of democracy resides and pulsates in every citizen. Democracy will blossom.

"Its values will get heightened. When (a) citizen is alert, citizen contributes and what a citizen contributes, there is no substitute for that."

Dhankhar also said there is no visualisation in the Constitution of any authority above Parliament.

"Part of 'We the People' is an atom in democracy and that atom has atomic power. That atomic power is reflected during elections and that is why we are a democratic nation," Dhankhar, who is also the Rajya Sabha chairperson, underlined.

Voicing concern over the recent Supreme Court ruling prescribing a timeline for the president to decide on Bills, Dhankhar on Friday said India had not bargained for a democracy where judges will legislate and perform executive functions and act as a "super Parliament".

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court had, for the first time, prescribed that the President should decide on the bills reserved for her consideration by governors within three months from the date such reference is received.

"There is a directive to the president by a recent judgment... We never bargained for democracy for this day. President being called upon to decide in a time-bound manner, and if not, becomes law," Dhankhar said.

The vice president was criticised for questioning the judiciary, with critics terming his remarks "unconstitutional". In an apparent response to Dhankhar's "super Parliament" remark, a top court bench on Monday said "as it is, we are alleged of encroaching upon the parliamentary and executive functions".

Justice B R Gavai, who was heading a bench also comprising Justice Augustine George Masih, made a similar observation in another matter.

Women outshine men in UPSC examination results

Continued from >> P1

The government has reported 1,129 vacancies — 180 in IAS, 55 in IFS, 147 in IPS, 605 posts in different central Group A services and 142 in Group B services — to be filled through the civil services examination 2024, it said. The top 25 candidates comprise 11 women and 14 men. Their educational qualifications range from graduation in engineering, humanities, science, commerce, medical science, and architecture from premier institutions of the country, such as Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), National Institute of Technology (NIT), VIT, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), University of Delhi, and University of Allahabad, the UPSC said.

The top 25 successful candidates have opted for a wide range of optional subjects in the written (main) examination, including anthropology, commerce and accountancy, geography, mathematics, philosophy, physics, political science and international relations, public administration, sociology, and literature of the Tamil language, the statement said.

The recommended candidates also include 45 persons with benchmark disability, comprising 12 orthopedically handicapped, eight visually challenged, 16 hearing impaired, and nine with multiple disabilities, it said.

The candidature of 241 recommended candidates has been kept provisional, the UPSC said, adding that the result of one candidate has been withheld.

Another 230 successful candidates have been put on a reserve list, the commission said.

The UPSC has a 'Facilitation Counter' near the examination hall on its campus in Delhi. Candidates can obtain information or clarification regarding their exams or recruitment on all working days between 10 am and 5 pm in person or over the phone by dialling 23385271/23381125/23098543, it said.

The result will also be available on the UPSC website — www.Upsc.Gov.In and the marks will be available on the website within 15 days from the date of declaration of the result, the statement said.

Aditya Srivastava, a trainee IPS officer, had topped the civil services examination 2023. Animesh Pradhan, Donuru Ananya Reddy, P K Sidharth Ramkumar, and Ruhani had secured second, third, fourth and fifth ranks.

The Pioneer
RAIPUR | WEDNESDAY | APRIL 23, 2025

Raipur businessman injured in Pahalgam terror attack

STAFF REPORTER
RAIPUR

A Chhattisgarh's Raipur city-based businessman was injured in a terror attack in Pahalgam town of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

The death toll is estimated to rise.

Raipur City Superintendent of Police (Civil Lines) Ajay Kumar said that Ramesh Mirania, who had gone to Kashmir along with his wife and two children, was injured in the terror attack.

Mirania is a resident of the Samta Colony locality in Raipur, he added.

After the terror attack, Mirania and other tourists were transported to a hospital for treatment, he said.

A high-level meeting was held by Raipur Collector Gaurav Singh and Raipur Senior Superintendent of Police Lal Umed Singh regarding the whereabouts of those locals who are in Kashmir. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has condemned the attack. He said on his X handle that the terrorists will never succeed and the security forces will give them a befitting reply.

White tiger dies in Bilaspur's Kanan Pendari

STAFF REPORTER
BILASPUR

A male white tiger died of heart failure at Kanan Pendari Zoological Garden in Bilaspur city in Chhattisgarh, officials said on Tuesday.

The big cat named Akash (10) was the only male white tiger in the zoo.

The wild animal's condition suddenly deteriorated and he died on Monday, zoo Superintendent Bhopal Singh Rajput said.

A team of veterinarians conducted a post-mortem in the presence of senior forest officials, and an independent expert cited congestive heart failure as the cause of death. Akash was the only male white tiger in the zoo, and he was born here on May 16, 2015. The big cat was completely healthy and did not show symptoms of any disease until sometime before his death. The zoo now has two white tigresses, Akash's mother 'Siddhi' and sister 'Isha'.

The authorities are in the process of bringing a white tiger from Gwalior Zoo, but this may take some more time due to the scorching summer.

CM to woo textile, steel industry giants

STAFF REPORTER
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai will present the state's new industrial policy, investment opportunities and vision of infrastructure development at the national events of the textile and steel industries in Mumbai on April 23 and 24.

On April 23, Sai will take part in the Clothing Manufacturers Association of India's (CMAI) Fab show.

There he will share information about the special facilities, incentives and investment opportunities for the textile industry in the new industrial policy of Chhattisgarh. During this, investment agreements are likely to be signed.

On April 24, Sai will highlight the infrastructure, innovation, and long-term plans for the steel industry in Chhattisgarh at the inaugural ceremony of India Steel 2025. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also join virtually.

A Chhattisgarh Round Table Meeting will also be organised. Topics like industrial clusters, logistics support, single-window clearance systems and favourable labour policies will be discussed with potential investors.

Sai will also speak at the Chhattisgarh pavilion about the state's industrial infrastructure, policy incentives, and multifaceted investment opportunities.

Railway authorities crack down on illegal vendors

STAFF REPORTER
RAIPUR

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager in Raipur, Awadhesh Trivedi, on Tuesday conducted a surprise inspection of unauthorised vendors at trains in Raipur and Durg railway stations.

Four unauthorised vendors were caught, and a fine of about Rs 37000 was imposed at Raipur station and Rs 64000 at Durg station for various irregularities in catering.

Two sisters drown in a pond in Bilaspur

STAFF REPORTER
BILASPUR

Two sisters drowned in a pond in Girdhauna village in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh on Tuesday.

The incident took place around 8 am under the Sakri police station limits, Bilaspur Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Archana Jha said.

The girls identified as Chandani Jaiswal (13) and her sister Parvati (11) had gone to the pond with their grandmother.

The grandmother returned back home after washing clothes, but the girls were taking a bath.

The grandmother started searching for the girls when they did not return home for a long time.

The woman spotted their clothes on the bank of the water body. She then called family members and other villagers, who recovered the bodies of children from the pond.

After being alerted, the police reached the spot and sent the bodies for post-mortem.

A case has been registered and further probe is underway.

Statewide campaign against child labour to be held quarterly

STAFF REPORTER
RAIPUR

Chairperson of Chhattisgarh Child Rights Protection Commission Dr Varnika Sharma issued directions on Tuesday to conduct a seven-day statewide raid campaign against child labour every three months.

She asked the Labour Department, Women and Child Development Department, Collectors and Superintendents of Police of all districts to ensure well-planned and strict action based on eight points.

To increase public participation, she recommended the establishment of a toll-free number under the Labour Department so that information related to child labour can be obtained promptly.

To eliminate the root causes of child labour, she said that employment should be provided to the families of the rescued children.

For this, the establishment of a 'single window system' at the district level has been recommended.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No.: WRSR-09-24-25-MATERIAL-3 Dated: 16.04.2025
Description of Work: Materials Shifting from Stores / Machine Shop to various locations of Wagon Repair Shop, Raipur for a period of 2 (two) years. **Approx. Tender Value:** ₹ 43,66,522.08, (Rs. Forty Three Lakhs Sixty Six Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Two and Eight Paise only) Including GST @ 18%, **Earnest Money:** ₹ 87,300.00 (Rs. Eighty Seven Thousand Three Hundred only), **Quantity and Contractual Period:** As per Annexure for a period of 24 (Twenty Four) Months. **Tender Document Cost:** ₹ 3,000.00 (Rs. Three Thousand only).
Bidding Start Date: 25.04.2025, **Tender Closing Date and Time:** On **09.05.2025** at **16:00** Hrs. **Eligibility Criteria:** Can be seen on the website Manual Tenders shall not be accepted. The details of tender are available on website **www.ireps.gov.in**

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer, WRS, South East Central Railway, Raipur
PR/R/WRS/MS/12
South East Central Railway @secrail

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE
ICICI Home Finance | Registered office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051
Corporate Office: ICICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400059
Branch Office: 1st floor, Indira Tower, A-26, Zone II, Main Road Vyapar Vihar Bilaspur (C.G.)- 495001

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited.
The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Niranjan Prasad Verma (Borrower), Lata (Co-Borrower), LHBSR00001364184	Mouja Sirgitti, Phn 23/37/41, Part of Khasra No.331/2, Plot No.27, Sheet No.25, Ward No.1 Bheem Rao Ambedkar Nagar Ward, Rnm Bilaspu Tehsil and District Bilaspur Chhattisgarh- 495001. Bounded By- North: Nistari Rasta, South: Land of Ghanshyam Sharma, East: Remaining Land of Seller, West: Remaining Land of Seller./ Date of Possession- 19-04-2025	10-01-2025 Rs. 7,69,968.68/-	Bilaspur

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.
Date : April 23, 2025,
Place: Bilaspur
Authorized Officer,
ICICI Home Finance Company Limited

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE
ICICI Home Finance | Registered Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051
Corporate Office: ICICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400059
Branch Office: Sky Park, Ground floor, Unit No.1, Near Canal Road Raipur- 492001

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited.
The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Sohan Lal Ojha (Borrower), Achal Ojha (Co-Borrower), LHRPR00001559828.	Property Situated At KH No. 36/18, PHN 108, Ward No. 29 Shitla Ward, Village Urkura, Rnm Raipur, Tehsil And District Raipur, Chhattisgarh- 492001. Bounded By- North: Road, South: Land of Other, East: House of Mr. Vinay Kumar, West: House of Mr. Bhim Sen./ Date of Possession-19-Apr-25	18-01-2025 Rs. 24,03,101.42/-	Raipur
2.	Sohan Lal Ojha (Borrower), Achal Ojha (Co-Borrower), LHRPR00001559829.	Property Situated At KH No. 36/18, PHN 108, Ward No. 29 Shitla Ward, Village Urkura, Rnm Raipur, Tehsil And District Raipur, Chhattisgarh- 492001. Bounded By- North: Road, South: Land of Other, East: House of Mr. Vinay Kumar, West: House of Mr. Bhim Sen./ Date of Possession-19-Apr-25	18-01-2025 Rs. 1,12,344.82/-	Raipur

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.
Date : April 23, 2025,
Place: Raipur
Authorized Officer,
ICICI Home Finance Company Limited

IIFL FINANCE
CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No.B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604
Tel: (91-22) 41035000 • Fax: (91-22) 25806654
E-mail: reach@iifl.com • Website: www.iifl.com

PUBLIC NOTICE OF E-AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders. Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted online through **Shriram Automall India Limited** on their online auction platform **https://gold.samil.in** on **26.04.2025 between 02:00 P.M to 05:00 P.M.** Change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center. If for any reason the E-Auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the said auction on any subsequent date on the auction platform and/or auction center with same terms and conditions. The unauctioned gold ornaments shall be auctioned on subsequent working days after displaying the details on auction platform and/or auction center. In case the auction at Branch level fails, the same will be re auctioned on **07.05.2025** without any further notice at district level at the specified district centre. If for any reason, the district level auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the district level auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir.

District Centre: **Korba-Power House Road - IIFL Gold Loan, Ground Floor, Narmada Tower, Power House Road, Near Sonaliya Jwellers, Korba Pin -495677 (Chattisgarh).**

Branch Name: KORBA-POWER HOUSE ROAD, Taluka - Korba.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL25270291, GL25895779, GL25958385, GL27347357, GL27909351, GL28193274, GL29400253, GL31018501, GL32658196, GL32730292, GL32739341, GL32769389, GL32900335, GL32919866, GL33141345, GL33157370, GL33174853, GL33338890, GL33350818, GL33487596, GL33560036, GL33686570, GL33708076, GL33814889, GL34283607.

The E-Auction shall be conducted on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis and IIFL does not make any representation or warranties regards quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. The E-Auction process and the sale (if any) pursuant to such E-Auction shall be subject to terms and conditions as IIFL may at its sole discretion deem fit to impose. IIFL, at its absolute sole discretion, may either postpone or remove, any of accounts from auction list and any proceedings without prior notice and without assigning any reason therefor and to reject any or all the bids or offers without assigning any reason for the same. Details of defaulting borrower(s), pledged ornaments and other details have been displayed at the respective branch. The defaulter borrower(s) have an option to repay the entire dues including up to date interest and all applicable charges and close or regularize their loan account even after publication of this notice but in any case, till the date of auction, failing which the pledged gold ornaments will be sold and balance dues (if any) will be recovered with interest and costs. However, the defaulter loans which are closed or regularized on or after this publication, will have to bear the proportionate publication charge. Borrowers are requested to submit/update their latest bank account details to enable timely refund of excess auction proceeds, if any.

For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Date: 23.04.2025
Place: KORBA
Sd/-
AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

IIFL FINANCE
CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No.B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604
Tel: (91-22) 41035000 • Fax: (91-22) 25806654
E-mail: reach@iifl.com • Website: www.iifl.com

PUBLIC NOTICE OF E-AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders. Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted online through **Shriram Automall India Limited** on their online auction platform **https://gold.samil.in** on **26.04.2025 between 02:00 P.M to 05:00 P.M.** Change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center. If for any reason the E-Auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the said auction on any subsequent date on the auction platform and/or auction center with same terms and conditions. The unauctioned gold ornaments shall be auctioned on subsequent working days after displaying the details on auction platform and/or auction center. In case the auction at Branch level fails, the same will be re auctioned on **07.05.2025** without any further notice at district level at the specified district centre. If for any reason, the district level auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the district level auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir.

District Centre: **Raipur-Pandri - IIFL Gold Loan, 1st Floor, Usha Tower, Above Andhra Bank, Near Mandi Gate Pandri, Vidhan Sabha Road, Raipur Pin - 492004 (Chattisgarh)**

Branch Name: RAIPUR-BUDHAPARA GL, Taluka - Raipur.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL25127476, GL31553591, GL33194375, GL34042297.
Branch Name: RAIPUR-PANDRI, Taluka - Raipur.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL24836305, GL25416713, GL25452156, GL27634862, GL27702858, GL29104620, GL29734776, GL30505982, GL30538375, GL32276304, GL32370340, GL33668460, GL34017608, GL34077423, GL34397734.
Branch Name: RAIPUR-SUNDER NAGAR MAIN ROAD GL, Taluka - Raipur.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL26410212, GL33229405, GL33231822.
Branch Name: RAIPUR-TELIBANDA, Taluka - Raipur.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL25045999, GL26440286, GL26727148, GL29537725, GL31548371, GL31741519, GL32753169, GL33098875, GL33118597, GL33606685.

The E-Auction shall be conducted on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis and IIFL does not make any representation or warranties regards quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. The E-Auction process and the sale (if any) pursuant to such E-Auction shall be subject to terms and conditions as IIFL may at its sole discretion deem fit to impose. IIFL, at its absolute sole discretion, may either postpone or remove, any of accounts from auction list and any proceedings without prior notice and without assigning any reason therefor and to reject any or all the bids or offers without assigning any reason for the same. Details of defaulting borrower(s), pledged ornaments and other details have been displayed at the respective branch. The defaulter borrower(s) have an option to repay the entire dues including up to date interest and all applicable charges and close or regularize their loan account even after publication of this notice but in any case, till the date of auction, failing which the pledged gold ornaments will be sold and balance dues (if any) will be recovered with interest and costs. However, the defaulter loans which are closed or regularized on or after this publication, will have to bear the proportionate publication charge. Borrowers are requested to submit/update their latest bank account details to enable timely refund of excess auction proceeds, if any.

For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Date: 23.04.2025
Place: RAIPUR
Sd/-
AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

IIFL FINANCE
CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No.B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604
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District Centre: **Bhilai-Risali GL - IIFL Gold Loan, Krishna Talkies Road, In Front Of Raja Steels, Risali, Bhilai, Durg 490006.**
Branch Name: BHILAI-POWER HOUSE CHOWK GL, Taluka - Durg.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL24606135, GL25277231, GL25352829, GL25504567, GL25968154, GL26329390, GL27504689, GL27684167, GL31103160, GL31152935, GL31480416, GL31505583, GL31538834, GL32617384, GL32677223, GL32729356, GL32941710, GL33216295, GL33234161, GL33448720, GL33456459.
Branch Name: BHILAI-SUPELA GL, Taluka - Durg.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL27515207, GL29603553, GL29669027, GL31954696, GL32727203, GL33013481, GL33023048, GL33145405, GL33562989, GL33983850, GL33991050.
Branch Name: DURG-DURG-STATION ROAD, Taluka - Durg.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL31291400, GL32782635, GL32801239.

The E-Auction shall be conducted on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis and IIFL does not make any representation or warranties regards quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. The E-Auction process and the sale (if any) pursuant to such E-Auction shall be subject to terms and conditions as IIFL may at its sole discretion deem fit to impose. IIFL, at its absolute sole discretion, may either postpone or remove, any of accounts from auction list and any proceedings without prior notice and without assigning any reason therefor and to reject any or all the bids or offers without assigning any reason for the same. Details of defaulting borrower(s), pledged ornaments and other details have been displayed at the respective branch. The defaulter borrower(s) have an option to repay the entire dues including up to date interest and all applicable charges and close or regularize their loan account even after publication of this notice but in any case, till the date of auction, failing which the pledged gold ornaments will be sold and balance dues (if any) will be recovered with interest and costs. However, the defaulter loans which are closed or regularized on or after this publication, will have to bear the proportionate publication charge. Borrowers are requested to submit/update their latest bank account details to enable timely refund of excess auction proceeds, if any.

For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Date: 23.04.2025
Place: DURG
Sd/-
AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

IIFL FINANCE
CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797
Regd. Office: IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No.B-23, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604
Tel: (91-22) 41035000 • Fax: (91-22) 25806654
E-mail: reach@iifl.com • Website: www.iifl.com

PUBLIC NOTICE OF E-AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS

It is hereby notified to all concerned borrower(s) in specific and the public, in general, that we, IIFL Finance Limited ("IIFL") are auctioning gold ornaments of defaulted customers who neither regularized their loans nor paid the outstanding amount despite being informed through registered auction notices and repeated reminders. Public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the following loan accounts will be conducted online through **Shriram Automall India Limited** on their online auction platform **https://gold.samil.in** on **26.04.2025 between 02:00 P.M to 05:00 P.M.** Change in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at the auction center. If for any reason the E-Auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the said auction on any subsequent date on the auction platform and/or auction center with same terms and conditions. The unauctioned gold ornaments shall be auctioned on subsequent working days after displaying the details on auction platform and/or auction center. In case the auction at Branch level fails, the same will be re auctioned on **07.05.2025** without any further notice at district level at the specified district centre. If for any reason, the district level auction cannot be held on the date mentioned herein or the auction does not get completed on the same day, IIFL reserves the right to conduct or proceed with the district level auction on any subsequent date with same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, then all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir.

District Centre: **Bilaspur-Bus Stand Road - IIFL Gold Loan , Shop No. Od 1,2,3 , 1St Floor Chattisgarh Complex, Telephone Exchange Road, Opp. Hotel The Emerald, Bus Stand Road, Bilaspur Pin -495001 (Chattisgarh)**

Branch Name: BILASPUR-BUS STAND ROAD, Taluka - Bilaspur.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL24487866, GL24866908, GL25082255, GL25190259, GL25267975, GL25418185, GL25421118, GL25533916, GL26096748, GL28398259, GL28539966, GL28657721, GL28785682, GL28917634, GL30580109, GL31895867, GL31965482, GL31966428, GL31981448, GL32354478, GL32648137, GL32806556, GL32818849, GL32841325, GL33098903, GL33109057, GL33116005, GL33188936, GL33193844, GL33418322, GL33430652, GL33485117, GL33537572, GL34010387, GL34010684, GL34252369, GL34264599, GL34680826, GL34683369.
Branch Name: BILASPUR-SARKANDA GL, Taluka - Bilaspur.
Gold Loan A/C No. : GL30413606, GL31083176, GL32457709, GL32509024, GL32510944, GL32604713, GL32965306, GL33438006, GL33528893, GL33989214.

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For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.

Date: 23.04.2025
Place: BILASPURCGH
Sd/-
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IIFL FINANCE LIMITED

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PM Modi's aircraft escorted by F-15 jets of Saudi Arabia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Signifying close ties between the two countries, in a special gesture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aircraft was escorted by F-15 jets of Saudi Arabia when his special flight entered the airspace of the Gulf nation on Tuesday, officials said. Modi is paying a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also released a video of the Saudi jets escorting Modi's aircraft. The gesture is being seen as deepening of Defence cooperation between the two countries.

The Prime Minister on Tuesday said India deeply values its long and historic ties with Saudi Arabia, asserting that their relations have acquired a strategic depth and momentum in recent years.

In his departure statement ahead of his two-day visit to the kingdom on the invitation of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, he said both countries have developed a mutually beneficial and substantive partnership, including in the domains of defence, trade, investment, energy and people-to-people ties.

"We have shared interest and commitment to promote regional peace, prosperity, security and stability," Modi said, noting that it will be his third visit to the country and the first one to the historic city of Jeddah.

He said he looked forward to participating in the second meeting of the Strategic Partnership Council and building upon the highly successful state visit of Mohammed bin Salman to India in 2023. Modi described the crown prince as "my brother".

He said he is also eager to connect with the "vibrant" Indian community in Saudi Arabia that continues to serve as the living bridge between the two nations and makes an immense contribution to strengthening the cultural and human ties.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi looks at the fighter jets of Royal Saudi Air Force escorting his aircraft as it arrives in Jeddah PTI

Officials noted that all prime ministers before Modi together visited Saudi Arabia three times in close to seven decades. This is also Modi's 15th visit to a country in the Gulf region, they added.

In an interview with Arab News, ahead of his visit Modi said India and Saudi Arabia have a natural interest in safeguarding peace and stability in the region and the growing defence and security collaboration between the two countries is a reflection of deep mutual trust.

Modi described Saudi Arabia as "one of India's most valued partners, a maritime neighbour, a trusted friend and a strategic ally".

"We consider Saudi Arabia as a force of positivity and stability in the region. As maritime neighbours, India and Saudi Arabia share a natural interest in safeguarding peace and stability in the region," he said.

"The growing defence and security engagement and collaboration between the two countries is a reflection of deep mutual trust," he said.

"It is also a testament to our shared commitment to regional stability, and our mutual resolve to address the evolving challenges in our extended neighbourhood," Modi added.

In their talks on Tuesday evening, Modi and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman are expected to focus on boosting defence ties apart from enhancing engagement in many other crucial sectors.

Haryana CM to dedicate 18 road projects in Gurugram

PARVESH SHARMA ■ Gurugram

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini will dedicate 18 road development projects worth over ₹115 crore related to the Public Works Department (PWD) in Sohna and Pataudi Assembly constituencies in Gurugram on Wednesday, officials said. The CM will also inaugurate the first modern street of Haryana at Udyog Vihar during his visit.

Executive Engineer of PWD Charandeep Singh Rana said that Chief Minister Saini will inaugurate the Loh Singhani to Chamanpura Road, Nunera from BPDS Road, and Alipur Hari Heda from Loh Singhani to Chamanpura Road, built in the Sohna assembly constituency.

At the same time, the foundation stone of the renovation work of the Sohna-Abhayapur-Lohtki-Khedla and Damdama to Rithoj road from Sohna-Abhayapur-Lohtki-Khedla and Damdama to Rithoj road from Dhumaspur via Nayagaon will be laid.

Charandeep Singh Rana said that in this sequence, the Chief Minister will also give various road development projects in Pataudi Assembly on Wednesday.

He informed us that the Chief Minister will also lay the foundation stone for the renovation of the Kheda Khurmpur road in the Pataudi Assembly. The estimated cost of these different projects would be around over 115 cores.

Deputy Commissioner Gurugram, Ajay Kumar, informed that the Chief Minister will also preside over the 14th meeting of the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) in Gurugram on Wednesday.

Pegasus row: Supreme Court sets April 29 to hear pleas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday fixed next week to hear a batch of pleas seeking a probe into the alleged unauthorised use of Pegasus spyware for the surveillance of journalists among others. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh posted the hearing on April 29 for want of time. Senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for some petitioners, said the top court previously directed for supply of reports of a technical panel but no such report was shared.

"This court will have to pass some directions because we have not received the reports. Kindly hear it urgently," Divan said. The bench directed for listing the matter next week.

On March 7, the top court fixed April 22 for hearing the pleas.

On August 25, 2022, the top court said the technical panel appointed by it to probe the unauthorised use of Pegasus found some malware in five of 29 examined cell phones but it could not be held that the Israeli spyware was used.

After perusing the report submitted by former apex court Justice RV Raveendran, the top court said the Central government did not cooperate with the Pegasus probe.

The top court in 2021 ordered a probe into the allegations of the use of Israeli spyware by government agencies for targeted surveillance of politicians, journalists, and activists and appointed technical and supervisory committees to examine the matter.

The overseeing panel submitted a "lengthy" three-part report, one of which suggested amending the law to protect citizens' right to privacy and ensure the nation's cyber security.

The technical panel, which included three experts on cyber security, digital forensics, networks, and hardware, was asked by the top court to "inquire, investigate and determine" whether Pegasus spyware was used for snooping on citizens and their probe would be monitored by Raveendran.

The panel members were Naveen Kumar Chaudhary, Prabaharan P, and Ashwin Anil Gumaste.

Justice Raveendran, who headed the panel, was assisted by former IPS officer Alok Joshi and cyber security expert Sundeep Oberoi in monitoring the inquiry of the technical panel. The apex

court order said the probe panel would be empowered to enquire and investigate the steps or actions taken by the Centre after reports in 2019 claimed the hacking of WhatsApp accounts of Indian citizens using the Pegasus suite of spyware.

It also directed the panel to ascertain if any Pegasus suite was acquired by the union of India, or any state government, or any central or state agency for use against the citizens of India.

An international media consortium reported over 300 verified Indian cell phone numbers were on the list of potential targets for surveillance using the Pegasus spyware.

Row over Bills: SC to examine if Tamil Nadu verdict covers issues raised by Kerala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would examine whether the recent judgement on a plea of Tamil Nadu, fixing timelines for the grant of assent to bills, covered the issues raised by the Kerala government in its pleas. A bench comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi agreed to hear on May 6 the pleas of the Kerala government against Governor over the delay in approving bills passed by the state assembly.

"We will look into that judgement and see whether issues raised here are covered," the bench said when Attorney General R Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the Governor's office, said the recent judgement delivered by a bench headed by Justice JB Pardiwala did not cover the issues raised by the Kerala government.

A bench comprising Justices Pardiwala and R Mahadevan on April 8 delivered a significant verdict on the plea of Tamil Nadu and set aside the reservation of the 10 bills for President's consideration in the second round holding it as illegal, erroneous in law.

The bench, for the first time, also prescribed that President should decide on the bills reserved for her consideration by Governor within a period of three months from the date on which such reference is received. Kerala seeks similar directions in its case. On Tuesday, senior advocate KK Venugopal, appearing for Kerala, said the pleas of the state were covered by the recent judgement. "What is the timeline for making a reference to the President by the Governor and this issue is dealt with by that judgement and there are no other questions," he said. He urged the bench to allow the pleas of the Kerala government in terms of the Tamil Nadu judgement.

Mehta, however, insisted on making submissions saying the case of Kerala was not covered by the Tamil Nadu judgement.

"The (Tamil Nadu) judgment does not cover certain issues in this case on facts which are essentially different," the bench said and fixed the pleas for hearing on May 6. The bench asked Venugopal to mention the third and subsequent plea of the state government, challenging the withholding of assent by President, before the CJI so that it can also be referred to it.

Venugopal said the Chief Justice of India directed listing of the petition on May 13.

The bench said a mention had to be made before the CJI for tagging the other petition with the present one.

In 2023, the top court expressed displeasure over the then Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan "sitting" for two years on bills passed by the state legislature.

Khan is currently Governor of Bihar.

The top court, on July 26, last year, agreed to consider the plea of opposition-ruled Kerala alleging the denial of assent to bills passed by the legislative assembly.

The Kerala government alleged that Khan referred certain bills to President Droupadi Murmu and those were yet to be cleared. Taking note of the pleas, the top court issued notices to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the secretaries of the Kerala Governor. Venugopal said, "This is the most unfortunate situation."

The state said its plea related to the acts of Governor in reserving seven bills, which he was required to deal with himself, to President. Not one of the seven bills had anything to do with Centre-state relations, it argued.

The bills were pending with Governor for as long as two years and his action "subverted" the functioning of the state legislature, rendering its very existence "ineffective and otiose", the state added.

"The bills include public interest bills that are for the public good, and even these have been rendered ineffective by the Governor not dealing with each one of them 'as soon as possible', as required by the proviso to Article 200," the plea said.

Neither Parliament nor executive but Constitution is supreme: Opposition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Neither Parliament nor the executive but the Constitution is supreme, opposition leaders said on Tuesday as they hit back at Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar who slammed his critics for questioning his remarks on a recent Supreme Court order and proclaimed the supremacy of Parliament. The opposition leaders' assertions came after Dhankhar said every word spoken by a constitutional authority was guided by supreme national interest.

In a social media post, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said, "Supreme Court: Parliament has the plenary power to pass laws. Supreme Court has the obligation to interpret the Constitution and do complete justice (Article 142)."

"Everything the court said is: Consistent with our constitutional values; guided by national interest," the Independent Rajya Sabha MP and former Congress leader said. In another post, Sibal said, "The law: Neither Parliament nor the Executive is supreme, the Constitution is supreme. The provisions of the Constitution are interpreted by the Supreme Court. That's how this country has understood the law so far!" AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi also reacted sharply to Dhankhar's remarks, saying the judiciary would intervene if a wrong law was made and constitutional articles were misused.

"It is his limited understanding. Parliament is definitely supreme and independent. The judiciary and executive are also independent. This is why the stereo separation of powers is part of (the) basic structure of our constitution… If you make wrong laws, if you misuse the constitutional articles, then judiciary will intervene," Owaisi told reporters.

RJD leader and Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha said, "The vice-president is a respected constitutional authority but I would urge him to revisit the Constituent Assembly debates where the importance of balance between the judiciary and the legislature was discussed… The Constitution remains our ultimate guide."

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said there was a strict division of powers in the Constitution among the legislature, executive and the judiciary.

"The judiciary in this country is meant to do judicial review. Yes, Parliament makes the law but the Supreme Court of India is the supreme authority to review those laws to find if those laws meet the norms of the Constitution. Should the judiciary be shut down? Is judicial review wrong? So what is the vice-president talking about? The vice-president should talk about how governors across the country have become puppets of the BJP," she said.

Reacting to Dhankhar's remarks, Congress leader and former Lok Sabha MP Danish Ali said the Constitution belonged to the people and not any "elected king" sitting in power. "Public representatives are servants of the people, not their masters. Now that the judiciary is looking them in the eye and showing them the truth, these 'masters' have started feeling the Constitution to be a burden. The country knows who is the 'master' who appoints these people 'who follow orders,'" Ali said in a social media post in Hindi.

"For Vice-President Dhankhar ji, a particular person may be of utmost importance but for us the Constitution is supreme. The country will not forgive the campaign being run to make a particular person all-powerful by ignoring democratic norms under the garb of Parliament or the executive," he said.

The vice-president is occupying a very high constitutional post and will be aware but is not saying that the Supreme Court has the power to review the laws passed by Parliament, Samajwadi Party MP Dharmendra Yadav said.

"How can you snatch that right?"

Mallikarjun Kharge condemns Pahalgam terror attack

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday condemned the terror attack on innocent tourists in Pahalgam, saying it is a blot on humanity. He also said the country's national security is paramount and urged the central government to take corrective measures. "I strongly condemn the cowardly terror attack on innocent tourists in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir. The entire nation is united in fighting the scourge of cross-border terrorism.

"These dastardly targeted attacks are a blot on humanity. News reports indicate that precious lives have been lost. On behalf of the Congress party, my heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured," the Congress president said in a social media post.

"India's National Security is paramount and we urge the GOI to take corrective measures to ensure the same," Kharge said.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also denounced the attack as a highly condemnable and shameful act, and said the country stands united against terrorism. "Targeting unarmed and innocent civilians is a crime against humanity. This is completely unacceptable. The whole country stands united against terrorism and strongly condemns it," she said in a social media post in Hindi.

"According to reports, many tourists have been killed in this attack. May God grant peace to the departed souls. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured," she said. Terrorists struck a prime tourist location of Pahalgham in south Kashmir on Tuesday, killing multiple people and injuring at least 20. The incident occurred around 3 pm when terrorists came down from the mountain in Baisaran valley and started firing at tourists, who frequent the place which is often dubbed as 'mini Switzerland' because of its lush green meadows.

The terror attack came at a time when US Vice President JD Vance is on a four-day visit to India along with his family. He was in Rajasthan on Tuesday.

India's heritage sites see 19 per cent rise in footfall in 2023-24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India's centrally protected ticketed monuments experienced an over 19 per cent surge in footfall in 2023-24 compared to the pre-pandemic levels but this did not translate into higher revenue from ticket sales, which dropped by 2.83 per cent, official data shows.

An analysis of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) data, presented in the Rajya Sabha, covering 143 monuments shows a complex recovery picture for these key heritage sites, contextualised by broader national trends reported in the Ministry of Tourism's 'India Tourism Data Compendium 2024'.

The total footfall across these listed monuments increased by 19.35 per cent from approximately 4.60 crore in 2019-20 to 5.49 crore in 2023-24, the data showed.

However, despite the surge in the number of visitors, the combined revenue from ticket sales at these monuments saw a decline of 2.83 per cent during the five-year period, dropping from ₹312.54 crore in 2019-20 to ₹303.70 crore in 2023-24.

This suggests a shift in the visitor composition at these sites. A direct comparison of visitor data for centrally protected ticketed monuments between 2019-20 and 2023-24 reveals divergent trends.

While domestic tourist visits surged by 21.75 per cent, from 4.36 crore in 2019-20 to 5.31 crore in 2023-24, foreign tourist visits decreased by 16.03 per cent, from 27.56 lakh in 2019-20 to 23.15 lakh in 2023-24, according to the data.

The increase in the domestic visitor segment, coupled with a decline in the number of higher-paying foreign visitors compared to the pre-pandemic levels, appears to be the primary factor behind the stagnant overall monument revenue

despite higher total footfall. This trend mirrors the national picture, where Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India in 2023 (95.2 lakh) recovered to only about 87 per cent of the 2019 levels.

The resulting lower average revenue per visitor at the monuments, likely stemming from this altered visitor mix and the ASI's differential pricing structure, aligns with the broader national context where Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism overall stood at $28.08 billion in 2023, lower than the 2019 peak of $30.72 billion.

The broader tourism sector remains a significant economic contributor nationally, with its total (direct + indirect) share estimated to be 5 per cent of the GDP and supporting 7.62 crore jobs in 2022-23, according to the Tourism Satellite Account data. Performance varied dramatically across individual monuments.

While sites like Rajarani Temple (301 per cent), Ashokan Rock Edict (251 per cent) and Konark Sun Temple (53.5 per cent) saw massive revenue growth (2023-24 vs 2019-20), others like Tirumalai Nayak's Palace (98.2 per cent), Moovarkoil (90.1 per cent) and Agra Fort (47.2 per cent) saw sharp declines.

These stark differences likely stem from various site-specific factors which could range from restoration activities impacting access, changes in regional tourism promotion and infrastructure, or shifts in popular visitor circuits. Specific reasons for each monument's performance are not detailed in the analysed data.

The performance of iconic monuments underscores the trend.

The Taj Mahal saw the footfall jump by 31.27 per cent but the revenue rose only 1.48 per cent. Qutub Minar's footfall surged by 45.1 per cent and revenue by 18 per cent. Conversely, Humayun's Tomb saw footfall increased by 16.6 per cent while revenue dropped by 29.8 per cent. According to the 'India Tourism Data Compendium 2024', the Taj Mahal was the most popular among visitors in 2023-24 with 61 lakh domestic and 6.8 lakh foreign tourists.

Konark Sun Temple (32 lakh) and Qutub Minar (31.2 lakh) were the next most popular among domestic tourists. For foreign visitors, it was Qutub Minar (2.2 lakh) and Agra Fort (2.18 lakh).

Visitor numbers, however, did not directly correlate with revenue generation.

The highest revenue earners among these monuments in 2023-24 were Taj Mahal (₹98.55 crore), Qutub Minar (₹23.80 crore), Red Fort (₹18.09 crore), Agra Fort (₹15.27 crore) and Konark Sun Temple (₹12.66 crore), according to ASI data. The data specific to India's protected monuments paints a picture of resilient visitor appeal, particularly drawing huge numbers of domestic travellers post-pandemic.

However, the financial recovery at these sites, measured by ticket revenue, still lags behind pre-pandemic benchmarks, reflecting the significant impact of the reduced number of foreign visitors compared to 2019 and the overall altered tourism landscape.

Major bureaucratic shake-up in UP

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

In a sweeping late-night administrative reshuffle, the Uttar Pradesh Government transferred 33 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, including two high-profile figures whose movements have raised political eyebrows — Kaushal Raj Sharma, the Divisional Commissioner of Varanasi, and Shishir, the long-serving Director of the Information Department.

Kaushal Raj Sharma, often described as a "yes man" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been moved to Lucknow as Secretary in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). His transfer marks the end of a significant era in Varanasi, the Prime Minister's parliamentary constituency, where Sharma served for more than seven years — first as District Magistrate and later as Divisional Commissioner. Notably, Sharma was once transferred in 2022 during his tenure as DM, but the order was abruptly cancelled following intervention from the Prime Minister's Office. That incident had cemented his image as someone with strong backing from the highest levels of power in Delhi.

However, recent murmurs within BJP and RSS circles suggested dissatisfaction with Sharma's prolonged presence in Varanasi. According to senior bureaucratic sources, the party leadership, including RSS functionaries, had conveyed their concerns, which ultimately led to his removal — this time with the approval of the PMO. The shift to the CMO in Lucknow is still seen as a significant posting, but it marks a subtle departure from Sharma's tight control over one of the state's most politically sensitive cities.

The reshuffle is being seen as a politically strategic administrative overhaul as the government prepares for key programs and potential electoral developments ahead

Equally significant is the transfer of Shishir, who had held the post of Director, Information Department, for nearly seven years. Known to be extremely close to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Shishir was instrumental in implementing the state's communication strategy and played a pivotal role in high-profile events such as the Investors Summit and the recently concluded Maha Kumbh. His sudden move to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Export Promotion Department, as Special Secretary, has raised questions in bureaucratic and political circles. He has also been given additional charge as CEO of the Khadi and Village Industries Board — an assignment seen as less influential compared to his previous role.

Replacing Shishir is Vishal Singh, the outgoing District Magistrate of Bhadohi. Singh, who had earlier served as the Municipal Commissioner of Ayodhya and vice-chairman of the Ayodhya Development Authority from 2020 to 2024, now assumes charge as Director, Information. The reshuffle also brought major changes in Lucknow. Inderjit Singh, the outgoing Municipal Commissioner, has been appointed Special Secretary in the Power Department, and will simultaneously serve as Director of the Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA) and Managing Director of UP Renewable and EV Infrastructure Ltd Gaurav Kumar, previously Chief Development Officer of Prayagraj, takes over as the new Municipal Commissioner of Lucknow.

In Varanasi, S Rajalingam, who had been serving as District Magistrate, has now been promoted to Divisional Commissioner. Meanwhile, Satyendra Kumar, earlier posted as Special Secretary in the Chief Minister's Office, has taken over as the new District Magistrate of Varanasi.

Other changes include the reassignment of L Venkateswarlu, who relinquishes charge of the Transport Department but continues to serve as Managing Director of the UP Administration and Planning Academy, as well as Director of both the State Rural Development Organisation and the SC/ST Research and Training Institute. Amit Gupta, currently Principal Secretary for Stamp and Registration, has been given additional charge of the Transport Department.

In a string of other key postings, Prerna Verma has been made Director of the State Urban Development Agency, while Abhishek Pandey takes over as the new DM of Hapur. Sanjay Kumar Meena has been appointed Vice-Chairperson of the Meerut Development Authority.

The reshuffle impacted district magistrates across 11 districts, with new appointments in Azamgarh, Bareilly, Ambedkarnagar, Ghazipur, Jhansi, Mahoba, Kushinagar, Sant Kabir Nagar, and Bhadohi. Additionally, new Chief Development Officers were posted in Gorakhpur, Prayagraj, and Shrawasti. Officers such as Aryaka Akhouri were moved to medical health as special secretary, while Ujjwal Kumar has taken charge as Managing Director of the UP Medical Supply Corporation. Pulkit Khare, formerly with the planning department, now heads the Skill Development Mission, and Anubhav Singh becomes Vice-Chairperson of the Moradabad Development Authority.

Karnataka CM ask officials to take action in IAF case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said he has asked police officials to take action in accordance with law irrespective of whoever is involved. The CM's instruction came in connection with a road rage incident in the city involving a Wing Commander and a call centre employee.

Stating that the IAF officer had made "unwarranted and derogatory" remarks about Karnataka and Kannadigas on social media, displaying conduct that is deeply disrespectful and inflammatory, he highlighted that the inclusive spirit of this land is well documented in history.

"I have asked officials to take action in accordance with the law, whoever it is — whether Wing Commander or anyone else," Siddaramaiah told reporters in Mandya.

Noting that both sides have given police complaints, he made it clear that action would be taken in accordance with the law.

Later in a post on 'X' Siddaramaiah said, "In connection with a recent incident in CV Raman Nagar, Bengaluru, Wing Commander Shiladitya Bose assaulted a Kannadiga, Vikas Kumar, following a minor vehicle-related matter. Subsequently, he made unwarranted and derogatory remarks about Karnataka and Kannadigas on social media, displaying conduct that is deeply disrespectful and inflammatory."

Kannadigas are proud of their mother tongue, but they are not parochial or intolerant. "It is not in our culture to attack or abuse others over linguistic matters," he said.

"Karnataka has a long and proud tradition of embracing people from across the country, treating them with respect, and accepting them as one of our own. The inclusive spirit of this land is well documented in history," he added.

An FIR has been registered against the 40-year-old IAF officer on charges of attempt to murder, criminal intimidation and voluntarily causing hurt based on a counter-complaint by a call centre employee, who was previously arrested on the officer's complaint in a road rage incident, police said on Tuesday.

Shiladitya Bose, a Wing Commander on Monday, recorded a video showing himself bleeding and claimed that he was attacked while he was en route to the airport along with his wife in their car, by the call centre employee (Vikas Kumar), who was on his bike.

Gujarat: Trainee pilot killed in plane crash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Amreli

A trainee pilot was killed when a trainer aircraft belonging to a private aviation academy crashed in a residential area in Gujarat's Amreli district on Tuesday afternoon and caught fire, a police official said.

The plane fell on a tree before crashing into an open plot. The aircraft crash-landed into a residential area in the Giriya Road area of Amreli town at around 12:30 pm due to unknown reasons, killing the trainee pilot on the spot, said Amreli Superintendent of Police, Sanjay Kharat.

The pilot was flying solo. The aircraft had taken off from the Amreli airport, he added. After it crashed near Shastri Nagar area, the plane caught fire and engulfed in flames, said Kharat.

"After taking off from the Amreli airport with a male trainee pilot, the trainer aircraft of an aviation academy, which operates from the airport, crashed into a residential area. The trainee pilot, who was flying solo, died in the crash while the aircraft was gutted in flames. No one else was injured in the accident," said Kharat.

He said a Delhi-based aviation academy provides pilot training from the Amreli airport. The SP said local police have started the process to lodge a case of accidental death and investigation to find out the exact cause of the crash.

Four teams of local fire brigade rushed to Shastrinagar upon learning about the plane crash and resultant fire in the aircraft, said fire officer SC Gadhvi.

"Though the plane crashed into a residential area, no one else was injured because it first fell on a tree and then crashed into an open plot. The fire was eventually brought under control by our teams" he said.

Flame and smoke rise up after a private company plane crashed in Amreli, Gujarat on Tuesday PTI

Scorching heat grips Uttar Pradesh, orange alert issued in 40 districts

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh continues to reel under an intense heat wave as both day and night temperatures remain alarmingly high across the state. With scorching sunlight and dry, hot winds sweeping through the region, life has become unbearable for millions of residents, especially in eastern and western Uttar Pradesh.

The Regional Meteorological Centre in Lucknow has issued an orange alert for Wednesday, warning of extreme heat conditions and unusually warm nights in 40 districts, including Prayagraj, Varanasi, Agra, Jhansi, Banda, and others.

On Tuesday, temperatures in more than 15 districts breached the 40 degrees Celsius mark. In districts like Jhansi, Hamirpur, Orai, and Banda, the conditions were particularly harsh.

"We are witnessing a prolonged and intensifying heat wave. The maximum temperature is likely to increase by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius in the next three to four days," said Atul Kumar Singh, senior scientist at the Regional Meteorological Centre, Lucknow. "Some districts, including Jhansi, may touch 45 degrees Celsius very soon." As the mercury soared, discomfort among locals increased. Many are struggling to get adequate sleep due to sweltering night temperatures, a condition rarely experienced so early in the summer.

"I could not sleep the whole night even with the fan on," said Rita Devi, a housewife from Varanasi. "The walls feel like they are radiating heat. It is as if the day's heat has started staying back into the night."

"It is hard to step out even at 9 in the morning. The winds feel like they are burning your skin," said Sunil Yadav, a rickshaw puller in Kanpur. "Our earnings have dropped too because people avoid coming out in such weather."

The heat wave warning spans a wide swath of the state, covering districts such as Banda, Chitrakoot, Kaushambi, Prayagraj, Fatehpur, Sonbhadra, Varanasi, Ballia, Mathura, Etawah, Aligarh, Jhansi, and more. These areas are expected to experience hot days with dry winds (loo) and warmer-than-usual nights, increasing the risk of heat stroke and other related ailments.

Hospitals have also reported a rise in cases of heat exhaustion and dehydration.

"We're advising people to stay indoors, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid exposure to the sun during peak hours," said Dr Sameer Srivastava, a general physician in Prayagraj. "Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable."

Local authorities have begun setting up water kiosks in busy areas, and government advisories have been issued urging schools to keep children hydrated and avoid outdoor activities during the noon hours. "We have shortened the school timings and ensured every classroom has access to cold drinking water," said Neha Saxena, principal of a private school in Rae Bareli.

Meteorologists are closely monitoring the situation, hoping for relief from dust storms or pre-monsoon showers in the coming weeks, though none are currently forecasted.

Andhra Pradesh CM Naidu meets with several Union ministers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday held meetings with several Union ministers in the national capital to discuss the ongoing Polavaram project and the establishment of a high court bench in Kurnool.

Naidu, who arrived in Delhi late Monday after his European holiday, met separately with Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

According to official sources, the chief minister discussed technical issues concerning the Polavaram project, which is currently under active construction. In his meeting with Meghwal, Naidu emphasised the need for a separate permanent high court bench at Kurnool to address the large backlog of cases. The appointment of judges to the Andhra Pradesh High Court was also discussed.

OBC candidates selected for government jobs wait for appointments even after six years

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

Thousands of OBC candidates in Madhya Pradesh, who were selected for government jobs under the increased 27 per cent reservation announced in 2018, are still waiting for their appointments, even after nearly six years. The situation has left aspirants across the state frustrated and disillusioned, as the legal dispute over the reservation hike continues to linger in the Supreme Court.

In 2018, the Congress government had increased OBC reservation in government jobs and education from 14 per cent to 27 per cent, pushing the total reservation in the state to 63 per cent. The move sparked political support among backward communities, but it also triggered a legal battle initiated by the organisation Youth for Equality, which challenged the decision in the Madhya Pradesh High Court, citing the Supreme Court's 50 per cent cap on reservations as laid down in the Indra Sawhney vs Union of India (1992) judgment.

While the Madhya Pradesh High Court ultimately upheld the government's decision, saying the state had justified the need for enhanced reservation, Youth for Equality escalated the matter to the Supreme Court, where the case remains pending.

As a result, recruitment lists from 2018 and onward — particularly those involving OBC candidates selected under the 27 per cent quota — have not been fully implemented, leaving thousands in limbo. The government selected 27 per cent OBC candidates, but recruited only 14 per cent and 13 per cent were kept on hold.

"We fulfilled every requirement, cleared exams, and got selected. Yet, we've been waiting for years without any clarity from the government," said Rahul Verma (name changed), who was selected for a clerical position in 2019 and is still awaiting his appointment.

The OBC Mahasabha has strongly criticised the delay in appointments. "This is not just a bureaucratic delay — it's a betrayal of constitutional rights. The 27 per cent quota was legally implemented, and aspirants selected under it must be given their due," said Dr. Rajesh Kumar, a national spokesperson of the OBC Mahasabha. "Thousands of families are suffering because of this inaction."

On the other hand, Youth for Equality maintains its position against the policy. "We are not against any community, but we oppose the violation of constitutional norms. The total reservation crossing 50 per cent sets a dangerous precedent," said Anupam Yadav, a representative of the organisation. "We trust the Supreme Court to uphold the principle of equality and merit."

The state government has so far refrained from issuing a blanket order on pending appointments, citing the matter as sub judice. However, legal experts point out that the delay in implementing selections made under a law upheld by the High Court raises serious administrative concerns.

While speaking to The Pioneer, Madhya Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla stated that it was the BJP government in the State that presented its stance in the High Court in support of OBCs. He added that a few petitions are still pending before the Supreme Court, and once the apex court delivers its verdict, the state government will implement the 27 per cent quota for OBCs in full.

Mayawati slams Centre over caste-based violence

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati has come down heavily on both Central and state governments over incidents of caste-based violence during the birth anniversary celebrations of Dr BR Ambedkar. In a series of tweets, she condemned the attacks on Dalit processions and the disrespect shown to Ambedkar's statues, particularly highlighting a gruesome incident in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district.

Taking to social media platform X (formerly Twitter), BSP supremo Mayawati expressed deep concern over what she called "shameful and condemnable" acts of caste violence that marred Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations in several Indian states this year. She cited instances where Ambedkar statues were dishonored and peaceful processions were attacked by miscreants, leading to serious injuries and fatalities. Referring specifically to Madhya Pradesh's Morena district, Mayawati pointed out that a Dalit man was killed and several others were injured during an Ambedkar Jayanti procession. She strongly criticized the state government for its failure to take swift and strict action against the culprits, alleging a clear display of insensitivity and negligence.

"These events expose the casteist character of the ruling regimes," she wrote, urging both the Centre and the state governments to act sternly against such atrocities. She also demanded justice for the Dalit victims and strict punishment for those responsible.

Mayawati further accused mainstream political parties of using Ambedkar's legacy to woo Dalit voters while ignoring their plight in practice. "These governments and parties organise grand events in Ambedkar's name only to mislead Dalits for votes," she said. She advised the Dalit community to be wary of the "dual-faced" parties that exploit their sentiments for electoral gain.

Calling for an end to caste-based injustice and atrocities, the BSP leader urged immediate and strong legal action against the perpetrators to ensure such incidents are not repeated.

Her tweets have sparked sharp reactions on social media, with many supporting her call for justice, while others criticised the politicisation of a tragic issue.

'One nation, one election' to be win-win situation for country, says Anurag Thakur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Srinagar

BJP MP Anurag Thakur on Tuesday said the implementation of the 'one nation, one election' formula would be a win-win situation for the country as it would not just cut the expenses incurred in conducting various polls but also save a lot of time.

Elections were held in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir within a few months of the Lok Sabha polls (last year). Then elections were held in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi. So, there are at least five assembly elections in a year.

"If all the polls are held simultaneously, it will reduce the expenditure, save time and increase the voting percentage as well," Thakur told reporters in Srinagar on the sidelines of a party event on 'one nation, one election' (ONOE).

The former Union minister said conducting simultaneous polls would reduce the expenditure of the candidates, political parties, and help the country save money.

"Around ₹1.5 lakh crore was spent in the (2024) Lok Sabha elections — by political parties, candidates, other institutions and the Centre, which can be saved. It can add 1.5 per cent to India's GDP. Thus, it will be a win-win situation for India wherein people will have a good government for five years," Thakur said.

With the implementation of ONOE, officials who are usually busy conducting elections will be able to focus on their primary duties, the five-time sitting MP from Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, said.

"When the model code of conduct is implemented, it slows down developmental works. A lot of time is lost before and after the conduct of elections, which usually takes 45-90 days.

"It also takes time to form a government, so a lot of time is lost. That is why we are saying that there should be 'one nation, one election'," Thakur said.

If the ONOE formula is implemented in 2029, all the elections will be held together, he said.

"If it (ONOE) matures up for 2029, elections in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab, which are scheduled in 2027, will be valid for two years only, and in 2029, all the elections will be held together," Thakur said.

"If Lok Sabha polls and state elections are conducted together, the country will benefit," he added.

BJP MP Anurag Thakur along with senior BJP leaders during an event on the 'One Nation One Election', at the party headquarters in Srinagar on Tuesday PTI

To a question on the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, Thakur said the BJP has promised it and "J-K will get it".

Asked about the situation in the Jammu region, which witnessed a spate of terror attacks in the recent past, Thakur said the BJP has zero tolerance policy towards terrorism. "Naxalism and terrorism are being dealt with sternly across the country. Naxals are being killed and arrested at many places, while several Naxals have laid down arms. If you see the situation in Kashmir, there is a lot of peace now compared to the previous years."

"If there were attempts (to launch attacks) in some parts of Jammu, our security forces took strong action against those. There is no place for terrorism. BJP has zero tolerance policy against terrorism," Thakur said.

Asked whether some BJP leaders were trying to put pressure on the Supreme Court over the challenges to the Waqf (Amendment) Act, the former Union minister said, "We are not putting any pressure on anyone. Our national president has made it clear."

"The Congress and the opposition parties created fear and misled the people on issues such as Articles 370, and 35A, triple talaq, Ram Mandir, and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). When these cases went to the SC, the government's stand was proven right.

"Banning triple talaq has benefitted our Muslim sisters. After the Ram Mandir was built, no one suffered any losses, but got benefitted. None of the Muslims lost their citizenship after the CAA was implemented. The opposition is lying while Rahul Gandhi is maligning India even on foreign shores," Thakur said.

Hitting out at Rahul Gandhi, Thakur said he loses elections in India and then runs an agenda against the nation in foreign countries.

"He (Gandhi) should ask Uncle Sam, his mentor Sam Pitroda, for clarity. Pitroda said there is no contribution of Babasaheb Ambedkar in framing the Constitution but Rahul Gandhi walks with Ambedkar's photo in India."

"So, what is their stand? Pitroda said there should be wealth distribution... What is Rahul Gandhi's stand on that? Pitroda has made statements against India many times, not just once. But he is a mentor to Rahul Gandhi, from whom he takes inspiration," Thakur alleged.

Editor's TAKE

A cultural gesture or a strategic reachout?

JD Vance's 3-day visit to India is more than a family trip. It's a message

United States Vice President JD Vance's three-day visit to India might appear on the surface as a cultural homecoming for his family, but beneath the surface lies a layer of strategic nuance that reflects the evolving dynamics of India-US relations — particularly amid the backdrop of Donald Trump's sanctions policy. Vance's India trip is being billed as a family-focused tour, with cultural visits to Jaipur and Agra aimed at helping his children connect with their Indian heritage through their mother, Usha Chilukuri Vance.

However, even such personal diplomacy carries weight. As the highest-ranking US official to visit India under the current administration, his presence alone sends a strong signal: despite recent tensions and Trump-era trade policy headwinds, the US values its long-term strategic relationship with India.

While the official itinerary includes only one major formal engagement — a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi followed by a state dinner — the subtext of that conversation is expected to be significant. Trade negotiations between the two nations remain in a delicate phase, especially with Trump's reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods paused only temporarily until July. The resumption or removal of those tariffs hinges on political will from both sides. Vance's visit offers a diplomatic window for quiet discussions, signalling a willingness from Washington to keep dialogue channels open even if the Trump administration's broader rhetoric leans toward economic nationalism.

Vance's visit comes just weeks after Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard's trip to India, indicating a deliberate staggered engagement from Trump's key officials. Vance's attendance at regional and business forums in Jaipur, including a speech at the Rajasthan International Centre, and his interactions with political figures, provide an opportunity to reinforce bilateral ties beyond just military or economic frameworks.

His presence also comes at a time when Modi is preparing for a high-profile visit to Saudi Arabia, underscoring how both nations are recalibrating their global engagements and seeking balance in a multipolar world order. Vance's India stop, sandwiched between Italy and other key visits, thus plays a quiet yet strategic role in maintaining American visibility in the Indo-Pacific theatre.

By prioritising a family-led cultural immersion alongside limited political engagements, Vance is walking a fine line. It's a display of soft power — highlighting shared values, people-to-people ties, and the significance of diaspora connections — while also reaffirming the transactional, interests-based nature of current US foreign policy under Trump.

The symbolic guard of honour, shopping trips for Indian handicrafts, and visits to Jaipur's heritage sites are diplomatic gestures that soften the harder edges of policy friction. This duality makes Vance's visit a potent blend of optics and opportunity. Whether Vance's trip translates into tangible outcomes on trade or security remains to be seen. But the fact that his first visit to India is being positioned as a cultural one, while quietly engaging on serious policy matters, reflects the Biden-Trump transition's lingering complexities — and how Vance is being groomed not just as a vice president, but as a statesman with cross-cultural appeal.

In a time of strained alliances and recalibrated partnerships, JD Vance's India visit is a quiet assertion: that while policy may shift, relationships endure — and sometimes, it's the personal visits that pave the way for political resets. As India and the United States navigate a landscape marked by shifting alliances and political flux, visits like Vance's offer more than ceremonial value. They signal intent, test the waters of diplomacy and often sow the seeds for future policy recalibration. In an age when optics can drive narrative, such symbolic overtures may well prove to be the quiet bridges over turbulent geopolitical waters.

India bolsters ties with Sri Lanka

As China deepens its presence through major investments, India is doubling down to protect its strategic interests — offering aid, infrastructure to send a message that it is Sri Lanka's most reliable partner

Amid the intensifying India–China battle for influence in Sri Lanka, New Delhi has reason to be satisfied following the recent two-day state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the island nation during which economic, defence, and energy ties with an important neighbour were shored up. India's strategic interests are intrinsically tied with those of Sri Lanka, hence the need to maintain close and robust bilateral relations with it. New Delhi also sought to convey to the Anura Kumara Dissanayake — led Government the message, yet again, that it can reap greater benefits from India, which is a reliable friend.

The underlying message herein being that China isn't one. It was also conveyed to Colombo once again that protecting India's security interests as well as its own should be of paramount importance. Towards this end, New Delhi also extracted from President Dissanayake an assurance, yet again, that he will keep in mind India's security interests.

To New Delhi's undoubted relief, President Dissanayake reiterated that he will not allow Sri Lankan territory to be used in any manner that will threaten India's security interests. For now, the Dissanayake Government appears to be walking the talk on this account going by news reports that Sri Lanka cancelled a joint naval exercise with India's arch-foe Pakistan, which was to be held in the waters off the strategically located Trincomalee, not too far from the Indian coastline. But not before New Delhi intervened and made its security concerns known, following which the exercise — which was to have been held around the dates PM Modi was to visit the island nation — was scrapped. Given its strategic imperatives in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), it's essential for New Delhi to consolidate its influence in Sri Lanka where India no longer holds sole sway, and to maintain robust ties with the new Government in place there.

In its outreach to the island nation, New Delhi is also seeking to burnish its credentials as a leader of the Global South, projecting itself as a dependable partner for nations facing economic hardship, and who need not fear falling into a debt trap as is often the case when they avail of loans from China.

During the PM's visit, there was also important messaging for Colombo about the perils of hob-nobbing too closely with Beijing, with PM Modi stating during the visit, "We have shared security interests. The security of both countries is inter-connected and co-dependent." As a maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean straddling vital sea lanes, New Delhi knows that Chinese expansionism can pose a strategic threat to both India and Sri Lanka.

The spreading tentacles of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Sri Lanka too have given New Delhi sleepless nights. As China's footprints in Sri Lanka increase, New Delhi knows well that it cannot afford to let its guard down vis-à-vis Beijing as the latter builds deep inroads into India's immediate and extended neighbourhood.

PARUL CHANDRA

This has forced India to redouble its efforts to ramp up its engagement and provide all manner of development assistance to countries in its neighbourhood so that they remain within its sphere of influence. In the case of Sri Lanka, India provided financial assistance totalling $4.5 billion in 2022 and 2023 to it during its post-pandemic economic meltdown. This played a vital role in helping Sri Lanka obtain an IMF bailout. India's outreach to the Dissanayake Government has also seen it convert $20.66 million given as lines of credit into grant assistance to reduce Sri Lanka's debt burden. All this, plus New Delhi's willingness to help Sri Lanka achieve economic stability, is possibly what has helped it forge close ties thus far with the Dissanayake Government.

Despite pursuing a policy of 'Neighbourhood First,' India's strategic space in the IOR is increasingly shrinking amidst a relentless Chinese onslaught. Though India has coined the new term 'Mahasagar' (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) replacing the earlier coinage of 'Sagar' (Security and Growth for All) for countries in the IOR, containing China's influence remains a challenge. India's efforts don't always bear fruit, especially when China-leaning Governments are in power in the neighbourhood. Besides, the offer of Chinese loans and financial assistance to build infrastructure is too tempting to resist for cash-strapped neighbours of India struggling to execute mega projects.

In the case of Sri Lanka, the Left-leaning Dissanayake has adroitly managed to balance his country's diplomatic ties with the two Asian giants in the six months since he took charge. It also means that the island nation for now is seeking to reap the benefits from the fierce India–China rivalry in Sri Lanka and the wider IOR. So if Dissanayake earlier this year managed to secure the largest-ever FDI (foreign direct investment) of $3.7 billion for his country from China for a state-of-the-art oil refinery at Hambantota to be built by Sinopec, he's being wooed by India as well in the area of energy security. PM Modi's visit saw the joint launch of the plan to build the Sampur solar power plant.

It will be developed by the Trincomalee Power Company, which is a joint venture between Ceylon Electricity Board and India's NTPC. To boost the island nation's energy security, all the more imperative as it went through a crippling forex crisis post the pandemic — which meant huge fuel shortages — the visit saw a tripartite agreement between India, Sri Lanka, and the UAE to develop Trincomalee as a regional energy hub. India needs to consolidate its foothold in Trincomalee on the island nation's eastern coast and keep China at bay. With its huge natural harbour, Trincomalee is of immense geo-strategic import and has the potential to be developed as a naval base. India is also already jointly redeveloping with Sri Lanka World War II — era strategic oil tank farms in Trincomalee. Apart from Trincomalee, New Delhi is also keeping a close eye on another strategic port, the one in Kankesanthurai, which lies not too far away from the Indian coastline. The port in Sri Lanka's Tamil-dominated northern province is close to the Indian coastline and is being "rehabilitated" with a $61.5 million grant assistance from India. Given its vital security stakes in Sri Lanka, a defence cooperation agreement with the island nation, the first between the two countries, inked during the visit would also help India counter Chinese moves in the region.

After all, China's hegemonic ambitions present a real and present danger to India and indeed the entire IOR.

(The author is Senior Journalist. Views are personal)

Leaderspeak

Deeply Pained by the Passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. Pope Francis will always be remembered as a beacon of compassion, humility, and spiritual courage by millions across the world. From a young age, he devoted himself towards realising the ideals of Lord Christ. He diligently served the poor and downtrodden. For those who were suffering, he ignited a spirit of hope.

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

Overthinking is injurious to mental health

SECOND Opinion

BY SAKSHI SETHI

Overthinking is a subtle but destructive habit that many people silently suffer from. It often disguises itself as caution or deep reflection, but in truth, it's a mental loop that traps individuals in cycles of worry, doubt, and inaction. While it may seem like a method of preparation or problem-solving, overthinking is far from harmless — it quietly undermines peace of mind, self-confidence, relationships, and even opportunities.

What begins as a desire to make the right choice or prepare for future outcomes quickly spirals into obsessive thinking. The mind replays conversations, dissects every detail, and invents endless "what ifs" and "should haves."

Instead of arriving at clarity, individuals find themselves stuck in a loop of mental noise that prevents real progress. A 2013 study published in the Journal of Abnormal Psychology found that overthinking is closely linked with anxiety and depression. Repetitive negative thinking was shown to be a shared factor in many mental health issues. This highlights that overthinking isn't just an annoying quirk — it's a serious risk factor that drains emotional energy, limits engagement with real life, and inhibits personal growth.Overthinkers often question every decision they make, fearing failure or embarrassment. This undermines self-trust, making even small choices feel high-stakes. When someone begins to believe that every decision must be perfect, they become paralysed by the fear of imperfection, holding themselves back from growth, both personally and professionally. Relationships are also affected. Overthinkers tend to overanalyse texts, tones, or expressions, often creating negative narratives. A delayed response from a friend can spiral into "They're mad at me," or "I must've said something wrong." These imagined scenarios create emotional distance, tension, and unnecessary stress, making it hard to connect authentically. On top of that, the constant mental activity can interfere with sleep, leading to insomnia or disrupted rest, which further affects emotional well-being. So what fuels this habit of overthinking? At its core, overthinking is driven by fear — the fear of failure, of being judged, of losing control.

Often, these fears stem from past experiences where mistakes were punished or outcomes were unpredictable. As a coping mechanism, the brain tries to take control by playing out every possible scenario. Ironically, this attempt at control results in more chaos and mental fatigue.To escape the grip of overthinking, the first step is awareness. You can't change what you don't recognise. Start by observing your thought patterns and identifying when helpful reflection turns into rumination. The next step is to disrupt the cycle. One effective technique is to set a "thinking deadline." For instance, give yourself 30 minutes to evaluate a decision, weigh the pros and cons, and then make a choice. This method trains your brain to move from overanalysis to action.Journaling is another powerful tool. Writing down your thoughts gets them out of your head and onto paper, immediately reducing their emotional charge. It also engages the logical part of the brain, helping you process emotions more constructively.

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), a scientifically supported method, is built around this very idea — challenging irrational thoughts and replacing them with more realistic, balanced perspectives. Most importantly, take action. Overthinking convinces us to wait until we feel perfectly ready, but clarity often comes after we start. Even the smallest step — sending a message, making a phone call, beginning a project — can break the mental gridlock and build momentum.

We begin to see that the consequences of our decisions are rarely as catastrophic as we imagine, and even when things go wrong, we gain experience and resilience. Building trust in yourself is crucial. Each small, confident decision reinforces your capability. Along the way, practising self-compassion helps loosen the grip of perfectionism. You don't need to be flawless or have all the answers. Life is unpredictable by nature, and embracing that truth allows space for peace and growth. In the end, overthinking drains our most valuable resources — time and mental peace. It disguises itself as preparation but only delays action and postpones growth. Life isn't meant to be overanalysed — it's meant to be lived fully and authentically.

(The writer is an educator. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

SY Quraishi and the politics of identity

Madam — Former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi responded firmly to BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's recent remark labelling him a "Muslim Commissioner." On Monday, April 21, Quraishi stated his unwavering belief in an India where individuals are defined by their contributions, not their religious identities. He noted that for some, such identities are used to push hateful political narratives. Quraishi served India with distinction as Chief Election Commissioner from July 2010 to June 2012. During his tenure, he introduced key reforms such as the creation of a Voter Education Division and Expenditure Control Division, and he founded the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management.

A proud member of the Haryana cadre of the IAS, Quraishi's public service career is a model of integrity and dedication. His work has been recognised by many, including Dr Gopalkrishna Gandhi, the distinguished grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and C Rajagopalachari. Dr Gandhi lauded Quraishi's efforts to uphold the values of India's constitutional institutions. Dubey's inflammatory comment followed Quraishi's criticism of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, which he described as a "sinister and evil plan" to seize Muslim lands. In a time when hate speech threatens the fabric of democracy, voices like Quraishi's serve as crucial reminders of the constitutional values India must continue to uphold.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

Rohit Sharma's wankhede moment

Madam — There could be no better timing than this for Indian cricket captain Rohit Sharma. Soon after the Mumbai Cricket Association honoured him by naming a stand after him at Wankhede Stadium, he delivered a stunning unbeaten 76-run knock against Chennai Super Kings, featuring four boundaries and six sixes.

His performance not only secured victory but also pushed Mumbai Indians up to sixth place on the IPL points table. From a young boy in Borivali known for breaking window panes to a cricketing legend who has broken records on the global stage, Rohit's rise is truly inspirational.

His success stems from a passion for the game and an unrelenting commitment to his team, not personal milestones.

What sets Rohit apart is his leadership, consistency, and ability to inspire. He is the only Indian cricketer to win two T20 World Cups — once as a player, once as captain — and has led the team to multiple ICC titles.

He is also the only player with three double centuries in ODIs and holds records for the most international sixes and the highest ODI score.

A fearless and flamboyant cricketer, Rohit Sharma's name now fittingly graces a stand at Wankhede. When he bats, it's nothing short of a festival for fans — an experience of joy, energy, and unforgettable moments.

G DAVID MILTON | MARUTHANCODE

Nurturing emotional bonds

Madam — Recent scientific research lends weight to poet William Wordsworth's timeless observation that "the child is father of the man." A study conducted by King's College London, Duke University, and the University of Osloemphasises that children given the right emotional support can positively influence society as a whole. It is troubling to see that emotional bonds within families are weakening. The lure of seductive technologies is isolating children from authentic human interaction, inhibiting essential emotional and intellectual qualities such as empathy, compassion, and kindness.

In the 21st century, children are often subjected to rigid schedules and academic pressure, leaving little time for meaningful connection with their parents. Given the rise in societal violence, insecurity, and alienation, even small acts of kindness — whether a warm gesture, kind word, or embrace — can serve as seeds for empathy and resilience. In a world increasingly fragmented by ego, hatred, and authoritarianism, the parent-child relationship remains a powerful antidote to many of humanity's ills. Emotional support fosters empathy, resilience, and compassion — qualities essential for a humane society. As technology and pressure erode connection, small acts of love within families can counteract alienation and help shape a more compassionate, unified future.

RANGANATHAN SIVAKUMAR | TAMIL NADU

A BREWING CRISIS THREATENING KERALA'S COMMUNAL HARMONY

Munambam, the jewel of Vypeen Island in Kochi, is a picturesque suburban area nestled along the Arabian Sea. However, it has now become the Achilles' heel of Kerala. In 1902, Abdul Sattar, a prominent member of the Kutchi Memon community — a Muslim trading group from Gujarat that had migrated to the state — was granted a lease for over 400 acres of land in Munambam by the princely state that governed the area. Later, in 1948, his close relative Mohammed Siddique Sait registered the deed, and in 1950, he endowed the land to Farook College in Kozhikode.

Over time, the college sold portions of the land to various encroacher–occupants. In 1971, the Paravur Sub Court ruled that the land was covered under a formal waqf deed. This decision was upheld by the Kerala High Court in 1975. Reports submitted by the Ernakulam Collectors to the High Court in 2008 and 2009 also confirmed the land's waqf status. Subsequently, in 2019, the Kerala Waqf Board formally registered the property as waqf, effectively nullifying all previous land sales. Amid the ensuing confusion, numerous tourist resorts have been established on the disputed land. The residents of the area — primarily Latin Catholic fisherfolk — have been staging a relay hunger strike for over 175 days, demanding recognition of their revenue rights over the land they have long inhabited. Unfortunately, the issue has been framed as a Christian–Muslim conflict, driven by partisan political narratives that now threaten Kerala's communal harmony. Union Minister Kiran Rijiju, during his speech in Parliament while introducing the Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2025, stated that the Munambam issue would be resolved in favour of the residents once the Act came into force. These statements reflect a lack of sincere intent to address the serious concerns of the affected residents. A respected Archbishop recently told the media that the hope for a resolution now lies with the State Government.

— HARIDARSAN RAJAN | KOZHIKODE

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.

Why India must cut GST on farm equipment?

As rural labour dwindles and food security demands rise, mechanisation is no longer optional — it's imperative. Yet the very tools needed to modernise farming are taxed more than luxury items, placing an unjust burden on small and marginal farmers

FIRST Column

India's agricultural sector, the backbone of rural livelihoods, is at a critical juncture. The transition to modern and mechanised farming is no longer a choice but is necessary to ensure food security, optimise productivity, and improve farmers' incomes. Yet, a significant bottleneck hampers this transition — the irrational Goods and Services Tax (GST) structure on tractors and other agri-implements.

Today, farm equipment is taxed at 12 per cent, more than a luxury watch is taxed at 5 per cent. For a small or marginal farmer purchasing a low-horsepower tractor costing ₹5-7 lakh, this means paying ₹60,000 to ₹84,000 upfront as GST alone — a prohibitive cost for most. This, in turn, delays the mechanisation process in areas where it is needed the most.

Pre-GST Scenario Was More Farmer-Friendly

Before the implementation of GST on July 1, 2017, tractors and most agri-implements were exempt from excise duties and subject to only 4-6 per cent Value Added Tax (VAT), depending on the state. Fertilisers, an essential element of agriculture, were previously taxed at 6 per cent (1 per cent excise and 5 per cent VAT). In the GST regime, the introduction of a 12 per cent GST rate on fertilisers was reduced to 5 per cent. However, on agricultural machinery still, 12 per cent GST disrupted the affordability landscape, disproportionately impacting small and marginal farmers, who make up over 86 per cent of India's total landholdings and are responsible for producing more than 60 per cent of the country's food grains.

While GST has unified the country's indirect tax system, it has also inadvertently penalised these vulnerable farmers by making essential farm tools more expensive. Rationalising GST to 5 per cent or even zero for tractors, their components, and agri-implements would significantly ease their financial burden and accelerate rural mechanisation.

Haryana's Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has recently written to the Union Finance and Agriculture Minister seeking GST exemption on 10 essential farm implements like rotavators, zero-till drills, super-seeders, straw-balers, and tractor-mounted spray pumps — a move and other states CMs should also collectively endorse.

Policy Contradictions: Subsidise on One Hand, Tax on the Other

The contradiction is glaring. The Government's flagship schemes, like the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM), offer subsidies of up to 50 per cent on machinery such as tractors, combine harvesters, sugarcane harvesters, cotton pickers, for establishing custom hiring centres (CHCs) and also to individual farmers for buying pump sets, tractor mounted sprayers, zero till and seed drills. Yet, these efforts are undermined when the same equipment attracts a steep GST rate.

A reduced GST rate on farm machinery will empower smallholder farmers and reduce the Government's subsidy burden. Lowering upfront taxes means farmers can buy machines at more reasonable prices, translating into more minor subsidy requirements for the Government.

AS MITTAL

Inconsistencies in the Green Energy Push

The policy incongruities extend to the renewable energy sector as well. Renewable energy devices such as solar panels, biogas plants, and windmill components attract only 5 per cent GST to promote sustainability. Electric vehicles (EVs) also enjoy a 5 per cent GST and a 15 per cent discount on third-party insurance premiums. Yet, electric tractors — vital for reducing agriculture's carbon footprint — are taxed at 12 per cent GST, the same as diesel tractors, and do not qualify for any insurance premium relief. According to a study by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), aligning electric tractors with EV incentives could reduce the price gap between electric and diesel tractors by nearly 40 per cent, helping India make a greener shift in agriculture.

> INDIA'S AGRICULTURAL FUTURE HINGES ON WIDESPREAD MECHANISATION, YET HIGH GST RATES ON ESSENTIAL FARM EQUIPMENT ACT AS A MAJOR ROADBLOCK. SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS — ARE UNFAIRLY BURDENED BY THE 12 PER CENT GST ON TRACTORS AND IMPLEMENTS, A RATE HIGHER THAN THAT ON LUXURY ITEMS.

The Urgency for Mechanisation

Mechanisation is the key to addressing India's agricultural productivity paradox. Despite India being the world's second-largest agricultural producer, only 47 per cent of its farming processes are mechanised, compared to 95 per cent in the United States, 75 per cent in Brazil, and 57 per cent in China. At this pace, India will need at least 25 more years to reach comparable levels.

Labour shortages due to rural-to-urban migration have further exacerbated the crisis. The share of the agricultural workforce has dropped from 59 per cent in 1991 to just 39 per cent in 2023. Mechanisation is essential to offset this shrinking labour force, increase yields, reduce drudgery, and make farming more attractive to rural youth.

Limited uptake

Tractors dominate India's farm equipment market, while implements such as harvesters, seed drills, tillers, and planters account for only 15-20 per cent of the market share. This limited uptake is due to the prohibitive costs and a lack of awareness about the productivity benefits of modern equipment.

The Government and multilateral agencies are already focusing on mechanisation schemes. However, these interventions will not reach their full potential unless complemented by lower taxation.

Farm mechanisation is not merely about replacing manual labour; it is about optimising inputs, improving efficiency, and securing rural incomes in a challenging agrarian landscape. It is time for the GST Council to undertake an urgent review of agri-implement tax slabs. A uniform GST rate of 5 per cent or zero on all agricultural machinery and their components would make mechanisation affordable for small and marginal farmers, stimulate demand in under-mechanised regions, encourage the adoption of green technologies like electric tractors, and reduce Government subsidy outflows in the long run. The 'magical' character of farm mechanisation needs a booster dose. Rationalising GST will empower farmers, create rural entrepreneurship opportunities via CHCs, and help India achieve sustainable development goals. It will bridge the mechanisation gap and unlock the true potential of Indian agriculture. Mechanisation is the future, but affordability is the key.

India's agricultural future hinges on widespread mechanisation, yet high GST rates on essential farm equipment act as a major roadblock. Small and marginal farmers — who form over 86 per cent of India's agrarian base — are unfairly burdened by the 12 per cent GST on tractors and implements, a rate higher than that on luxury items. This policy contradiction undermines Government subsidies offered through schemes like RKVY and SMAM, inflating costs and stalling progress. Haryana's call for GST exemption on key implements is a step in the right direction that other states must support. The mismatch extends to green technologies too — electric tractors face the same GST rate as diesel ones, with none of the incentives that electric vehicles enjoy. This hinders both affordability and sustainability goals.

Meanwhile, India's mechanisation rate lags behind other major agricultural economies, slowed further by rural labour shortages and high upfront machinery costs. Rationalising GST to 5 per cent or zero for all agricultural equipment is critical. It would ease financial pressure on farmers, reduce Government subsidy burdens, and accelerate the adoption of both conventional and green technologies. Mechanisation is not a luxury — it's a necessity. Affordability, enabled through fair taxation, is the key to unlocking a more productive, sustainable, and prosperous agricultural future.

(The writer is Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views are personal)

RTI amendment erodes transparency

By removing the public interest safeguard from Section 8(1)(j), the amendment now imposes a blanket exemption on all personal data — even when linked to public duties — thereby crippling the citizen's ability to hold public officials accountable

The recent amendment to the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, through the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, marks a pivotal retreat from the transparency regime that India painstakingly built over nearly two decades. By shielding personal information under a blanket exemption, the Modi Government has altered the balance between privacy and the public's right to know.

The operation of the RTI Act — informed by several judgments by the Supreme Court and High Courts — has shown that personal information not related to public activity was already protected.

It underlines that there was already sufficient judicial restraint in place to protect genuinely private data. Landmark rulings like Girish Deshpande vs CIC (2013), and the Puttaswamy (2017) privacy judgment, drew clear boundaries between personal data and information relevant to public interest. Courts consistently held that unless the disclosure of personal information served a larger public cause, it should be denied.

Therefore, the amendment was not needed and shows legislative overreach, reflecting mistrust in judicial discretion. It signals a shift from a principle-based regime to a bureaucratic shield where no scrutiny is possible. The amendment now legalises the denial of information that courts had earlier allowed when public interest was evident-setting a regressive precedent that may encourage arbitrariness and corruption.

The SC judgment reinforces that safeguarding personal privacy and promoting institutional transparency are not mutually exclusive but are jointly essential.

This point underscores a vital democratic balance. The Supreme Court, especially in the Puttaswamy case, held that privacy is a fundamental right but not an absolute one; it must be balanced with transparency, especially when public interest is involved. The original RTI Act embodied this balance by permitting the release of personal information where larger institutional accountability or public interest was at stake.

The amendment breaks this balance by giving unchecked primacy to privacy, even when it is used as a smokescreen to hide inefficiency, nepotism, or corruption. For instance, public access to officials' attendance, disciplinary records, or property details — which can reveal disproportionate assets — would now be blocked. The implication is that institutions become unanswerable to the public, reducing the citizen's role from a watchdog to a mute spectator.

KS TOMAR

The sweeping changes have been introduced through the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, which amended Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act. Earlier, this section exempted disclosure of personal information unless there was an overriding public interest. The amendment removes this public interest override and comprehensively exempts all personal data from disclosure under RTI, regardless of its connection to public duties. It is a fundamental shift from a "case-by-case" evaluation to an "absolute bar" on access to personal information, thereby hollowing out the core of the RTI regime.

> THE AMENDMENT BREAKS THIS BALANCE BY GIVING UNCHECKED PRIMACY TO PRIVACY, EVEN WHEN IT IS USED AS A SMOKESCREEN TO HIDE INEFFICIENCY, NEPOTISM, OR CORRUPTION.

The implication is grave: details about the conduct, performance, assets, and public duties of Government officials — even when crucial to detect corruption-can now be shielded from public scrutiny under the excuse of "Privacy". It turns the RTI from a transparency-enabling instrument into a tool riddled with opaque exemptions, undermining citizens' ability to hold officials accountable.

This proviso was a crucial equaliser — it mandated that any information which cannot be denied to Parliament or a State Legislature should not be denied to a citizen.

Its removal gives disproportionate access to legislators while stripping ordinary citizens of equal standing in accessing information. It opens the doors for selective transparency, where MPs and MLAs can access sensitive Government information while citizens are stonewalled. This defeats the spirit of the RTI Act, of 2005 which was built on the idea that transparency is not a privilege but a right.

The move indicates a central tendency to empower the political class at the cost of democratic equity. It also allows the bureaucracy to selectively disclose information to suit political interests while denying the same to activists, journalists, or public-spirited individuals.

This technical change has a wide-ranging impact. By using the DPDP Act to amend Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, the Government has effectively introduced a data protection regime that overrides the RTI's foundational purpose-access to public information. The phrase "all personal information" is undefined and absolute, allowing information officers to deny almost anything under the guise of personal data.

Details such as educational qualifications, performance appraisals, transfer postings, and reasons for disciplinary action can all now be denied, even if such data expose abuse of power or fraud. This will embolden non-performance, discourage whistle-blowers, and limit the ability of journalists, lawyers, or citizens to demand accountability. In essence, it turns a democratic law into a bureaucratic fortress.

The Modi Government claims that legal obligations under RTI remain unaffected but this assertion is misleading. Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act directly amends the RTI Act itself, thereby altering the legal obligation.

There is a common perception amongst the citizens having consciousness about the RTI Act that the center should pause and review the amendment which reflects a broader democratic concern as it will dilute the purpose of the entire process of seeking information. The vociferous demand to reconsider the amendment is a red flag from the opposition and civil society as these changes are not about protecting privacy but about restricting scrutiny.

The repeal demand stems from fears that the Government is creating an architecture of secrecy behind the smokescreen of data protection. If allowed to persist, this may institutionalise opacity and convert public institutions into information black holes-something antithetical to participatory democracy.

The RTI Act was a landmark law that was an unprecedented achievement of the people's movement under Magsaysay winner, Aruna Roy that democratised access to governance and brought the citizen to the center of accountability. By altering its core provisions, the Modi Government risks reversing this progress.

While data protection is necessary in the digital age, it should not come at the cost of institutional transparency. Instead of finding a nuanced balance, the Government has chosen to impose blanket opacity.

The implications go far beyond legalese-they erode the foundations of a transparent republic, where the citizen has the right to question power. This amendment must be revisited, reviewed, and if necessary, repealed to restore the sanctity of the RTI Act.

(The writer is a senior political analyst and Ex Chairperson of the Standing Committee of All-State Public Service Commissions in India. Views are personal)

Russia batters Ukraine as peace talks come to crux

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kyiv

Russian drones battered the Ukrainian port city of Odesa in a nighttime attack, local authorities said Tuesday, less than 24 hours after a purported Easter ceasefire unilaterally declared by Moscow ended and just over a day before Ukrainian, British, French and US officials are due to meet in London to discuss the war.

Anticipation is building over whether diplomatic efforts can stop more than three years of fighting since Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour.

Trump said last week negotiations were "coming to a head" and insisted that neither side is "playing" him in his push to end the grinding war.

This came after Secretary of State Marco Rubio suggested last week the US might soon back away from negotiations altogether if they don't progress. He spoke in Paris after talks among U.S., Ukrainian and European officials produced outlines for steps toward peace and appeared to make some long-awaited progress.

A new meeting is expected Wednesday in London, and Rubio suggested it could be decisive in determining whether the Trump administration continues its involvement.

Odesa came under a "massive attack" by Russian drones overnight, injuring at least three people, the head of Odesa regional administration, Oleh Kiper, wrote on his Telegram page Tuesday.

A residential building in a densely populated urban area, civilian infrastructure and an educational facility were hit, he said.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 54 Shahed and decoy drones at Ukraine overnight, marking a resumption of long-range attacks that have blasted civilian areas and sown terror throughout the war.

Russia has stepped up in the past months its use of Shahed drones, expanding its production of the weapon and refining its tactics, the International Institute for Strategic Studies said in a recently published analysis.

After Putin declared a unilateral ceasefire on Saturday, Ukraine said it was ready to reciprocate but said Russian attacks were continuing. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Russia violated the ceasefire more than 2,900 times.

The Associated Press was unable to verify whether a ceasefire was in place along the roughly 1,000-kilometer front line.

Russia has effectively rejected a US proposal for an immediate and full 30-day halt in the fighting by imposing far-reaching conditions. Meanwhile, both Russia and Ukraine are preparing for the spring-summer military campaign, Ukrainian and Western officials say.

Pope's funeral for Saturday morning, with public viewing starting Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Vatican

Cardinals have taken their first decisions following the death of Pope Francis, setting Saturday as the date for his funeral and allowing ordinary faithful to begin paying their final respects starting Wednesday, when his casket is brought into St. Peter's Basilica.

The cardinals met for the first time Tuesday in the Vatican's synod hall to chart the next steps before a conclave begins to choose Francis' successor, as condolences poured in from around the world grieving history's first Latin American pope.

The cardinals set the funeral for Saturday at 10 am in St. Peter's Square, to be celebrated by the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re.

US President Donald Trump has announced he and first lady Melania Trump plan to attend Saturday's funeral Argentine President Javier Milei is also expected.

Francis died Monday at age 88 after suffering a stroke that put him in a coma and led his heart to fail. He had been recovering in his apartment after being hospitalized for five weeks with pneumonia. He made his last public appearance Sunday, delivering an Easter blessing and making what would be his final greeting to followers from his popemobile, looping around St. Peter's Square.

In retrospect, his Easter appearance from the same loggia where he was introduced to the world as the first pope from the Americas on March 13, 2013, was a perfect bookend to a 12-year papacy that sought to shake up the church and return it to its Gospel-mandated mission of caring for the poorest.

"He gave himself to the end," said Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, the head of the Italian bishops' conference and considered a possible contender to be next pope. "To go out to meet everyone, speak to everyone, teach us to speak to everyone, to bless everyone." The first images of Francis' body were released Tuesday, showing him in the wooden casket, in red vestments and his bishop's miter, with the Vatican secretary of state praying over him in the chapel of the Domus Santa Marta hotel where he lived and died.

In his final will, Francis confirmed he would be buried at St. Mary Major basilica, which is outside the Vatican and home to his favorite icon of the Virgin Mary. Before and after every foreign trip, Francis would go to the basilica to pray before the Byzantine-style painting that features an image of Mary, draped in a blue robe, holding the infant Jesus, who in turn holds a jeweled golden book.

Francis stopped by the basilica on his way home from the Gemelli hospital on March 23, after his 38-day hospital stay, to deliver flowers to be placed before the icon. He returned April 12 to pray before the Madonna for the last time.

Bells tolled in chapels, churches and cathedrals around the world and flags flew at half staff in Italy, India, Taiwan and the U.S. After Francis' death was announced by the Vatican camerlengo. Soccer matches in Italy and Argentina were suspended in honor of the Argentine pope who was a lifelong fan of the San Lorenzo soccer club.

World leaders praised Francis for his moral leadership and compassion, while ordinary faithful remembered his simplicity and humanity.

Francis chose not to live in the palace, though, but in a two-room suite in Santa Marta on the other side of Vatican City. He died there and his body was transferred to the hotel chapel in the lobby, where the private viewing was being held Tuesday for Vatican officials and members of the pontifical household.

In changes made by Francis last year, his body was not placed in three wooden coffins, as it had been for previous popes. Rather, Francis was placed in a simplified wooden coffin with a zinc coffin inside.

Once in St. Peter's, his coffin will not be put on an elevated bier but will just be be placed simply facing the pews, with the Paschal candle nearby.

"Like every Argentine, I think he was a rebel," said 23-year-old Catalina Favaro, who had come to pay her respects in the Buenos Aires church where Francis discovered his priestly vocation. "He may have been contradictory, but that was nice, too."

In East Timor, where Francis' final outdoor Mass drew nearly half of the population last September, President Jose Ramos-Horta praised Francis' courage. "Papa Francisco was a brave man who was not afraid to speak out against the rulers of the world who seek war, but do not want to seek peace," Ramos-Horta said.

"He challenged the powerful to act with justice, called nations to welcome the stranger, and reminded us that our common home - this Earth - is a gift we must protect for future generations," said Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, who is Muslim. Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and has around 30 million Catholics, representing about 14% of the total population.

The pope's formal apartments in the Apostolic Palace and in the Santa Marta hotel were sealed Monday evening, following a centuries-old ritual. Cardinal Kevin Farrell, who as camerlengo had the task of announcing the death and confirming it once the cause was determined, presided over the rituals.

"He was a pope who didn't change his path when it came to getting dirty," Francis' vicar for Rome, Cardinal Baldassarre Reina, said in a Mass in his honor. "For him, poor people and migrants were the sacrament of Jesus."

After the funeral, there are nine days of official mourning, known as the "novendiali." During this period, cardinals arrive in Rome and meet privately before the conclave.

To give everyone time to assemble, the conclave must begin 15-20 days after the "sede vacante" - the "vacant See" - is declared, although it can start sooner if the cardinals agree.

Once the conclave begins, cardinals vote in secret sessions in the Sistine Chapel. After voting sessions, the ballots are burned in a special stove. Black smoke indicates that no pope has been elected, while white smoke indicates that the cardinals have chosen the next head of the Catholic Church.

The one who has secured two-thirds of the votes wins. If he accepts, his election is announced by a cardinal from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica who tells the world "Habemus Papam," Latin for "We have a pope.

Global tributes pour in for Pope Francis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Vatican City

Grief and tributes for Pope Francis were shared around the world Tuesday, a day after the popular pontiff died at age 88.

Cardinals will meet at the Vatican Tuesday to begin scheduling Pope Francis' funeral and burial, planning the conclave to elect his successor and making other decisions about running the Catholic Church.

History's first Latin American pontiff charmed the world with his humble style and concern for the poor but alienated many conservatives with critiques of capitalism and climate change.

Francis recently returned to the Vatican after 38 days in a hospital for a respiratory crisis that developed into double pneumonia, the longest hospitalisation of his 12-year papacy. He last appeared in public on Sunday with an Easter blessing and popemobile tour through a cheering crowd in St Peter's Square.

No funeral date has been announced. The next pope is yet to be decided.

Here's the latest:

AUSTRALIAN CANDIDATES CANCEL CAMPAIGN EVENTS: Both Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and opposition leader Peter Dutton cancelled campaign events planned for Tuesday out of respect for the late pontiff, as early voting began for a May 3 general election.

Flags were flown at half staff from government buildings across the country where a 2021 census found 20 per cent of the population were Catholics.

Albanese was raised as a Catholic but chose to be sworn in as prime minister when he was elected in 2022 by making a secular affirmation rather than by taking an oath on a Bible. Albanese attended a Mass in honour of the pope in Melbourne's St Patrick's Cathedral on Tuesday morning.

"I try not to talk about my faith in public," Albanese told reporters, but added "At times like this, I think what people do is they draw on who they are and certainly my Catholicism is just a part of me."

Dutton, who was raised by a Catholic father and Protestant mother and attended an Anglican school, planned to go to a church service in Sydney.

"I don't think it's a day for overt politicking at all. I think that the day is best spent reflecting," Dutton told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

INDIA DECLARES THREE DAYS OF MOURNING: The Indian flag flew at half-staff on Tuesday at all government buildings as the country observed three days of mourning as a mark of the respect for Pope Francis.

The Indian flag will be flown half-staff on government buildings across the country for the next two days, as well as on the day of the pontiff's funeral, the Home Ministry said in a statement.

TAIWAN'S CATHOLICS REMEMBER FRANCIS: Members of Taiwan's Catholic community gathered at a church in the capital Taipei for a sombre mass as believers prayed and reflected on Francis' spiritual legacy.

Former Premier Chen Chien-jen, a devout Catholic who visited the Vatican multiple times at the invitition of Francis and previous popes, spoke of the deep loss felt by the faithful.

Harvard sues Trump administration over grants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Boston

Harvard University announced Monday that it was suing the Trump administration to halt a freeze on more than USD 2.2 billion in grants after the institution said it would defy the Trump administration's demands to limit activism on campus.

In a letter to Harvard earlier this month, the Trump administration had called for broad government and leadership reforms at the university as well as changes to its admissions policies. It also demanded that the university audit views of diversity on campus, and stop recognising some student clubs. Harvard President Alan Garber said the university would not bend to the government's demands. Hours later, the government froze billions of dollars in federal funding.

"The Government has not - and cannot - identify any rational connection between antisemitism concerns and the medical, scientific, technological, and other research it has frozen that aims to save American lives, foster American success, preserve American security, and maintain America's position as a global leader in innovation," the university wrote in its lawsuit.

"Nor has the Government acknowledged the significant consequences that the indefinite freeze of billions of dollars in federal research funding will have on Harvard's research programs, the beneficiaries of that research, and the national interest in furthering American innovation and progress," it added.

The Trump administration, in the April 11 letter, told Harvard to impose tougher discipline on protesters and to screen international students for those who are "hostile to the American values."

It also called for broad leadership reforms at the university, changes to admissions policies and the removal of college recognition for some student clubs. The government also demanded Harvard audit its faculty and student body to ensure wide viewpoints in every department and, if necessary, diversify by admitting additional students and hiring new faculty. Last Monday, Harvard said it would not comply, citing the First Amendment. The following day, Trump took to his Truth Social platform, questioning whether the university should lose its tax-exempt status "if it keeps pushing political, ideological, and terrorist inspired/supporting Sickness?'"

The Trump administration also threatened to block the university from enrolling international students. The university frames the government's demands as a threat not only to the Ivy League school but to the autonomy that the Supreme Court has long granted American universities. For the Trump administration, Harvard presents the first major hurdle in its attempt to force change at universities that Republicans say have become hotbeds of liberalism and antisemitism.

Trump allies are increasingly turning on one another

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

The infighting and backstabbing that plagued President Donald Trump's first term have returned as a threat to his second, with deepening fissures over trade, national security and questions of personal loyalty.

The latest turmoil threatens to engulf the Pentagon, where Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has pushed out top advisers and faces fresh controversy over sharing sensitive information about airstrikes in Yemen outside of classified channels.

A former Pentagon spokesperson who was ousted last week wrote in Politico that Trump should fire Hegseth for presiding over a "full-blown meltdown."

The interpersonal drama is not - at least yet - a dominant plot line of Trump's return to the White House. But its reemergence after a period of relative discipline in his ranks reflects a turbulent management style that has been suppressed or papered over, not reformed.

Trump's national security team was recently rattled by an Oval Office visit from Laura Loomer, a far-right conspiracy theorist who has been questioning his staff's trustworthiness. The Republican president fired some of the officials, emboldening Loomer to continue scrutinizing people across the administration.

In an interview with independent journalist Tara Palmeri released on Monday, Loomer mocked the idea that the White House is "one big happy family."

"The advisers don't get along with each other," she said. "The heads of agencies don't get along with each other."

Tariff trouble causes friction for the Trump team

Much of the tension is connected to Trump's determination to use tariffs to rebalance the global economy, with officials often contradicting each other and occasionally turning to insults. Trump adviser Elon Musk, the billionaire entrepreneur whose companies could suffer from higher costs brought on by import taxes, sharply criticized Peter Navarro, Trump's top counsellor on trade, as "dumber than a sack of bricks."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt dismissed the idea of growing dissension within the administration, saying there are "far more examples of the president's team working together enthusiastically and collaboratively to advance the administration's goals."

"The numbers and results of this administration speak for themselves," she said. "The president and his team are getting work done."

Trump has always had a high tolerance for chaos, shunning traditional policy deliberations to entertain divergent opinions and viewing unpredictability as a negotiating tool. He's spent years fostering a competitive atmosphere among his staff members, who are often chosen for their devotion and penchant for aggression.

But now the increasing strife underscores the risks for more turmoil in the months ahead, as Trump presses forward with a dramatic overhaul of the federal bureaucracy, international trade, foreign policy and more.

> The only thing they have in common is the belief that they should show personal fealty to Trump. That got them the job but shows how unserious they are.
>
> — JOHN BOLTON, FORMER NSA

John Bolton, who served as national security adviser in Trump's first term before writing a tell-all book critical of the president's inner circle, said the drama reflects the lack of a consistent ideology and the inexperience of many administration officials. "The only thing they have in common is the belief that they should show personal fealty to Trump," Bolton said. "That got them the job. That may in fact keep them in the job. But it shows how fundamentally unserious they are."

The situation is a test for Susie Wiles, the White House chief of staff, who helped run Trump's presidential campaign last year. She earned a reputation for imposing an unusual level of order on Trump's chaotic orbit - though she carefully avoided trying to control Trump or his impulses - and he praised her as "the ice maiden."

During Trump's first term, he had four chiefs of staff - one of them serving in an acting capacity for more than a year. The second, former US Marine Gen. John Kelly, became a sharp critic of the president after he left the job, describing him as a fascist during the 2024 election.

White House closes ranks around Hegseth

With his new administration, Trump has surrounded himself with loyalists, and he's been reluctant to throw anyone overboard in response to negative coverage from the mainstream media, which he considers to be an enemy. Allies say the hesitance to make personnel changes in this term is meant to deny giving a win to critics, even if it means leaving troubled officials in place.

On Monday, the president brushed off reports that Hegseth participated in a second group chat to talk about pending airstrikes in Yemen last month. The first chat, which used the encrypted messaging application Signal, involved top administration officials as well as the editor of The Atlantic, who was accidentally included in the discussion.

NY Indian Film Festival to pay tribute to Shyam Benegal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New York

The legacy of legendary Indian filmmaker Shyam Benegal will be honoured at the New York Indian Film Festival here, which will celebrate its silver jubilee this year with a repertoire of diverse cinematic works featuring celebrated artists such as Manoj Bajpayee, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, James Ivory and Rasika Dugal.

The festival, the longest-running and prestigious US festival dedicated to Indian independent cinema, will celebrate its milestone 25th edition here from June 20-22, spotlighting "bold new voices, storied auteurs, and urgent narratives" from the Indian subcontinent and its global diaspora.

"What began as a grassroots platform is now a global stage for Indian independent cinema," Festival Director Aseem Chhabra said in a press statement Monday.

"This year's lineup is one of our most powerful and wide-ranging to date. From deeply personal documentaries to regional narratives that rarely reach global audiences, the 25th edition of NYIFF reflects the evolving language of Indian cinema."

The festival will pay tribute to Benegal, a "titan of Indian parallel cinema", who passed away in December 2024 at the age of 90. NYIFF will screen a 4K restoration of "Manthan", Benegal's landmark 1976 film about India's White Revolution, restored by the Film Heritage Foundation. The film premiered at the Cannes Classics in 2024.

It will also honour the work of Oscar-winning film director James Ivory, with "An Arrested Moment", a short documentary from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, directed by Dev Benegal. The film explores Ivory's "enduring fascination with Indian art and culture."

The 2025 NYIFF lineup includes 22 feature-length films-18 narratives and four documentaries-spanning more than a dozen languages and regions. The festival program also includes 21 short narrative and documentary films.

From Tamil and Odia to Assamese, Hindi, and Malayalam, the selection of the works to be showcased at the festival "reflects both the diversity and the evolving language of Indian cinema," it said.

Chhabra said Siddiqui, who has won two NYIFF best actor trophies, will be attending this year's festival.

Executive Director of the Indo-American Arts Council, which presents NYIFF, Suman Gollamudi said the festival has long been a space where India's cinematic legacy meets its most daring futures. "At 25, we are not just celebrating the past-we are investing in what's next."

The 2025 festival opens with the East Coast premiere of the Manoj Bajpayee, Priyanka Bose and Deepak Dobriyal starrer "The Fable", directed by Raam Reddy. With a debut at the 2024 Berlinale, the film "merges surrealism and psychological tension against the Himalayan backdrop". The film, whose ensemble includes Tillotama Shome in a cameo, recently took home Best Film at the Leeds International Film Festival.

Pope's calls made him revered figure in Gaza

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dhaka

Bangladesh has rejected New Delhi's charge that the recent killing of a Hindu leader was part of a "pattern of systematic persecution" of minorities in that country.

Body of Hindu community leader Bhabesh Chandra Roy, 58, a resident of Basudebpur village of Dinajpur district in north Bangladesh, was recovered on Thursday night. His son has claimed Roy was allegedly abducted from his home in the village, about 330 kilometres northwest of Dhaka, and beaten to death.

"It is unfortunate that the death of Mr Bhabesh Chandra Roy has been described as part of a 'pattern of systematic persecution' of Hindu minorities under the interim government," interim government chief Muhammad Yunus' press secretary Shafiqul Alam told the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) news agency late Monday.

Alam, who is currently accompanying Yunus to an international conference in Qatar, said Bangladesh is not a country where one would find government-sponsored systematic discrimination against minorities. Rather, he claimed, the Bangladesh government protects the rights of all of its citizens irrespective of religious denominations.

The Bangladesh reaction came days after India condemned the alleged abduction and killing of the Hindu minority leader in Bangladesh and called on the interim government in Dhaka to live up to its responsibility of protecting the minorities. "This killing follows a pattern of systematic persecution of Hindu minorities under the interim government even as the perpetrators of previous such events roam with impunity," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X on Saturday.

Roy's family had lodged a case with Dinajpur police after his murder against four named suspects and several unnamed individuals. "The accused took my father to an unknown location and beat him to death in a premeditated manner," Roy's son 28-year-old Swapan Chandra Roy, alleged in his written complaint.

Swapan Chandra Roy named Atikur Rahman as accused number one, who according to media reports, runs an informal money lending business.

Police said according to the family complaint, Roy borrowed Taka (Tk) 25,000 from Rahman agreeing to repay it in monthly installments of Tk 3,250 but financial hardship debarred him from regular repayment despite the lender's insistence making him sick.

Roy's son, in the complaint, said that on April 17 afternoon the accused went to Roy's house on two motorbikes and took him away under the pretext of an urgent discussion and added that he received a call in the evening when a co-accused, Ratan Islam told him his father had fallen sick.

The accused abandoned Roy on a spot near his home and fled and doctors declared him dead as the family took him to a hospital.

Yunus's press secretary, however, said "in this particular case, we have ascertained that the victim went out with some individuals previously known to him" and the autopsy report did not detect any prima facie sign of bodily injury.

"This notwithstanding, the authorities have ordered viscera analysis to conclusively determine the cause of death," he said, adding that appropriate actions would be taken once the viscera report is available. "We invite all quarters to refrain from making fabricated and insightful comments on the incident," Alam added.

Roy's son said his father was a farmer by profession and also served as the vice-president of the local unit of Puja Udjapan Parishad.

Dinajpur's district police chief Marufat Hossain acknowledged the filing of the case by Roy's son. "We are taking the matter seriously and conducting a thorough investigation," he told reporters.

Pope Francis prays at Israel's separation barrier on his way to mass in Manger Square next to the Church of the Nativity, traditionally believed to be the birthplace of Jesus Christ in the West Bank of Bethlehem FILE PHOTO

What do Iran-US nuclear talks signal?

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

Negotiations between Iran and the United States over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program will move Wednesday to what's known as the "expert level" - a sign analysts say shows that the talks are moving forward rapidly. However, experts not involved in the talks who spoke with The Associated Press warn that this doesn't necessarily signal a deal is imminent.

Instead, it means that the talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff haven't broken down at what likely is the top-level trade - Tehran limiting its atomic program in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

"Agreeing to technical talks suggests both sides are expressing pragmatic, realistic objectives for the negotiations and want to explore the details," said Kelsey Davenport, the director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association who long has studied Iran's nuclear program.

"If Witkoff was making maximalist demands during his talks with Araghchi, such as dismantlement of the enrichment programme, Iran would have no incentive to meet at the technical level." That technical level, however, remains filled with possible landmines. Just how much enrichment by Iran would be comfortable for the United States?

What about Tehran's ballistic missile program, which US President Donald Trump first cited in pulling America unilaterally out of the accord in 2018? Which sanctions could be lifted and which would be remain in place on the Islamic Republic?

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that my Client Smt. Arun Chandok W/o Surinder Pal Chandok R/o House No. 523, Kh No. 63, Floor 2nd, Gali No. 4, Block B, Near Govt School Kewal Park, Majlis Park, Adarsh Nagar, North West Delhi-110033 have severed their all relations with their son Shivanshu Chandok and her wife Swati Chandok. Henceforth my client debarred/disowned them from their all movable and immovable properties / assets. My clients shall not be liable for their any act or deeds in any manner whatsoever. Anybody dealing with them will do so at his own cost and risk.

Parveen Kumar (Advocate) Office Address:- J-1/105, J.J. Colony Wazirpur, Delhi-110052

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that my Client Smt. Radha Devi W/o Puran Singh R/o M-28, Singal Pur Village, Shalimar Bagh, North West Delhi, Delhi-110088 have severed their all relations with their son Sanjay. Henceforth my client debarred/disowned him from their movable and Immovable properties/ assets. My client shall not be liable for their any act or deeds in any manner whatsoever. Anybody dealing with them will do so at his own cost and risk.

Parveen Kumar (Advocate) Office Address:- J-1/105, J.J. Colony Wazirpur, Delhi-110052

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice for Conversion of Section 8 Company into a Private Limited Company

Notice is hereby given that M/s ESTONIAN COUNCIL FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION (CIN: U80902DL2019NPL351856), having its registered office at A-39, Kewal Kunj Apartment, Plot No. 46, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085, has applied to the Regional Director, Northern Region, for conversion from a Section 8 Company to a Private Limited Company under Section 8(4)(ii) read with Section 18 of the Companies Act, 2013.

Any objections may be sent within 30 days to:
The Regional Director, Northern Region, B-2 Wing, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003.

A copy should also be sent to the company at its registered office.
For M/s ESTONIAN COUNCIL FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION
[SHYAM CHAWLA] [KARAN CHAWLA]
Directors
DIN: 08494407 / 08494408
Email: Karanchawla3100@outlook.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of my client **Mr. Yogesh Kasana** to inform the public at large that **Mrs. Rajwati** is the owner of **Residential Plot of land area measuring 311 Sq. Yards i.e. 260.02 Sq. Meters, out of Khasra No. 1326M, situated at Village Kasna, Pargana Dankaur, tehsil and Dist. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.** vide **Sale Deed dated 27.11.2021 (Doc. No.22293)** executed by **Mrs. Reenu** W/o Mr. Jagesh Bhati **as General Attorney on behalf of Mr. Jagesh Bhati** and same to be financed by **Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Company Ltd.** That, **Original Regd. GPA dated 08.03.2021 (Doc. No.412)** executed by **Mr. Jagesh Bhati** in favour of **Mrs. Reenu** has lost/misplaced and FIR for the same also lodged vide FIR dated 19/04/2025.So, to comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/ or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned about his objections within **7 days** from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.

Lucem Legal LLP
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank Sector 2,Noida,UP-201301Contact#0120-4269379

NOTICE OF PETITION

FORM NO. NCLT. 3A
Advertisement detailing petition [Rule 35]
Company Petition No 111/ND/2023

A petition under section 241-242 of the Companies Act, 2013, for oppression and mismanagement was presented by Ms. Minu Subba titled as Minu Subba vs. Siri Ram Syal Hydro Power Private Limited and Others on the **13.06.2023,** and the said petition is fixed for hearing before bench IV of National Company Law Tribunal, Delhi on **27.05.2024.** Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said petition should send to the petitioner's advocate, notice of his intention, signed by him or his advocate, with his name and address, so as to reach the petitioner's advocate not later than 'two days before the date fixed for the hearing of the petition. Where he seeks to oppose the petition/ application/ reference, the grounds of opposition or a copy of his affidavit shall be furnished with such notice. A copy of the petition/ application/ reference will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.

Dated
Aparna Jain
Advocate for petitioner
Address: W-19, L.G.F, Greater Kailash-2, New Delhi-110048

आम सभा की बैठक

आदरणीय सभी आजीवन सदस्यों को सूचित किया जाता है कि भगवान परशुराम आश्रम सेवा समिति गोहाना, सोनीपत की आम सभा की बैठक रविवार दिनांक 27 अप्रैल 2025 को सुबह 11 बजे "BOLLYWOOD DHABA" (BANQUET) बीसवां मील जीटी रोड में होनी निश्चित हुई है। इस बैठक में समिति की वार्षिक रिपोर्ट, आय व्यय रिपोर्ट, सदस्यता रिपोर्ट आदि प्रस्तुत की जाएगी। सभी सदस्यों से अनुरोध है कि यथासमय पहुंचने का कष्ट करें। इसके लिए सभी सदस्यों को डाक पत्र द्वारा भी सूचित कर दिया गया है। जिन सदस्यों के नाम, पता व टेलीफोन न. आदि विवरण सही नहीं है, उसको भी ठीक करवाने की कृपा करें।

प्रधान अशोक कुमार शर्मा
भगवान परशुराम आश्रम सेवा समिति गोहाना। 9416054055

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI (ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION) DA-6

O.M.P, (COMM.) 319/2023
CAREER LAUNCHER INFRASTRUCTURE PRIVATE LIMITED .....Petitioner
VERSUS
NALANDA FOUNDATION AND OTHERS .....Respondents

To
RESPONDENT NO. 9:
MR. PANKAJ KUMAR SINGH
S/O SHIVPAL SINGH
R/O: 1045, G NO12, PATEL NAGAR,
GURGAON,HARYANA

WHEREAS the above named Petitioner has filed a **petition under Section 34 of the Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996. Whereas, this Court issued notice to you, the above named Respondent No. 9.**

AND

WHEREAS it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Court that it is not.possible to serve you in the ordinary way, therefore, this notice is given by publication directing you to mako appearance before **Ld. Joint Registrar(Judicial)** of thisHon'ble Court on **09.04.2025** at **11.00 A.M.** to defend the above mentioned petition.

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day mentioned above, the Petition will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given undor my hand and the scal of the Court in Lorms of orders dated 22nd day ofJanuary, 2025.

Assistant, Registrar(O)
for Registrar General

EXTENSION OF SUMMER SPECIAL TRAIN

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to extend the periodicity of the run of Train No. 02393/02394 Rajender Nagar-New Delhi-Rajender Nagar Superfast Special Train as per details given below:-

Train No.	From	To	Days of Run	Notified up to	Period of Extension	Trips
02393	Rajender Nagar	New Delhi	6 Days (Exp- Thu.)	30.04.25	02.05.25 to 30.06.25	52
02394	New Delhi	Rajender Nagar	6 Days (Exp-Fri.)	01.05.25	03.05.25 to 01.07.25	52

Note :- Rest of the instructions will hold good.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of other stations enroute and composition etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

Please join us on

RailMadad Helpline No. 139
Visit RailMadad Website:- www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in
Download RailMadad app.
NORTHERN RAILWAY
Your Convenience - Our Concern
Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in
1193/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

LOST AND FOUND

I, Chanda Kumari, wife of Mr. Mukesh Kumar Mishra, resident of C-6/185, Sultanpuri, Delhi-110086, hereby inform that all the Original Documents related to the Property at House No. C-6/186, Sultanpuri, Delhi-110086, have been lost. In the future, if anyone finds the documents related to my house, they are requested not to use them. If anyone uses these documents, they will be solely responsible for any consequences. The complete ownership of House No. C-6/186, Sultanpuri, Delhi-110086, belongs to me. I alone have the full rights to sell this property.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement systems

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi - 110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items :-

S. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	07240149A	SECONDARY VERTICAL DAMPER FOR LHB	3073 NOS	13-05-25
02	19255004	RETRO FITMENT OF WATERLESS URINAL	358 NOS	15-05-25
03	18241059A	PRE-PRINTED COMPUTER TICKETS	117864 ROLLS	20-05-25
04	07243844	STANDARDIZED BRAKE DISC FOR LHB	532 NOS	21-05-25
05	07243461A	YAW DAMPER FOR LHB COACHES	6136 NOS	21-05-25
06	07240106B	BRAKE BEAM, COMPLETE	3747 NOS	16-06-25

Note : 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.
Tender Notice No. 07/2025-2026 Dated:- 22.04.2025 1186/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय, उज्जैन
क्रमांक /भण्डार/ 2025/136 दिनांक : 22.04.2025

डेस्कटॉप कम्प्यूटर क्रय हेतु प्रथम ई-निविदा वर्ष-2025

PM USHA परियोजना अंतर्गत विश्वविद्यालय के विभिन्न प्रशासनिक विभागों/अ.शा./संस्थानों/लैब आदि हेतु डेस्कटॉप कम्प्यूटर क्रय किए जाने हेतु पंजीकृत निर्माता फर्म/अधिकृत विक्रेताओं से **http:// www.mptenders.gov.in** के माध्यम से ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदाओं का विस्तृत विवरण विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय, उज्जैन की वेबसाइट **www.vikramuniv.ac.in** पर भी उपलब्ध है। निविदा का अनुमानित मूल्य लगभग राशि रु. 13,00,00,000 (रु. तेरह करोड़ मात्र) है।

म.प्र. माध्यम/119743/2025 कुलसचिव

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!

MORE SUMMER SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of Rail Passengers, Railways have decided to run the following additional Summer Special Trains as per schedule given below :-

Train No. 07077/07078 Charlapalli-Dehradun-Charlapalli Summer Special Train — 10 TRIPS

Train No. 07077 ARR.	Train No. 07077 DEP.	STATIONS	Train No. 07078 ARR.	Train No. 07078 DEP.
----	05:00	Charlapalli	22:30	--
19:20	----	Dehradun	----	07:00

Days of Run : 07077 Ex Charlapalli from 29.04.2025 to 27.05.2025 (every Tuesday) **and 07078 Ex Dehradun** from 01.05.2025 to 29.05.2025 (every Thursday)

Stoppages : Kazipet, Ramagundam, Mancherial, Bellampalli, Sirpurkagaz Nagar, Balharshah, Nagpur, Itarsi, Rani Kamalapati, Bina, Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi, Agra Cantt, Mathura Jn, Hazrat NizamuddinJn, Meerut City, Roorkee & Haridwar stations

Accommodation: 3 Tier AC & Sleeper

Train No. 05577/05578 Saharsa Jn.-Anand Vihar T.-Saharsa Jn. Garibrath Summer Special Train — 66 TRIPS

Train No. 05577 ARR.	Train No. 05577 DEP.	STATIONS	Train No. 05578 ARR.	Train No. 05578 DEP.
----	20:00	Saharsa Jn.	10:30	--
00:30	----	Anand Vihar T.	----	05:15

Days of Run : 05577 Ex Saharsa Jn. from 16.05.2025 to 30.06.2025 (every Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, Sun) **and 05578 Ex Anand Vihar T.** from 18.05.2025 to 02.07.2025 (every Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sun)

Stoppages : Garh Baruari, Supaul, Saraygarh Jn, Nirmali, Ghogardiha, Jhanjharpur, Sakri Jn, Darbhanga Jn, Janakpur Road, Sitamarhi Jn, Bairgania, Raxual Jn., Narkatiaganj Jn, Bagaha, Kaptanganj, Gorakhpur Jn, Basti, Gonda Jn, Sitapur, Shahjehanpur, Bareilly, Moradabad & Ghaziabad Jn stations

Accommodation: 3 Tier AC

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

Please join us on
NORTHERN RAILWAY
Your Convenience-Our Concern
Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in
1194/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Can Fin Homes Ltd (Sponsor: CANARA BANK) HOME LOANS • DEPOSITS Translating Dreams into Reality

Regd. Office: 29/1, 1st Floor, Sir M N Krishna Rao Raod, near Lalbagh West Gate, Basavangudi, Bengaluru-560 004. Website: www.canfinhomes.com

WANTED OFFICE PREMISES

Can Fin Homes Limited, a Housing Finance Company require space of 700 - 1000 Sq.Ft. in Ground / First / Second Floor in a good locality on lease for 5 to 10 years at the following.

Sr. No.	Location	Contact Person & Designation	Contact Number - Mobile & Landline & Email id
1.	Dwarka, Delhi	Sonu Sharma Senior Manager	7625079150, 011-41761717 Email: pitampura@canfinhomes.com

Interested Premises owners may send their offers in a closed envelope to **Can Fin Homes Limited., NCR Pitampura Branch - DP-11, 1st Floor, Local Shopping Complex, Infront of Maurya Enclave Police Station, Pitampura, Delhi-110034** , as per our format in our website **www.canfinhomes.com** on or before **09th May, 2025** addressed to the above mentioned contact person.

Premises should be ready for occupation will all facilities/amenities. Offers from the brokers/intermediaries will not be entertained. Can Fin Homes Limited reserve the right to reject any or all the offers with out assigining any reason whatsoever. Canavassing in any form will disqualify the offer. No brokerage will be paid.

Date: 22-04-2025 Sd/-
Place: Pitampura Branch Manager

NORTHERN RAILWAY

NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, Delhi Division, Northern Railway, in terms of Railway Board letter no. 2022/TC(FM)/ 10/04 dated 13.06.2022, invites bids through **e-Auction (www.ireps.gov.in)** for the contract of Management and operation of Cloakroom (on ROMT basis) situated at Anand Vihar Railway Station (ANVT) Main hall adjacent to Parcel Office (Area 24.726 Sq Mtrs) for 5 (five) years as per detail and schedule given below:-

S. No.	Date & Time of e-Auction	Assets to be auctioned
1	06.05.2025 at 11:00 am	The contract of Management and Operation of Cloakroom (on ROMT basis) situated at Anand Vihar Railway Station (ANVT) Main hall adjacent to Parcel Office (Area 24.726 Sq. Mtrs) for 5 (five) years.

Important notes: 1. For more information, requirement and various aspects regarding these e-Auctions, interested bidders are advised to visit **https://www.ireps.gov.in/html/helpdesk/learning_centre.html.** (E-Auction leasing section). **2. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD):** 10% of the total contractual bid value to be deposited online during the auction. EMD of the successful bidder will be retained as Security Deposit. **3.** Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute rights to short terminate these contracts at any point of time and/or for taking any decision regarding the discontinuation/continuation of these contracts with modified/ additional terms and conditions depending upon the situations. 1176/25
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

कार्यालय नगर निगम, हरिद्वार

पत्रांकः– 30 / सै0सी0(न0नि0हरि0) / 2025–26 दिनांकः– 22.04.2025

निविदा सूचना

नगर निगम हरिद्वार द्वारा निगम के ग्राम सराय ज्वालापुर स्थित ए0बी0सी0 सेन्टर के संचालन हेतु www.uktenders.gov.in पर टू बिड प्रक्रिया (तकनीकी व वित्तीय) के माध्यम से दर निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती हैं जिसका विवरण निम्नानुसार हैः–

S. No.	Scheduled/Information	Date	Time
1	Date of Online publication	24.04.2025	12:00 PM
2	Document Download start Date	24.04.2025	01:00 PM
3	Bid submission Start Date	24.04.2025	01:00 PM
4	Bid Submission End Date	08.05.2025	01:00 PM
5	Offline Submission of Hard/Original copy of Document End date	08.05.2025	02:00 PM
6	Bid opening Date	08.05.2025	03:00 PM

उक्त तिथियो / निविदा में कोई भी प्रकार का कोई www.uktenders.gov.in पर ही प्रकाशित किया जायेगा ।

सहायक नगर आयुक्त
नगर निगम हरिद्वार

GST 05AAAAN2285M1ZF
नैनीताल दुग्ध उत्पादक सहकारी संघ लिमिटेड
(आई.एस.ओ. प्रमाणित उपक्रम)
लालकुआँ, जिला नैनीताल (उत्तराखण्ड) दूरभाष : 05946 : 268061,268127
आँचल

पत्रांक 203–08 / पनीर वैक्यूम पैकिंग / 2025–26 दिनांक– 22.04.2025

E-Tender Notice
Nainital Dugdh Utpadak Sehkari Sangh LTD. Lalkuan (Nainital)
E-Tender Notice No:01 Paneer Vacume Packing/NDUSS 2025-26 Date-22.04.2025

Following E-tenders are invited by the undersigned, from experienced, reputed and financially sound Manufacturers/Firms/ Authorized Dealers for the following works so as to reach this office on or before 06.05.2025 up to 5.00 PM, which will be opened on 07.05.2025 at 11.00 AM.

S No.	Name of work
01	Requirement of Paneer Packing Machine for Rent/work Charges basis Packing Size 180 Gram at Nainital DUSS Ltd Lalkuan

Online tender -E-Tender documents may be seen and downloaded/ uploaded from E-tender portal http://www.uktenders.gov.in

निर्माता : ऑचल दुग्ध एवं दुग्ध उत्पाद
(Anurag Sharma)
General Manager

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act 1993 read with rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rule, 1993) in the matter of
TA NO 330/2022 **DATE: 03.04.2025**
UNION BANK OF INDIA **... APPLICANT**
VERSUS
SH NISHIT JAIN & ORS. **... RESPONDENT**
To, **DEFENDANT**
D1. MR NISHIT JAIN S O SH AKHILESH KUMAR JAIN GALI NO 1 NEAR WATER TANK GOVIND NAGAR KOTDWAR UTTARAKHAND- 246149 **ALSO AT: SENIOR APPLICATION DEVELOPER COMPUTER SCIENCE CORPORATION INDIA PVT LTD** C-28 AND 29 LOGIX CYBER PARK TOWER B SECT 62 NOIDA UP
D2. MR. PRIYANAKA JAIN W/O NISHIT JAIN GALI NO 1 NEAR WATER TANK GOVIND NAGAR KOTDWAR UTTARAKHAND- 246149
D3. MR. ASHIT JAIN S/O SH AKHILESH KUMAR JAIN, GALI NO 1 NEAR WATER TANK GOVIND NAGAR KOTDWAR UTTARAKHAND- 246149 **ALSO AT:** HOUSE NO 2324 CHABRA HOUSE NEAR METRO PILLAR NO 215 SHADIPUR NEW DELHI **ALSO AT: PRATIBHA INDUSTRIES LTD.** NEAR INA METRO STATION B-85 1ST FLOOR BHISMA PITAMAH ROAD DEFENCE COLONY NEW DELHI
D4. M/S JBK DEVELOPERS PVT LTD, 99, PATPARGANJ DELHI - 91 ALSO AT B-21-22 SECT 16 NOIDA UP 201301

Whereas the above named applicant (s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of **Rs. 20,53,193.03 (RUPEES TWENTY LAKH FIFTY THREE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED NINETY THREE AND THREE PAISE ONLY)** against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on **27.08.2025 At 11.00 A.M.**

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

All the matters will be taken up through video Conferencing and for that purpose:-
(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the **"Cisco Webex"** application/software: (ii) **"Meeting ID"** and **Password** for the date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar shall be displayed in the daily cause list itself at DRT Official Portal i.e. drt.gov.in (iii) In any exigency qua that the Advocate/Litigants can contact the concerned official at **Ph. No. 23748478.**

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal this the **03RD day of April., 2025.**
BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL, SECTION OFFICER, DRT-II, DELHI

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Nidhi Dangwal W/o Shri Shakti Prasad Dangwal R/o H.No. 8221, C-8, Vasant Kunj, South West, Delhi-110070, have changed the name of my minor daughter Meghavini aged about 15 years and she shall hereafter be known as Elliotte for all future purposes.
PD(1910)A

I, Nirajana Devi W/o- No.14845500F NK/MT Shyam Babu Prasad, R/o- Vill- Bilaspur, PO- Saunaha, PS- Palanwa, Teh- Raxaul, Dist- East Champaran, Bihar- 845305, have changed my name from Nirajana Devi to Nirajana Kumari, vide affidavit dated 22/04/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.
PD(1911)C

I, No.13624579F Hav Ved Prakash, R/o- Neemri, Bhiwani, Haryana- 127025, have changed my daughter's name from Karshu to Krrisu, vide affidavit dated 22/04/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.
PD(1912)C

I, Sheela Tiwari W/o- JC-805378X Sub Manan Jee Tiwari, R/o- Vill- Asha Parari, PO- Asha Parari, Teh- Dumraon, Dist- Buxar, Bihar- 802135, have changed my name from Sheela Tiwari to Sheela Kumari, vide affidavit No 628/25 dated 03/04/2025 before Notary Public, Mhow, Indore, M.P..
PD(1913)C

I HARPREET CHOUDHRY W/o ZILE SINGH R/o 4/6&7 2nd Floor Racquet Court Road Civil Line Delhi 110054. Have changed my Name to HARPREET CHOUDHARY for all future purpose .
PD(1914)C

I, Sunita Devi, W/o- No.4281660X L/Hav Budhiman Oraon, R/o- Vill- Khakhparta Kumba Toli, PO- Rampur, PS & Dist- Lohardaga, Jharkhand- 835302, have changed my name from Sunita Devi to Sunita Kumari, vide affidavit dated 22/04/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.
PD(1915)C

Reforms key to India's growth story over next two decades: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ San Francisco

India's quest for sustained growth over the next two decades hinges on a new paradigm, driven by bold reforms, enhanced domestic capabilities, and strategic institutional collaborations suited for the evolving global landscape, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

The last two Union Budgets have laid the groundwork for this transformation, with a clear multi-sectoral policy agenda, she said, while speaking at Hoover Institution at Stanford University California.

In the last decade, she said the government has undertaken structural reforms, rationalising over 20,000 compliances, decriminalising business laws and digitising public services to reduce friction.

She further said a significant thrust on infrastructure development has also created a strong foundation for manufacturing-led growth by bolstering investor confidence over the last 10 years.

> Our experience with implementing the Business Reform Action Plan by different state governments has demonstrated that deregulation is a powerful catalyst for industrial growth
>
> – NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, FINANCE MINISTER

This has been enabled by a more than four-fold increase in the union government's capital expenditure between 2017-18 and the 2025-26 Budget, she said.

"Our experience with implementing the Business Reform Action Plan by different state governments has demonstrated that deregulation is a powerful catalyst for industrial growth," she said.

Going forward, the Finance Minister said, sustaining India's growth momentum calls for a fresh approach of bold reforms, adaptive strategies in line with changing global landscape.

"Over the next two decades, sustaining India's growth momentum calls for a fresh approach grounded in bold reforms, stronger domestic capacities, renewed institutional partnerships and adaptive strategies suited for the evolving global landscape," she said.

India has set a goal to become a developed nation by 2047, the year when the country would enter the 100th year of its independence from British rule.

"As we lay the foundation for a developed India, we must stay committed to long-term goals, without losing sight of present realities. The global order is changing. That poses challenges but also opportunities. We must be prepared to tackle the former while seizing the latter," she said.

India's journey to become a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 is not merely an aspiration but a shared national mission powered by a vision for inclusive, sustainable, and innovation-led growth, she said.

Despite the pandemic shock and a banking crisis, she said, "our progress over the past decade, anchored in strong macroeconomic fundamentals and steady reforms, gives us confidence and direction for the road ahead." As a result, she said, India has risen from the world's tenth-largest economy to the fifth-largest.

Quoting a report by Indiaspora and BCG, she said, Indian first-generation immigrants founded 72 unicorns between 2018 and 2023 and these unicorns were worth at least USD 195 billion in valuation and employed nearly 55,000 people.

More than 65 per cent of Global Capability Centres (GCC) in India have their headquarters in the US, she said, adding, these GCCs provide high-value-added, bespoke services in areas such as R&D, management consulting and auditing. Observing that the US is a mature start-up hub which has developed over 50-60 years, while India's start-up journey is a nascent one, she said, "over the course of the last decade, the government's focus was on reducing the cost of entrepreneurial risk-taking by removing regulatory and infrastructural barriers.Rs

India, US have finalised terms for BTA: USTR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India and the US have finalised the terms of reference outlining the roadmap for negotiations of the proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), according to a statement issued by the US.

US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer said that these ongoing talks will help achieve balance and reciprocity by opening new markets for American goods and addressing unfair practices that harm US workers.

"India's constructive engagement so far has been welcomed, and I look forward to creating new opportunities for workers, farmers, and entrepreneurs in both countries," he said in a statement.

"I am pleased to confirm that USTR and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry have finalised the Terms of Reference to lay down a roadmap for the negotiations on reciprocal trade," Ambassador Greer said.

He claimed that there is a "serious" lack of reciprocity in the trade relationship with India. India and the US on Monday said that they made "significant progress" in negotiations for a mutually beneficial bilateral trade pact as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US Vice President JD Vance held wide-ranging talks here.

Vance is the first US vice president to visit India in 12 years after Joe Biden visited New Delhi in 2013.

On February 13, the two countries announced to negotiate the BTA. It was decided to finalise the first phase of the pact by the fall (September-October) this year.

to the USTR, the United States is looking at increasing market access, reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers, and negotiating a robust set of additional commitments to ensure long-term benefits.

US has long recognised significant trade barriers with India and as a result, the US ran a USD 45.7 billion goods trade deficit with India in 2024, a 5.1 per cent

> The US total goods trade with India was estimated at $129.2 billion in 2024. According to the US, India's average applied tariff is 17 per cent, among the highest of the world's largest economies

(USD 2.2 billion) increase over 2023, the statement said. "The US welcomed the tariff reductions India implemented during the Prime Minister's (Narendra Modi) meeting with President (Donald) Trump in February and its willingness to further reduce tariffs on US products as part of the BTA," it added.

The US total goods trade with India was estimated at USD 129.2 billion in 2024. According to the US, India's average applied tariff is 17 per cent, among the highest of the world's largest economies, while America's average applied tariff is 3.3 per cent.

India's average applied tariff rate on agricultural products is 39 per cent while the USA's is just 5 per cent. "In addition to tariffs, technical barriers to trade, regulatory barriers, and restrictions on access to the market in the services, industrial, and agricultural sectors also reduce US exports to India," it said.

On April 2, President Trump imposed a 10 per cent tariff on all countries and individualised reciprocal higher tariffs on nations with which the US has the largest trade deficits in order to level the playing field.

"The ToR (Terms of Reference) announcement with India is a critical step forward in negotiations with India to achieve reciprocal trade with one of our most strategic partners and deliver results to the American People," the statement said.

ToRs include issues such as tariffs, non-tariff barriers, rules of origin, and customs facilitation.

FM Sitharaman invites global IT companies to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ San Francisco

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday met several IT industry leaders and invited them to explore opportunities for technical collaboration and investment. During a bilateral meeting with Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian and his team here, Sitharaman encouraged them to explore local linkages in India for territorial collaboration and to develop tech for India and the world market under the 'Make In India' initiative.

They discussed the transformative evolution of India's digital infrastructure under the Digital India initiative in recent years, positioning the country as a global leader in digital adoption.

Kurian appreciated India's AI Mission and the trajectory India is taking under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He also emphasised the need to connect India to the global network through land and sea cable infrastructure.

During another meeting with Turing CEO Jonathan Siddharth, the Finance Minister highlighted India's policy framework for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and encouraged his company to explore opportunities for collaboration and fruitful engagement. Siddharth expressed his desire to see India at the forefront of the AI revolution and spoke about working in the domain of AI with India and through Indian contributors to create a sovereign model that can serve as a template for the world, the finance ministry said in a series of posts on X. Data Robot CEO Debanjan Saha also called on the Finance Minister and referred to India's potential to become an AI superpower and expressed interest in participating in the AI Centre of Excellence, for which the Union Budget 2025-26 recently allocated ₹500 crore.

"FM @nsitharaman underlined the steps that the Government of India has taken over years to boost digital infrastructure, including budgeting ₹10,300 crore for IndiaAI Mission, creating AI language technologies through BharatGen and Sarvam-1, and the establishment of the Srijan Centre for Generative AI at IIT Jodhpur @saide_iitj among others," another post said. The Finance Minister explained to him about the potential opportunity through the proposed Rs 1 lakh crore corpus, private sector-driven research, development, and innovation scheme, and informed about India ranking first globally in AI skill penetration where India is ahead of many developed countries. In another meeting with Anjney Midha, General Partner with a16z and Raghu Raghuram advisor VMware, Sitharaman suggested that a16z and VMware may like to explore collaboration across sectors within the domain of AI including in education, healthcare, and AI Centres of Excellence.

ITC Hotels signs 14 Fortune Hotels in 2024-25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

ITC Hotels Ltd on Tuesday said it signed 14 'Fortune Hotels' and opened seven new properties under the brand in 2024-25, to further strengthen presence, especially tier II and tier III markets.

The new properties are located across emerging markets and gateway destinations and will further strengthen the brand's presence, especially tier 2 and tier 3 markets in the upscale to midmarket category, the company said in a statement.

As of March 31, 2025, Fortune brand had a portfolio of 78 hotels comprising 56 operational hotels across India and Nepal with 22 hotels in pipeline, it added.

"As we enter this new financial year, we reaffirm our commitment to sustained growth and excellence in hospitality," ITC Hotels Ltd Managing Director Anil Chadha said.

He further said, "This footprint expansion endeavours to offer travellers access to prime locations and Fortune's comfortable hospitality."

In FY25, the company said Fortune saw six new hotel openings in India at Pahalgam, Puri, Chennai, Candolim (Goa), Palampur (Himachal Pradesh), Ekta Nagar (Gujarat) and its first international hotel opening in Nepal at Bhaktapur.

The new signings were in Goa, Kolkata, Chennai, Rishikesh, Indore, Bhimtal, Mukteshwar, Gorakhpur, Mohali, Surat and Ayodhya, it said, adding that with these Fortune Hotels now has presence in over 65 cities across India and Nepal.

Gold breaches ₹1 lakh mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Gold prices surged by ₹1,800 to zoom past the crucial ₹1 lakh-mark for 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid buying rush by local jewellers and stockists in anticipation of increased demand during Akshaya Tritiya and wedding season even as global macroeconomic uncertainties continued to fuel safe-haven chase.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity climbed ₹1,800 to hit the lifetime peak of ₹1,01,600 per 10 grams from Monday's closing level of ₹99,800 per 10 grams.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped by ₹2,800 to hit a record high of Rs 1,02,100 per 10 grams in the local markets on Tuesday. It had settled at ₹99,300 per 10 grams in the preceding session.

Akshaya Tritiya, which is considered the most auspicious day to buy gold, falls on April 30. The ongoing wedding season will continue till May end.

The yellow metal has spurted by ₹22,650 per 10 grams, or nearly 29 per cent, since December 2024.

Meanwhile, silver prices remained flat at ₹98,500 per kg on Tuesday.

"The new all-time-high attained by the yellow metal is primarily influenced by the rising tensions between President Trump and US Fed Chair Jerome Powell regarding the interest rate cut.

"Additionally, weakness in the US dollar following the tensions between Trump and Fed Chair Powell, and uncertainties around the US-China trade war are another crucial factors that has pushed gold price to a record high," Colin Shah, MD, Kama Jewelry, said.

CAIT demands regulator for e-commerce

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Traders' lobby CAIT on Tuesday demanded setting up of an independent regulatory body for digital commerce for oversight and fixing accountability on e-commerce and quick commerce platforms, alleging anti-competitive practices like predatory pricing, deep discounting and exploitation of gig workers.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) also sought expeditious roll-out of the National e-Commerce Policy and e-Commerce rules under the Consumer Protection Act, both currently under finalisation by the Commerce as well as Food & Consumer Affairs Ministries, respectively, to safeguard the interests of retail traders. It recommended an imposition of a 'luxury tax' under the prevailing GST framework on goods sold via e-commerce platforms, arguing that the practice of buying goods online be considered a 'luxury'.

Currently, goods and services tax is a four-tier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18, and 28 per cent.

Dhairyasheel Patil, National President, All India Consumer Products Distributor Federation (AICPDF), and CAIT's Senior Vice President, told PTI that as per estimates, as many as 10 lakh kirana stores have shut down operations in the last two-three years, owing to lack of viability and affordability. While several kirana stores have also come up during the period, he said, more shops have closed as compared to the number of new retail shops opened.

> At a conclave organised by CAIT, traders' representatives adopted a resolution demanding immediate enforcement of FDI and e-commerce policies and rolling out of e-commerce rules

"Quick commerce has now expanded to 100 cities. In metro cities, 70 per cent of the retailers are using rented shops. Till now 10 lakh shops have been shut as per our estimates in the last two-three years. Though new shops have also opened, the number of new shops that have opened is less as compared to the number of small retail stores that have shut down due to lack of affordability and viability of operations," he shared.

The traders' body also recommended prohibition of inventory-led operations by platforms posing as marketplace.

As per existing rules, 100 per cent FDI is allowed through an automatic route in the marketplace model of e-commerce. However, overseas investment is not permitted in an inventory-based model.

In the marketplace model, e-commerce entities can only provide a platform for third-party sellers and they cannot own the inventory. They also cannot directly or indirectly influence the price of the goods.

It has been reported in the past that the CCI, which works to ensure fair business practices across sectors in the marketplace, is already looking into alleged anti-competitive ways of e-commerce companies.

At a conclave organised by CAIT, traders' representatives adopted a resolution demanding "immediate enforcement of FDI and e-commerce policies and rolling out of e-commerce rules under Consumer Protection Act; imposition of luxury tax under GST on purchase of goods from e-commerce platforms; and stoppage of human right violations committed by quick commerce & e-commerce companies".

They also stated that accountability of e-commerce platforms should be fixed and banks should be directed not to discriminate their credit card usage between e-commerce and small shopkeepers in terms of offering cash backs.

The resolution also adopted recommendations seeking "prohibition of inventory-led operations by platforms posing as marketplaces; formation of an independent regulatory body for digital commerce; mandatory transparency in algorithms, pricing, and seller selection; and protection and promotion of small Kirana stores and offline trade".

Tenure of RBI Deputy Governor extended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The government has extended the term of RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar for another one year till May 2026, according to sources.

This is the second one-year extension granted to him. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the re-appointment of Rao for a period of one year with effect from May 3, 2025, or until further orders, sources said quoting a government order dated April 21. The ACC is headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He was appointed as RBI Deputy Governor in May 2021 for an initial period of three years. In his previous role as Executive Director, Sankar was looking after the Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, the Department of Information Technology, Fintech and the Risk Monitoring Department in RBI.

Sankar has also in the past served as an IMF Consultant (2005-11) towards developing government bond markets and debt management. Outside his career at the RBI, Sankar holds the role of Chairman at Indian Financial Technology and Allied Services (IFTAS) and is also a member of the Board of Directors at ReBIT (Reserve Bank Information Technology Private Limited) and a member of the governing council at IDRBT.

Rupee falls 8 paise to settle at 85.23 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

The rupee consolidated in a narrow-range and settled for the day lower by 8 paise at 85.23 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as the support from positive domestic equities was negated by dollar short-covering by investors.

orex traders said foreign fund inflows supported the domestic unit. However, a recovery in crude oil prices dented investor sentiment.

Moreover, concerns persisted over economic headwinds from tariffs and US monetary policy that could dampen demand.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.11 and moved between the intra-day high of 85.07 and the low of 85.23 against the greenback.

The unit ended the session at 85.23 (provisional), registering a loss of 8 paise over its previous closing level on Tuesday, after witnessing a gaining streak for five straight sessions.

Sensex, Nifty rise for 6th day on row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty advanced on Tuesday, marking their sixth straight day of rise helped by gains in banking and FMCG shares and foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 187.09 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 79,595.59. During the day, it jumped 415.8 points or 0.52 per cent to 79,824.30.

The NSE Nifty rose by 41.70 points or 0.17 per cent to 24,167.25. Barring IT and energy sectors, most indices ended in the green, with realty, FMCG, and banking emerging as the top gainers.

From the Sensex pack, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Eternal, Kotak Mahindra Bank, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were the major gainers.

On the other hand, IndusInd Bank fell the most by 4.88 per cent after reports claimed that the bank has hired EY for forensic audit into ₹600 crore microfinance discrepancy.

The bank after the market hours informed exchanges that it has not engaged EY for a forensic audit as reported in the news item but its Internal Audit Department (IAD) is conducting a review of the MFI business to examine certain concerns.

> From the Sensex pack, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Eternal, Kotak Mahindra Bank, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were the major gainers. Power Grid was among the laggard

Power Grid, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, and Bajaj Finserv were among the laggards.

"Despite negative global cues related to Trump-Fed tensions, the national market has maintained its optimism. The RBI's relaxed liquidity coverage ratio guidelines, which are anticipated to enhance credit growth, boosted the finance sector. Foreign inflows have remained consistent for the fourth consecutive day, driven by a weakening dollar and competitive valuations.

"Additionally, domestic macroeconomic conditions are improving, with declining inflation and rising expectations of further rate cuts by the RBI, which are likely to lower costs and stimulate demand. These factors are expected to support corporate earnings in FY26," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited,

BSE smallcap gauge jumped 0.82 per cent and midcap index went up by 0.81 per cent. BSE sectoral indices, realty jumped 2.40 per cent, FMCG (1.87 per cent), consumer durables (1.43 per cent), healthcare (0.75 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.72 per cent) and bankex (0.61 per cent).

BSE teck, BSE Focused IT, power, utilities, IT and telecommunication were the laggards. As many as 2,477 stocks advanced while 1,504 declined and 149 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Since April 9, the BSE benchmark has jumped 5,748.44 points or 7.78 per cent, and the Nifty zoomed 1,768.1 points or 7.89 per cent. pause after a strong uptrend is normal. While strong domestic fundamentals continue to provide support, underperformance in the US markets is capping the upside momentum," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹1,970.17 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

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

INBRIEF

FRENCH AMBASSADOR VISITS GNDU FOR GOLDEN JUBILEE

Amritsar: French Ambassador Thierry Mathou visited Guru Nanak Dev University's Golden Jubilee Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, engaging with startups and faculty. The visit, lauded by university leadership, marked a key step in strengthening Indo-French innovation and academic collaboration.

VEDANTA CHAIRMAN HAILS RAJASTHAN

Jaipur: Vedanta Chairman Anil Agarwal urged accelerated industrial growth in Rajasthan, citing its vast mineral wealth and $196B GDP lag. He emphasized transforming resources into value-added products and praised the state's entrepreneurial spirit, reaffirming Vedanta's commitment to Rajasthan's economic ascent.

India finish third in ISSF World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lima

Indian shooters finished third at the ISSF World Cup after the pair of Prithviraj Tondaiman and Pragati Dubey failed to reach the medals round in the trap mixed team event, here on the final day.

Simranpreet Kaur Brar fetched India's final medal in the women's 25m pistol event on Monday, taking the country's tally to seven, including two gold, four silver and a bronze.

While the USA also ended with seven medals, they edged ahead of India to take second place, courtesy of a higher gold-medal count.

China finished on top of the standings with four gold, three silver and six bronze medals.

The standout performer for India was 18-year-old Suruchi Inder Singh, who claimed both of the country's gold medals. She outgunned Paris Olympics double medallist Manu Bhaker to win the 10m air pistol title before teaming up with Saurabh Chaudhary to secure gold in the mixed team event. In the trap mixed team event on Monday, Tondaiman and Dubey posted a combined score of 134 to finish eighth, while the other Indian pair of Lakshay and Neeru ended 13th with the total score of 128. Only the top four teams advance to the medal rounds.

K Sultan Singh, Secretary General, National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), seemed pleased with the young Indian shooters' show.

"It was a young squad and the exposure of going half-way around the world into alien conditions, adapting to the surroundings, the ranges, and then bringing out your best for India, will be an experience which will hold them in good stead," Singh was quoted as saying in a press release.

"Remember, the next LA Olympics will be a similar experience. Having said that, given the quality of competition, the squad as they have been doing generally over the years, performed splendidly," added Singh.

In the back-to-back World Cups in Argentina and Peru, Indian shooters reached a total of 32 finals, including medal matches in the mixed events and returned with 15 medals including six gold.

The 18-year-old Suruchi was the most successful, bringing home three gold and one bronze medal.

Arya Borse was the other World Cup debutant to shine, making it to three finals and returning with two silver medals in the mixed team rifle event.

"It gives us immense pleasure to look at the depth we have developed in the sport. There are so many accomplished international shooters who were back home and not part of this tour and still we have produced such results. This shows that Indian shooting is moving in the right direction," Singh said.

The next international assignment for Indian shooters will only for shotgun exponents who will compete in the Cyprus World Cup, beginning in the first week of May in Nicosia.

Pole vaulter Meena breaks own national record

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kochi

Extending his sparkling form this season, Madhya Pradesh pole vaulter Dev Kumar Meena broke his own national record with an effort of 5.35m on his way to gold medal-winning show on the second day of the National Federation Senior Athletics Championships here Tuesday.

The 19-year-old Meena dominated the men's pole vault event as he bettered his earlier national mark of 5.32m which he had scaled while finishing on top during the Uttarakhand National Games in February.

Tamil Nadu athletes M Gowtham (5.15m) and G Reegan (5.10m) took the silver and bronze respectively. Former national record holder S Siva — also of Tamil Nadu — finished fourth with an effort of 5.05m.

Meena, however, fell short of the Asian Championships qualification mark of 5.51m set by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI). Asian Championships will be held in Gumi, South Korea from May 27-31. Pole vault is one event in which there is a huge gap between Indian and international athletes.

The Asian record in men's pole vault is 6m, set by Ernest John Obiena of the Philippines in 2023, while the world record stands in the name of Swedish superstar Armand Duplantis at 6.27m.

Meena said he was a bit disappointed at missing out on the Asian Championships qualification mark.

"I wanted to raise the bar but there was light drizzle and my coach advised against continuing," Meena said.

On the tracks, there was intense competition in the women's 400m in which Uttar Pradesh's Rupal Chaudhary, one of the pre-race favourites, conserved every ounce of her energy to explode at the home stretch and win the gold with a time of 52.55 seconds.

Tamil Nadu's Asian Games medallist Vithya Ramraj (52.81 seconds), who had a good lead in the first 300m, couldn't switch gear in the last 100m. She was edged out by Rupal on the tape.

"I just wanted to catch up and shifted to another gear as the first 200m was slow," Rupal said after winning the gold medal.

Vithya said she paid the price for running at top gear in the first 300m.

Top six runners in the women's 400m dipped below the Asian Championships qualification time of 53.80 seconds.

Asian Games medallist Jyothi Yarraji too expressed her satisfaction in winning women's 100m hurdles gold with a time of 13.23 seconds and bettering the Asian Championships qualification time of 13.26 seconds.

Yarraji said she had pulled her right hamstring three weeks back and couldn't dip below 13 seconds.

"Kochi was my only chance for me to make the cut for the Asian Championships. Hence, I had no choice but to compete," said Yarraji who holds the national record of 12.78 seconds.

In men's 110m hurdles, national record holder Tejas Ashok Shirse of Maharashtra clinched the gold with a below-par time of 13.65 seconds. He missed the Asian Championships qualifying time of 13.56 seconds. His NR stands at 13.42 seconds.

National record holder high jumper Jeswin Aldrin is set to miss next month's Asian Championships in Korea as he was beaten by P David of Tamil Nadu for the gold.

David jumped 7.94m while Aldrin of Reliance produced an effort of 7.83m well below his national record distance of 8.42m.

The Asian Championships qualifying distance is set at 8.07m.

Meanwhile, Sarvesh Anil Kushare of Maharashtra won gold in men's high jump after clearing 2.26m. He bettered the Asian Championships qualifying mark of 2.23m.

I am desperate to make most of opportunity: Kujur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Perth

Drafted into the senior national women's team following an impressive performance in the Hockey India League with JSW Soorma Club, young midfielder Ajmina Kujur is desperate to make the most of the opportunity in the upcoming five-match away series against Australia.

India are set to play two games against Australia A on April 26 and 27, followed by three matches against the Australian senior team on May 1, 3, and 4 at the Perth Hockey Stadium.

"I am grateful that they have given me a chance to play now so I have to give my 100 per cent. Two years ago, I was in the senior team camp but I didn't make it into the team. Now that I have been given this chance, I am going to ensure I make the most of it," Kujur said in a Hockey India release upon landing in Australia.

> Training with the seniors has been a wonderful experience. I am learning a lot and I am excited to play with them ahead
>
> — AJMINA KUJUR, HOCKEY PLAYER

Kujur had been training in the senior national camp in SAI, Bengaluru, since March 23 in preparation for the tour.

"Training with the seniors has been a wonderful experience. I am learning a lot and I am excited to play with them ahead.

Everyone has enjoyed training with each other and now it is time for us to give it our best against Australia,' the 23-year-old said. "The senior players are really helpful, especially Sushila di (Sushila Chanu) who has supported me a lot during the camp. She tells me every time I make a mistake and has taught me how to play to my strengths. I also tend to think a lot when I make an error but the senior players have helped me cope with it and I am a lot more confident now."

At the start of the year, Kujur played a crucial role in the HIL (Women) as she featured in all the seven matches for runners-up side JSW Soorma Hockey Club.

Next, she played the 15th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship for Odisha and, although her team was knocked out in the pool stage of Division A, she dished out a stand-out performance in the midfield.

"I have been focusing on my fitness a lot more, which I think has really helped me improve my game," she said. Kujur started playing hockey at the age of 11.

Coming from Sundargarh district in Odisha which is famous for its rich hockey culture, the sport has always been a part of her life. She was first introduced to hockey when she saw her father and brothers play in their village.

Nottingham Forest beat Tottenham in Premier league

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

Nottingham Forest beat Tottenham 2-1 to move into third place in the Premier League and deepen the gloom at White Hart Lane.

Forest was clinical in front of goal and 2-0 up within 16 minutes against a team that showed many of the same failings that have dogged it all season.

Elliot Anderson's deflected shot bagged the opener after five minutes and Chris Wood added a second with a header 11 minutes later. Between the two, Wood had a goal chalked off for offside.

Although Spurs controlled possession in the second half it took it until the 87th minute to score, when Richarlison netted a header. The result was another disappointing one for Spurs fans, who booed their team off at the final whistle.

Although Ange Postecoglou has guided the team to a Europa League semifinal, Monday's defeat was its 18th in 33 Premier League games and left it in 16th place.

For Forest, meanwhile, it was a return to winning ways after defeats by Everton and Aston Villa.

In third place, it was one point above Newcastle, two above Manchester City and three above Chelsea and Aston Villa.

They will be joined in the top tier next season by Leeds United and Burnley, both of which guaranteed spots in the Premier League with wins.

Leeds beat Stoke City 6-0 and Burnley beat Sheffield United 2-1 to open unassailable leads in the second-tier Championship with only two games remaining.

The top two gain automatic promotion and the next four go into the playoffs for the last remaining spot.

The victories ensure another two US-owned clubs will enjoy the estimated revenue uplift of around $180 million that comes with a place in England's top tier.

Leeds is owned by the San Francisco-based 49ers Enterprises group, members of whom include American golfers Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas. Red Bull, the energy drink company whose other soccer interests include owning Leipzig in Germany, bought a minority stake in the club last May.

Burnley, meanwhile, has been majority-owned since 2020 by the ALK Capita investment group. The New York group is fronted by US Businessman Alan Pace and counts former NFL star JJ Watts as a notable shareholder.

Former players to hone coaching skills under foreign cocch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) wants former top Indian players to hone their coaching skills under foreign coaches and work with junior players but also strive to save the Indian style of play from fading.

BAI had advertised coaching position and received an overwhelming response with as many as 49 former players applying for the job.

"We invited applications from the top players who want to come into coaching with BAI and SAI. We got 49 applications out of which we have shortlisted 10-11. The list has gone to SAI for approval," BAI General Secretary Sanjay Mishra said in an interaction.

Mishra stressed the importance of preserving the traditional Indian playing style, which he believes is slowly fading due to the increasing influence of foreign coaches. "The Indian style is somewhat fading. Prakash (Padukone) sir used deception to win the All England, (Pullela) Gopichand played net game to win. But now, under foreign coaches, the Indian shuttlers are playing a more physical game, more like the Indonesian or Malaysian style."

"Maybe our physique also doesn't fully support that kind of play. After playing one or two games the body may not be able to sustain the tempo. So these Indian coaches can pass on our style apart from learning the foreign style which may give better results," he added.

BAI plans to rotate the shortlisted coaches across training centres. Initially they will be assigned to junior players at the National Centres of Excellence (NCoE). "These coaches will be rotated in the centres. We want these coaches to work with junior players at the NCoE before moving to elite coaching."

The BAI is also focussing on the development of junior players as it wants to create a "chain of talent".

> These coaches will be rotated in the centres. We want these coaches to work with junior players at the NCoE before moving to elite coaching
>
> — SANJAY MISHRA, BAI GENERAL SECRETARY

"Our focus at the NCoE is on junior players. Earlier, we would just hold 15-day camps before tournaments. But now, with the NCoE, they have a consistent space to train together," he said.

"It will take 3-4 years, but eventually, the question of 'who after Sindhu?' or 'who after Prannoy?' will be answered."

"In China if top two are not playing, the third string player also goes and wins a tournament. We want to develop a similar system, prepare a chain of players so that even if the top two are not available then third best player has the capability to reach the semifinals."

Mishra added that the top players will be given a choice to train across the three NCoEs in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Guwahati where one foreign coach will also be stationed.

Currently, Malaysia's Tan Kim Her works at NCoE in Hyderabad and Indonesian Irwansyah Adi Pratama in Bengaluru while South Korea's Park Tae-Sang, who coaches junior players, works in Guwahahti.

He also added that shuttlers will undergo fitness tests thrice a year.

Super Cup: Chennaiyin FC vs Mumbai City FC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bhubaneswar

Led by forward Connor Shields, Chennaiyin FC have named a strong squad for their Kalinga Super Cup 2025 opener against Mumbai City FC here on Wednesday.

The tournament winners will earn a qualifying play-off spot for the AFC Champions League Two.

Apart from Shields, head coach Owen Coyle has also named standout Indian performers Irfan Yadwad and Jiteshwor Singh, among others.

Wilmar Jordan Gil and Daniel Chima Chukwu lead the attack, with the former aiming to become the outright top-scorer of the Super Cup.

With eight combined goals across multiple editions, Jordan, the leading cup scorer in 2023, is a goal shy of Sunil Chhetri at the top of the all-time standings. Chennaiyin head into the tournament on the back of a convincing 5-2 win over Jamshedpur FC in their final league game in March.

The Marina Machans then spent three weeks training locally and played a friendly against East Bengal FC in Kolkata in the build–up to Super Cup.

"We're under no illusions how difficult the game will be–Mumbai City are a wonderful side, with some outstanding players, both foreign and domestic," said Coyle during a pre-match press conference.

"We're looking forward to the game, we've shown that when we are at our very best, we can stand toe-to-toe with the best teams. The Super Cup is a great opportunity for everybody because there is an AFC spot available."

Bangladesh fights back against Zimbabwe in test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Sylhet

Najmul Hossain Shanto hit 60 not out as Bangladesh fought back against Zimbabwe on a rain-truncated day three of the first cricket test.

Shanto's knock, which included seven boundaries, helped Bangladesh reach 194-4 in its second innings with a 112-run overall lead before bad light forced an early stumps Tuesday.

Jaker Ali is 21 not out.

After the entire first session was washed out due to a wet outfield, Bangladesh resumed on 57-1 — still 25 behind Zimbabwe — and appeared to be in control thanks to Shanto, its captain, and Mominul Haque.

But Zimbabwe struck back with the wickets of Mominul, who made 47 after 56 runs in the first innings, and Mushfiqur Rahim. Shanto and Ali stabilized the innings and have shared a 39-run partnership for the fifth wicket.

Bangladesh was dismissed for 191 in its first innings and trailed by 82 runs after Zimbabwe replied with 273 all out.

Fast bowler Blessing Muzarabani ended the day with 3-51. He struck in the seventh over Tuesday, dismissing Mahmudul Hasan Joy for 33 after a short-pitched delivery.

Hasan, who survived twice because of poor fielding by Zimbabwe on Monday, added just five runs to his overnight total.

Pacer Victor Nyauchi (1-28) was rewarded for his excellent line and length by dismissing Mominul after forcing the batter to play and edge behind. Mominul hit six fours in his 84 ball-47.

England tour: Around six names in contention for two reserve middle-order slots

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The national selection committee is expected to name the India and India A squad for the Test tour of England in the second week of May and there will be at least six contenders for a couple of reserve middle-order slots that would be up for grabs.

During the tour of Australia, the BCCI sent a 17-member team but for the five Tests against England, the final squad could be 15 or 16 as the India A contingent's presence makes it easier to call up anyone if the situation warrants.

However, the national selection committee under Ajit Agarkar might need to do some brainstorming when it comes to selecting the fringe players, especially the reserve batters from the pool that comprises domestic performers, some tried and tested names and a couple of names who are yet to realise their true potential.

If everyone is fit and fine, then skipper Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli select themselves. The all-rounder's slot belongs to Nitish Kumar Reddy for the time being. There would be a slot for one extra middle-order batter if it is a squad of 15. A couple could be added if they beef it up to 16 for the assignment that will start June 20 and wind up only in the first week of August.

While no one would like to zero in on them right now, there are at least six names that are expected to be discussed as per PTI's understanding. One, if not two, can find their place in the senior team while the rest will certainly be a part of the India A series against England Lions which will be held at the same time.

B Sai Sudharsan

With seven tons in 29 first-class games, Sai Sudharsan is a player to watch out for even in red ball cricket. He has already been a big hit for Gujarat Titans in the IPL. The reason why selectors will have a closer look at the southpaw is his tight technique and he also did well for India A in Australia before getting injured.

His biggest strength is that he can open the batting and also bat in the middle-order as per the team's requirement. He is a long-term prospect and at 23 and half years, he is ready for the big league.

Shreyas Iyer

Shreyas Iyer 2.0 is a player who cannot be ignored as he has come back to red ball cricket with a far more tighter technique and plays the short ball way better than he did during his earlier stint.

On the England tour, experience will be of premium and having played 14 Tests, including one in England in 2022, Iyer knows a thing or two about challenges. After being dropped from central contracts, he has played a lot of domestic cricket and looked at ease. Whether he will get another shot at red ball is the question.

Rajat Patidar

If one goes purely by statistics, then Patidar has probably blown away his chance at Test cricket by not even getting a single fifty against England at home. However, there are very few players outside the current India set-up who are as classy as the MP batter with strokes all round the park.

Add to it, his elegance which also at times can be his undoing. The Ranji season (less than 450 runs) didn't go as per plan but can Agarkar's committee show a leap of faith is the pertinent question.

Karun Nair

One of India's only two triple centurions in Test cricket, Karun Nair lost his way in the middle before finding his mojo for Vidarbha in what has been a dream domestic season with more than 850 first-class runs.

He had once tweeted a couple of seasons ago "Dear cricket, give me one more chance" and who knows the England tour could be that for him. In 2018, he didn't impress Ravi Shastri and Virat Kohli during net sessions and perhaps 2025 could be a different script for the Bengaluru man.

Devdutt Padikkal:

Another sinewy left-hander, who got a chance to make his Test debut in Australia due to the absence of Rohit Sharma in the first game. Padikkal did show glimpses of his talent in the second innings during an effective stand with Yashasvi Jaiswal. He has been in good touch in IPL and if he doesn't make the senior team cut, he will be in and around the India A team for sure.

Sarfaraz Khan

After he scored a 150 against New Zealand in Bengaluru in October, Sarfaraz should have sealed his place in the Test squad but some atrocious shot selection in the following Tests put him down in the pecking order. In Australia, he was more of a tourist and was not even discussed for a place in the first XI. However for the sake of continuity, selectors can still look at him.

SRH desperately need win against Mumbai Indians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Hyderabad

The misfiring Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) will hope for a happy homecoming when they take on a resurrected Mumbai Indians (MI) here on Wednesday, eyeing a much-needed victory to revive their campaign in the Indian Premier League.

With only two wins in seven outings, SRH are in a desperate situation. Their power-packed batting has let them down more often than not while their bowlers are not making any strong impression either. That SRH are a one-dimensional side has been proven by the manner in which it has struggled on slow and turning pitches. The Pat Cummins-led outfit has lost two home matches too.

Their four-wicket defeat to MI in Mumbai on a tricky Wankhede pitch with grip and turn was the most recent instance of their frailties being exposed in challenging conditions. SRH batters thrive on flat wickets which produce high-scoring contests and having a favourable surface against MI would give the them the best chance to find some momentum.

Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head will have their task cut out against MI given SRH's chances of winning hinge, to a large extent, on the left-handed opening pair. Their success in the powerplay defines the team's fortunes in a contest.

Abhishek smacked a 55-ball 141 in his last outing here against Punjab Kings to record the highest individual total for any batter in this IPL.

There will be, however, some concerns around Head who hasn't gone all guns blazing like he usually does and SRH will want their Australian star to be at the top of his game.

A defeat would put SRH in a tough situation. They will also have to be wary of their head-to-head record against Mumbai Indians. The team has won 10 out of their 24 matches while losing 14.

For Mumbai Indians, it is a perfect opportunity to test their resurgence in an away game before they return home to face Lucknow Super Giants in Mumbai on Sunday. Mumbai Indians have put their disappointing start to the IPL behind with three consecutive wins.

The five-time champions are coming off a massive nine-wicket hammering of Chennai Super Kings on a batting-friendly wicket on which they went over the line chasing a target near 180 with more than four overs to spare. Rohit Sharma's sensational 76 not out and Suryakumar Yadav's 68 not out with all his trademark shots coming out fluently signalled the return to form of MI's two batting pillars.

Tilak Varma did not get to bat against CSK but the left-hander has been in prime form, while Naman Dhir has shown signs of hitting his strides as a finisher alongside skipper Hardik Pandya.

Jasprit Bumrah has not been at his menacing best when it comes to taking wickets but the ace India bowler has begun nailing his line and lengths perfectly.

This could be a warning sign for the SRH batters given MI tend to use Bumrah more strategically, with Trent Boult and Deepak Chahar sharing the new ball.

The nature of the surface could have a bearing on the outcome with SRH's two wins here coming on flat decks ensuring run-fests in their contests against Rajasthan Royals and Punjab Kings earlier.

Teams

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD: Pat Cummins (c), Ishan Kishan (wk), Atharva Taide, Abhinav Manohar, Aniket Verma, Sachin Baby, Smaran Ravichandran, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Travis Head, Harshal Patel, Kamindu Mendis, Wiaan Mulder, Abhishek Sharma, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Mohammed Shami, Rahul Chahar, Simarjeet Singh, Zeeshan Ansari, Jaydev Unadkat, Eshan Malinga.

MUMBAI INDIANS: Hardik Pandya (c), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Robin Minz, Ryan Rickelton (wk), Shrijith Krishnan (wk), Bevon Jacobs, Tilak Varma, Naman Dhir, Will Jacks, Mitchell Santner, Raj Angad Bawa, Vignesh Puthur, Corbin Bosch, Trent Boult, Karn Sharma, Deepak Chahar, Ashwani Kumar, Reece Topley, VS Penmetsa, Arjun Tendulkar, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Jasprit Bumrah.

Kolkata Knight Riders struggling in IPL 2025: Morgan after loos to GT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kolkata

Defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) have struggled with batting issues throughout this IPL season and the changes made for the home game against Gujarat Titans (GT) were not effective, feels former captain Eoin Morgan.

KKR's loss to Gujarat Titans by 39 runs here on Monday was their second consecutive defeat in the tournament, third in the last five matches and overall fifth in eight games.

It has also been a season of struggle at home for the three-time champions who have also lost three of the four matches at the Eden Gardens.

"Kolkata Knight Riders has simply not bounced back as well as we would have liked them to. It's always a good sign for a strong team with a lot of character around, but they had the same failures that they've shown throughout the tournament," said JioStar expert Morgan.

"They made a couple of changes (against GT), mainly to try and gain some impetus in their batting line-up, and it didn't necessarily come off. Were the changes worth it? They'll sit back and say no."

Morgan said KKR failed to forge partnerships in chase of 199 as they finished at an ordinary 159 for eight.

"It was interesting to hear Ajinkya Rahane talk about 199 being a chaseable score because towards the back end of Gujarat Titans' innings, we thought the ball held up more than we expected (and) that made finding boundaries harder," Eoin Morgan said.

> They made a couple of changes (against GT), mainly to try and gain some impetus in their batting line-up, and it didn't necessarily come off
>
> — EOIN MORGAN, CRICKETER

Morgan added, "But there was no rhythm, no substantial partnerships - almost the polar opposite of what Gujarat Titans displayed."

Morgan was all praise for India and GT pacer Prasidh Krishna who delivered another vital spell of 4-0-25-2.

"He's the purple cap holder at the moment, and his rhythm just keeps getting better. We know he has that extra bit of pace to work with, but you have to admire the strength he brings during the middle phase of the game," he said.

"As a captain, having a seamer who can make that kind of impact in the middle overs is absolutely priceless."

"He now finds himself with the most wickets in this year's tournament — by some margin, actually, by four. It's great to see him growing as a player, evolving across formats, and now being rewarded with national honours as well," Morgan added.

Meanwhile, former India batter Ambati Rayudu praised B Sai Sudharsan, who made 36-ball 52 to take his tally past 400-run mark in this IPL, for playing the game in "traditional style".

Rayudu said, "It gives us such joy to watch him bat. As a classical batsman, he shows how the game can still be played in a traditional style - (to) use the pace of the ball, play under your eyes, keep it along the ground, and play smart cricket. Playing smart cricket brings runs and also builds confidence."

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.
Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

IDFC FIRST Bank

APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For immovable property)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 16.01.2025 calling upon the borrower, co-borrowers and guarantors **1.HARKESH SONWANI, 2.HEMANT SONWANI, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 3,89,783.36/- (Rupees Three Lac Eighty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Three And Thirty Six Paise Only) as on 15.01.2025 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Demand notice.**

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub – section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this **19th day of APRIL 2025.**

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **THE IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) for an amount of Rs. 3,89,783.36/- (Rupees Three Lac Eighty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Three And Thirty Six Paise Only) and interest thereon.**

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub – Section (8) Of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF MORTGAGE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF LAND KHASRA NO. 732/3, AREA 0.02 HECT., SITUATED AT MOUJA - BHALUCHUWA, P.H.NO. 24, R.I.C.- KHALLARI, TAHSIL- BAGBAHARA, DISTRICT- MAHASAMUND (C.G.) AND, BOUNDED AS: EAST: LAND OF BADU, WEST: LAND OF HORILAL, NORTH: GALI, SOUTH: LAND OF BADU

Date:19-04-2025
Place:CHHATTISGARH
Loan Account No: 71149308

Authorised Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)

Novak Djokovic returns to Madrid Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Madrid

Former champion Novak Djokovic has returned to the Madrid Open for the first time in three years in hopes of achieving his 100th tour-level title. Djokovic is seeded fourth in the same half of the draw as second-seeded Carlos Alcaraz, the home favorite who arrives at the Caja Magica this week with fitness concerns after reaching consecutive clay-court finals.

The 37-year-old Djokovic, a three-time champion in Madrid, hasn't played in the Spanish capital since losing to Alcaraz in the 2022 semifinals, their first meeting. Djokovic won his 99th title last August at the Paris Olympics. He has lost four finals since then, most recently last month in Miami.

The 100-title club features only Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103).

Over the last two weekends, Alcaraz has won the Monte Carlo Masters and lost in the Barcelona Open final, where he needed treatment on his upper right leg on Sunday.

"I'm confident it won't affect me in Madrid," he said. "That's what happens when you play so many matches and have so few days to rest. It's so demanding, and you have to give 100 per cent every day. Having played a tournament like Monte Carlo and arriving in Barcelona with few days to adapt is really tough."

Alcaraz said fellow Spaniard Rafael Nadal, a five-time winner in Madrid, wrote to him after the Barcelona final to encourage him and say he hoped he wasn't injured.

"I bow at the feet of Rafa because of what he did week after week," Alcaraz said. "You have to respect that."

Alexander Zverev, number 2 in the world after winning in Munich at the weekend, was the top seed in Madrid and Taylor Fritz was the third seed. Defending champion Andrey Rublev was the seventh seed. Djokovic has a 30-9 record in Madrid, with titles in 2011, 2016 and 2019. He beat his coach Andy Murray in the 2016 final.

Alcaraz won Madrid in 2022 and 2023.

Sabalenka leads women's draw

The women's draw has 29 of the top 30 players. Number 15 Barbora Krejcikova is missing because of an injury.

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka seeks her fourth final appearance in Madrid in five years.

She won the tournament in 2021 and 2023, and lost last year's final to Iga Swiatek, the second seed this week.

AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED (A Scheduled Commercial Bank)
Regd. Office: 19-A, Dhuleshwar Garden, Ajmer Road, Jaipur - 302001 (CIN:L36911RJ1996PLC011381)

APPENDIX IV [SEE RULE 8(I)] POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **AU Small Finance Bank Limited (A Scheduled Commercial Bank)** under the "Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest [Act, 2002 (54 of 2002)] and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice on the date as mentioned below calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice as per the details given in below table: -

Name of Borrower/Co-Borrower/ Mortgagor/Guarantor/Loan A/c No.	13(2) Notice Date & Amount	Description of Mortgaged Property	Date of Possession Taken
(Loan A/C No.) L9001060119816064 & L9001060822639151, Deepak Kashyap (Borrower), Ramesh Kashyap (Co-Borrower)	13-Dec-24 ₹ 4,68,246/- Rs. Four Lac Sixty-Eight Thousand Two Hundred Forty-Six Only & ₹ 3,08,026/- Rs. Three Lac Eight Thousand Twenty-Six Only as on 11-Dec-24	All That Part And Parcel Of Residential/Commercial Property Land / Building / Structure And Fixtures Property Situated At- Kh No 461/27, P C No 23, Vill & Th- Lormi, Dist- Mungeli, Chattisgarh **Admeasuring 80 Sq Mtr**	17-Apr-25
(Loan A/C No.) L9001060126317432, Kishan Lal Sharma (Borrower), Smt. Devika Sharma (Co-Borrower)	16-Jan-25 ₹ 2,87,724/- Rs. Two Lac Eighty-Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty-Four Only as on 10-Jan-25	All That Part And Parcel Of Residential/Commercial Property Land / Building / Structure And Fixtures Property Situated At-PLOT No 177/1 Sheet No 56,Plot Of Devika, Bagh Talab Raigarh, Dist-Raigarh, CG. **Admeasuring 722 Sq Ft.** East: Road, West: Land Of Kashi Maharaj, North: Road, South: Land Of Patel	18-Apr-25

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, therefore notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein above mentioned table in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said [Act 2002] read with Rule 8 of the said rule on the date mentioned in the above table. "The borrower's attention is Invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 (6), in respect of time available, i.e. 30 days from this intimation, to redeem the secured assets."

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **AU Small Finance Bank Limited (A Scheduled Commercial Bank)** for the amount and interest thereon mentioned in the above table.

sd/-
Date : 22/04/2025 Place : Chattisgarh Authorised Officer AU Small Finance Bank Limited

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai - 600031. TEL: +91 44 4564 4000 | FAX: +91 44 4564 4022.

IDFC FIRST Bank

APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For immovable property)

Whereas the undersigned being the authorized officer of IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with [rule 3] of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notices calling upon the Borrower/ Co-borrowers and Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the demand notice appended below within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice together with further interest and other charges from the date of demand notice till payment/realization.

The Borrower/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors and public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this notice.

LOAN ACCOUNT NUMBER	BORROWER/S/ CO-BORROWER/S & GUARANTORS NAME	DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGED PROPERTIES	DEMAND NOTICE DATE	DEMAND NOTICE OUTSTANDING AMOUNT (RS.)	DATE AND TYPE OF POSSESSION TAKEN
103100649	1. NARENDRA KUMAR YADAV, 2. REN BAI	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF ABADI LAND PART OF KH. NO. 825/197, PH. NO. 10, AREA ADMEASURING 917 SQ. FT., MOUJA LATABOD, RNM JHALMALA, TAH. & DIST. BALOD, LANDMARK BAZAR CHOWK, DURG, CHHATTISGARH - 491226, AND, **BOUNDED AS: EAST: HOUSE OF LAL SINGH/HIRAU, WEST: GALI, NORTH: HOUSE OF SANTOSH, SOUTH: ROAD**	30.11.2024	Rs. 8,21,991.44/-	17-04-2025 Physical Possession
57123748	1. ARUN KUMAR BANJARE, 2. NEHA BANJARE, 3. NOHAR RAM BANJARE	ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF LAND/PLOT AREA 0.01 HECT. (1076 SQ. FT.), ABADI LAND PART OF KH. NO. 497, SITUATED AT MOUJA: MUNDARA, P.H.NO. 40, R.I.C.-GUNDERDEHI, TEHSIL: GUNDERDEHI, DISTRICT: BALOD, CHHATTISGARH-491223, AND **BOUNDED AS: EAST: VACANT LAND, WEST: RASTA, NORTH: HOUSE OF BIRENDRA, SOUTH: HOUSE OF CHANDA BAI**	11.12.2024	Rs. 2,90,103.16/-	17-04-2025 Symbolic Possession

The Borrower/ Co-borrowers/ Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) for an amount mentioned in the demand notice together with further interest and other charges from the date of demand notice till payment/realization.

Authorised Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)

Date: 17-04-2025
Place: CHHATTISGARH

Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.
Registered Office at-27BKC, C 27, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai – 400 051 , Branch office- KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK 1st Floor, Pujari Complex, Behind Nirankari Furniture, Pandri, Raipur (CG) 492001

POSSESSION NOTICE
(For immovable property)
(As per Appendix IV read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

WHEREAS, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LIMITED, a banking company within the meaning of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 having it's Registered Office at 27BKC, C 27, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai – 400 051 , Branch office KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK 1st Floor, Pujari Complex, Behind Nirankari Furniture, Pandri, Raipur (CG) 492001, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (2) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Details of the Parties along with Mortgaged Property over the Possession taken by the Bank, is given below-

Name of Customer (Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s)) along with Loan Account Nos	Date of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) read with rule 9 of SARFAESI Act. Along with Amount in Rs.	Description of Immovable Property taken in to Possession (As per Appendix IV read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)	Date of Possession
LAP LOAN ACCOUNT NO. LAP18161620 & LAP-OD-114424969 (CRN NO. 325218062) **1. Mr. Sanjay Kumar Manjar s/o Mr. Rajkumar Manjar (Borrower) 2. Mr. Rajkumar Manjar s/o Mr. Tekchand Manjar (Co-Borrower/Mortgagor) 3. Mrs. Sapna Manjar w/o Mr. Rajkumar Manjar (Co-Borrower) All having address at: H. No. MIG B4,Rajendra Park Mahaveer Nagar, Ward No. 45 Amlidih Raipur CG 492001 4. M/s Shree Maruti Fashions Through it's Proprietor Mr. Sanjay Kumar Manjar 139, Ground floor, Shyam Square Pandri, Raipur CG. 492004**	**Demand Notice dated 9th January 2025** **Rs.32,28,207/- (Rupees Thirty Two Lacs Twenty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Seven Only) as on 7TH January 2025**	All The Piece and Parcel of The Residential Property owned by Mr. Rajkumar Manjar The property is Block No. MIG B – 4, at 'Rajendra Park' Mahaveer Nagar Mauja Purena Khasra no. 254/2, PHN 113, RIC Raipur – 1 Admeasuring Area 1500 SQ. FT. At RNM Raipur – 1 Within Limits of Raipur Chhattisgarh. And Bounded As: North: Land of Vikas Jain, South: Land of Vikas Jain, East: Other's Land, West: Road. (As Per The Sale Deed Dated 24TH February 2001)	**22nd April 2025**

The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said rules on the date as mentioned above in "Date of Possession" Column.

The Borrowers mentioned herein above in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to charge of KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LIMITED, for an amount as mention in this notice, along with future interest at contractual rate and substitute interest, incidental expenses, costs and charges etc. due w.e.f. the very next date of the status of outstanding amount date showing in the above mention details, till the date of full repayment and/ or realization. Further the borrower's attention invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Please note description of properties is as mentioned above.

Date: 23rd April 2025
Place: Raipur CG

Sd/- (Authorised Officer)
Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited