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VIJAYAWADA

North India turns into sauna

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orth India including Delhi and NCR faced an uncomfortable sultry Tuesday which felt like an unrelenting furnace, making outdoor conditions tough. Alarmingly, a study by the Council on Energy Environment and Water (CEEW), also revealed that the number of very hot days are increasing in India, but the number of very warm nights is increasing even more posing health risks. The study said that Delhi, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are among the 10 States with the highest heat risk. It further found that about 57 per cent of Indian districts, home to 76 per cent of the country's population, are currently at high to very high risk from extreme heat. Delhi and NCR clocked a hot and humid

day as a combination of clear skies and increased moisture on Tuesday making outdoor conditions uncomfortable for Delhiites. Although a maximum temperature of 41.8 degree Celsius, that 1.4 degree Celsius above the normal, was recorded on the day which is normal for this time of year, high relative humidity ranging from 43 per cent to 70 per cent gave Delhi a heat index (HI) or "real feel" temperature of 47-48 degree Celsius, a brutal combination of temperature and humidity that leaves the city feeling like a pressure cooker. Usually, May is typically one of the driest months for Delhi, accompanied by extreme high temperatures and dry conditions. But this year seems an exception.

The IMD data said the combined effect is a sultry atmosphere, with temperatures hovering around 40 degree Celsius, but increased moisture making it feel hotter and more oppressive. Interestingly, on paper, Delhi was supposed to have a "pleasant day on Tuesday.

The IMD had issued a yellow alert thunderstorms, dust storms, some strong surface winds, maybe a touch of lightning. But as any Delhiite could tell you, the city felt more like a 'tandoor.' Amid the prevailing hot and humid weather, the national capital's power demand clocked at 7,401 MW on Tuesday afternoon, the highest for the



A pedestrian carries an umbrella to shield herself from the scorching sun during a hot summer day in New Delhi on Tuesday

INDIA REPORTS MILD SURGE IN COVID-19 CASES

A new wave of COVID-19, driven by Omicron sub-variants JN.1, LF.7 and NB.1.8, is affecting parts of Asia, including India. India currently reports 257 active cases, mostly mild. Kerala leads with 69 new cases, followed by Maharashtra (44) and Tamil Nadu (34). Two COVID-19 linked deaths were reported in Mumbai, both involving patients with serious health issues. Symptoms remain similar to earlier Omicror strains, including sore throat, fever, and fatigue. Health experts warn of waning immunity and advise vigilance, mask wearing, and early testing, especially with pre-monsoon illnesses on the rise.

summer season, so far. The State Load Dispatch Centre Delhi's real-time data showed the peak demand was 7,401 MW at 3:11 pm. BSES discoms - BRPL and BYPL "successfully" met the peak power demand of 3,285 MW and 1,559 MW, respectively, on the day, said a company spokesperson. The BSES discoms were prepared to handle the growing power demand in the city, aided by over 2,100 MW of green power during' summer months, he added. The oppressive weather comes as the India Meteorological Department issues fresh warnings on the severity and persistence of heatwaves expected this summer.

Meanwhile, as part of the study, CEEW researchers developed a Heat Risk Index (HRI) for 734 districts, using 40 years of climate data (1982-2022) and satellite images to study heat trends, land use, water bodies and green cover. They also included data on population, buildings, health and socioeconomic factors, along with night temperatures and humidity, for a comprehensive picture of heat risk.

"About 57 per cent of Indian districts, home to 76 per cent of India's total population, are currently at 'high' to 'very high' heat risk. It also found that the number of very warm nights has increased faster than that of very hot days in the last decade.

Very warm nights and very hot days are defined as periods when minimum and maximum temperatures rise above the 95th percentile threshold, i.E., what was normal for 95 per cent of the time in the

Three years practice must for judicial services: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

n a significant verdict, the Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered that a candidate should have at least three years of practice as a lawyer to enter judicial services. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih reaffirmed the importance of courtroom exposure for prospective judges. The appointment of fresh law grad-

uates has led to several difficulties, as noted by multiple high courts. Practical experience in court is essential for ensuring judicial efficiency and competence," the CJI said while pronouncing the judgement. The bench said the min-

imum of three years of legal practice is

mandatory for appearing in the judicial

service examination for entry-level civil

judge posts that are lower division cadre. The CJI said allowing fresh law graduates direct entry into the judiciary has created practical challenges, as reflected in reports submitted by various High

Courts. "All the high courts and the State Governments in the country shall amend the relevant service rules to the effect that candidates desirous of appearing in the examination for the post of Civil Judge (Junior Division) must have practiced for a minimum period of three years to be eligible for the said examination," the SC ordered. Judgment said that such amend-

The experience of various high courts has also shown that such fresh law graduates, upon their entry in judicial service, begin to show behavioural and temperament problems

- SUPREME COURT

ments to the rules must be carried out by high courts within three months, and that these amendments must then be approved by the State Governments within a further period of three months. The SC, however, clarified that this requirement of having at least three years of legal practice for entry to judicial service will not apply to ongoing judicial recruitment but will only apply prospectively.

The judges from the very day on which they assume office have to deal with the questions of life, liberty, property and reputation of litigants. As rightly observed, neither knowledge derived from books nor pre-service training can be an adequate substitute for the first-hand experience of the working of the court-system and the administration of justice.

"This is possible only when a candidate is exposed to the atmosphere in the court by assisting the seniors and observing how the lawyers and the Judges function in the court. The candidate should be equipped to understand the intricacies of the functions of a Judge. The experience of various high courts has also shown that such fresh law graduates, upon their entry in judicial service, begin to show behavioural and temperament problems," the judgment reads.

Centre, petitioners clash over Waqf in SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Centre on Tuesday urged the Supreme Court to confine the hearing on pleas challenging the validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act for passing interim orders to three issues, including the power to denotify properties declared as "waqf by courts, waqf-by-user or waqf by deed". A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih was asked by Solicitor General (Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, to confine the proceedings identified by the earlier bench.

The court had earmarked three issues. We had filed our response to these three issues. However, the written submissions of the petitioners now exceed several other issues. I have filed my affidavit in response to these three issues. My request is to confine it to the three issues only," argued Solicitor General (SG). SG's submission was opposed by senior advocates Kapil

Sibal described the law as a "complete departure from historical legal and constitutional principles" and a means to "capture wagf through a non-judicial process"

Sibal and Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for those challenging the provisions of the 2025 law, that there cannot be any piecemeal hearing. One of the issues is the power to denotify properties declared as waqf by courts, waqf-by-user or waqf by

The second issue raised by the petitioners relates to the composition of State waqf boards and the Central Waqf Council, where they contend only Muslims should operate except ex-officio members. The third issue relates to a provision that says a waqf property will not be treated as a waqf when the collector conducts an

inquiry to ascertain if the property is Government land. "There is a presumption of constitutionality in favour of every statute. For interim relief, you have to make out a very strong and glaring case. Otherwise, presumption of constitutionality will be there," the CJI said when senior advocate Kapil Sibal, leading the charge against the legislation. Sibal described the law as a "complete departure from historical legal and constitutional principles" and a means to "capture waqf through a nonjudicial process".

'This is a case about the systematic capture of waqf properties. The Government cannot dictate what issues can be raised," Sibal said. Sibal said the amended law enables a systematic expropriation of waqf properties through executive means, bypassing due judicial process and moreover, waqf properties can become nonwaqf ones that too by an executive order denying the right to access courts by the aggrieved parties.

The ByStander





Astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar passes away

TN RAGHUNATHA Mumbai

enowned Astrophysicist Jayant Vishnu Narlikar - who along Wishnu Natikai — ,,,,,, with British mathematician and astronomer Fred Hoyle proposed the theory of conformal gravity as an alternative to the Big Bang theory — passed away at his residence in Pune on Tuesday.

Recognised internationally for his pioneering contributions to cosmology and for propounding an alternative model to the widely-accepted Big Bang theory, Prof Narlikar was 86.

He is survived by his three daughters Geeta, Girija and Leelavati, all of whom have followed their father's suit and opted for research careers in Science. His wife Mangala Rajwade, a PhD in Mathematics, had died a few years ago.

Govt quarters sublet in city Drive launched to evict illegal occupants

he General Administration Department and other government agencies on Tuesday began a drive to evict the occupants from government quarters in State capital which have been illegally occupied or rented out.

Notably, several government quarters, meant for officials, have been taken over either forcibly or are being sublet illegally in the government colonies.

During the drive, a hotel operating on the Rajmahal to Master Canteen stretch was found operating from a government quarter.

Similarly, quarter number VA 25/3, for instance, has been turned into a private warehouse for construction materials like cement and rods. Liquor bottles were seen stacked inside. Sources said an influential person allegedly set up a workshop inside the premises, manufacturing manhole covers and selling them back to the government.

"Subas Babu is the supervisor of the unit. Though we know this property belongs to the government, we four people are living here and working in the unit," said a worker.

Similarly, quarter number VA 23/4, originally allocated to the Hind Mazdoor Sangh office, was occupied by a woman who uses the space to sell leaf plates and other items. She has allegedly encroached on the entire premises. As per reports, out of 765 government quarters in Unit-2, 250 lie vacant, and more than a hundred are under illegal occupation. Locals allege that influential persons have occupied these government accommodations and are running their own businesses or staying there rent-free.

Odisha caste census to prioritise backward classes

BIP slams Opposition for 'confusing people

PNS Bhubaneswar

he forthcoming caste census is set to prioritise backward classes, a decision that has ignited debates over the implications for their reservation rights, informed BJP State president Manmohan Samal on Tuesday.

Moreover, Samal criticised opposition BJD and Congress for their alleged confusing stance on the caste census. He accused them of opposing the initiative habitually without considering their own past actions.

Samal alleged that despite being in power for an extended period, they (BJD and Congress) failed to make any significant impact on the issue. He further accused them of 'shedding crocodile tears', implying insincere concern.



Emphasising the progress made under the current BJP government, Samal stated that they have delivered on their promises related to reservation as outlined in their manifesto.

"The BJP has consistently supported the Mandal Commission," he affirmed.

"What was their (BJD) role in it? Those who were only giving speeches don't have the moral courage to tell anything about the matter. Their late leader Biju Patnaik had even moved the Supreme Court against the recommendation

of the Mandal Commission. Later, they only made a campaign of supporting it," he claimed

"Though Congress and BJD were in governance for a long time, they could not implement it. BJP is consistently in support of the Mandal Commission. And when we have started its implementation process, they are trying to confuse people by giving different kinds of comments," said

The BJD and the Congress are yet to respond to Samal's allegations,

in Cabinet, empowers ministers RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar directed to take timely action directed to take timely action

Odisha curtails secretaries' role

The Odisha Government has reduced the role of departmental secretaries in Cabinet meetings, vesting greater decision-making authority in the hands of ministers. A notification to this effect was issued on Tuesday by the Parliamentary Affairs Department following the approval of Chief Minister Mohan

the importance of adhering strictly to Part III of the Rules of Business, which governs Cabinet procedures. As per the new norms, Ministers and Ministers of State will now play a more decisive role in Secretaries will offer inputs only when specifically asked.

Notices for Cabinet meetings are to be circulated at least five days in advance, although the Chief Minister may relax this in urgent cases. To comply with Instruction No 17(i) of the Rules, no Cabinet memorandum will be accepted beyond 5.00 pm three working days before the meeting. Departments have been

to obtain necessary approvals within this deadline.

Charan Majhi.

The notification reiterates Cabinet deliberations while

Departments must prepare a Cabinet memorandum outlining key facts and decisions when proposing any matter for discussion. These papers must be circulated to the Chief

Minister, relevant Ministers or Ministers of State and the Secretary to the Cabinet. Agenda papers, once approved by the Chief Minister, must reach all concerned two working days before the meeting. No case will be taken up without prior circulation, unless permitted by the Chief Minister.

The role of Secretaries inside the Cabinet Room has also been redefined. Only the Chief Minister, relevant Cabinet Ministers or Ministers of State and the Secretary to the Cabinet are allowed inside during discussions. Departmental Secretaries will be seated in a separate room and may be called in only when required to assist.

Once a decision is made by the Cabinet, the concerned minister will be responsible for implementing it.

Andhra pushes for Polavaram project completion by 2026

Odisha raises alarm **RAJEEV RATHAN** Bhubaneswar

▲ he Andhra Pradesh Government has intensified efforts to complete the controversial Polavaram irrigation project by 2026 with Rs 59,36 crore allocated by the Union Government in the 2025-26 budget. Further Budgetary Resources for Infrastructure Development in Government (BRIDG) arrangement have been earmarked for the project between 2025 and 2027.

Amid the Centre's push, Odisha has once again raised concerns over the potential impact of the project, particularly on its southern district of Malkangiri. The State alleges that the Union Government is ignoring repeated warnings regarding the threat of massive backwater submergence.

In January, a Central team from the National Project Construction Committee under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti visited five States, urging fast-tracked construction and uninterrupted funding. However, Odisha's apprehensions about displacement, environmental impact and submergence of tribal villages remain unaddressed.

According to former Chief Engineer Lalit Patnaik, the Polavaram dam stands at 150 feet and water levels are expected to rise by nearly 50 meters above the standard flood level. "The worst-hit area will be near Motu in Malkangiri district, where large tracts of land are vulnerable to submergence," he

Senior BJD leader and former MP Prasanna Acharya lashed out at the Centre, saying, "Odisha is being completely ignored. The Union Government continues to bulldoze ahead without respecting the federal structure. Our repeated appeals have been met with silence."

Echoing similar concerns, Congress Legislature Party Leader Ramchandra Kadam demanded immediate action from the State Government. "The displacement of thousands and environmental degradation in tribal belts cannot be overlooked," he said.

In response, Odisha Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan assured that the State Government would take all necessary measures. "We

will present a detailed report on Polavaram's impact on Odisha at the upcoming meeting chaired by the Prime Minister. Odisha's interests will not be compromised," he

Despite Andhra Pradesh's Centre-approved surveys in Dhengana and surrounding areas, no such effort has been initiated on the Odisha side to assess submergence. Experts have warned that with 70% of the project already completed, the threat to Malkangiri has grown significantly.

The Polavaram project, declared a National Project in 2009, continues to stir political controversy with Odisha's Opposition accusing the Union Government of acting with bias and indifference.

A court in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to five persons in the sensational 2023 Sushant Nayak murder case at the GED Slum near Unit 1 under the Capital police station.

Additional District Judge Court, Bhubaneswar Bandana Kar sentenced all five accused Vishal Nayak, Sujit Nayak, Ajit Nayak, Tikili Nayak and Subash Nayak to life imprisonment.

The court also directed them to pay a fine of Rs 25,000 and in default to undergo another year's imprisonment.

Sushant Nayak, a housekeeping staff at Central Horticultural Experiment Station (CHES) in Aiginia, was hacked to death at GED Slum in the wee hours of May 24, 2023.

According to reports, Vishal, Sujit, Ajit, Tikili and Subash chased Sushant while he was returning home after dropping his wife, a BMC worker, and attacked him with swords and other lethal weapons. Reports said Sujit's nephew Vishal had allegedly molested Sushant's niece in April 2023.

The police investigation revealed that Sujit and his relatives committed the gruesome murder after Sushant's family lodged acomplaint at the Capital police station on April 25,

Sujit, a resident of Nayagarh district, had fled along with other accused after killing Sushant. The police launched a hunt and nabbed all five from Cuttack, Nayagarh and Khordha districts.

YouTuber Priyanka under probe in espionage-linked case

The investigation into Puri-based YouTuber Priyanka Senapati (21), allegedly linked to Jyoti Malhotra, a content creator, recently arrested on espionage charges is intensifying. Puri Superintendent of Police Vinit Agrawal confirmed on Tuesday that the probe is ongoing and being conducted with utmost diligence.

"We are still in the process of investigation and have not yet reached any conclusion. Once all inquiries are complete, a detailed report will be shared," Agrawal said.

Authorities are scrutinising



every angle of the case in coordination with multiple Central and State agencies to ensure a thorough and transparent investigation. "We remain

in contact with all relevant departments and will provide information as requested," he added.

A key development in the

case is the discovery of a drone video that Priyanka had posted on her Instagram account. The video, which was deleted shortly after posting, is now under detailed examination by the police to trace its origin and intent.

The investigation has broadened to include an audit of Priyanka's social media accounts and the financial records of her and her family. "All possible leads are being explored," the SP confirmed.

Priyanka Senapati and her family have reportedly been cooperative throughout the investigation. She continues to reside in Puri as the probe ad-

4 cops reinstated in Army officer torture case

But IIC's suspension continues

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

Udisha Police headquarters on Tuesday revoked the suspension orders of four police personnel who were earlier implicated in the alleged custodial torture of an Indian Army officer and his fiancée at the Bharatpur police station in Bhubaneswar.

Sub-Inspector Baisalini Panda, Assistant Sub-Inspectors Sagarika Rath and Salilamayee Sahoo and Constable Balaram Hansda

have been reinstated. However, the suspension order against then Inspectorin-Charge Dinakrushna Mishra remains in force as the investigation against him continues.

Notably, the controversial incident dates back to the night of September 14, 2024 when the Army officer and his female companion had approached the Bharatpur PS to report a road rage incident. The couple had allegedly been harassed by a group of youths on the road.

Instead of addressing their complaint, the police allegedly subjected both the officer and his fiancée, a

practicing lawyer to physical assault. The woman was reportedly stripped, beaten and later jailed on unsubstantiated charges. She sustained serious injuries, including a dislocated jaw and hip and was treated at AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

Following public outrage and pressure from the defence community, the government had ordered a judicial probe into the matter. Retired Justice Chittaranjan Das headed the inquiry.

The reinstatement of the four officials came amid demands from the Odisha Police Association, which had opposed the suspensions and called for a fair hearing pending the outcome of the inquiry.

Meanwhile, former IIC Dinakrushna Mishra has undergone a series of scientific tests, including polygraph and narcoanalysis, as part of the ongoing investigation. His suspension continues, reflecting the gravity of the allegations against him.

The case had drawn nationwide attention with human rights groups, the Army fraternity and legal experts demanding strong action to prevent custodial excesses and uphold accountability within the police force.

CSIR-IMMT, NTPC Mining Ltd sign pact

For promoting critical minerals research, devt

PNS Bhubaneswar

 Γ he Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the NTPC Mining Limited (A wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC Limited), to pursue research initiatives of direct interest and relevance to coal, mineral processing and extraction industry, including critical minerals.

The MoU was signed by Dr Ramanuj Narayan, Director,

CSIR-IMMT and Naveen Jain, CEO, NTPC Mining Limited, co-ordinated by Dr Kali Sanjay, Head, Hydro, Bio and Electrometallurgy Department and Business Development from CSIR-IMMT, and Dhananjay Shrikhande, General Manager (Technical Services and Commercial) and Anil Kumar Soni, Additional General Manager (Technical Services and Business Development) from NTPC Mining

NTPC Mining Limited has emerged as a key contributor to India's energy security, supplying nearly 15% of NTPC's coal requirement in FY 2024-25, with over 134 million tonnes of coal produced since its inception in 2018. The signing of the MoU with the CSIR-IMMT reflects NTPC Mining's commitment to innovation-

led sustainable growth. CSIR-IMMT brings decades of experience in critical minerals research and technology commercialization, delivering advanced solutions to the mining and materials

As part of the collaboration, the NTPC Mining delegation visited CSIR-IMMT's critical minerals technology development facilities and deliberated on focussed R and D and technological collaboration on critical minerals vital for Atmanirbhar Bharat and

Scuba Diving Training Centre at Ramchandi soon

 ${f A}$ Scuba Diving Training Centre at Ramchandi in Puri district will be established by the Odisha Government to bolster disaster response capabilities and promote adventure tourism. The centre will function under the Odisha State Waterways and Life Guard (OSWALI).

The proposed centre will offer specialised training to personnel engaged in emergency rescue operations, particularly for underwater and deep-sea scenarios. The government has earmarked Rs 5 crore for the project, with the Odisha Police Housing Corporation tasked with executing the infrastructure works.

The facility will include a diving tank with a glass observation panel, a decompression chamber and a training tower. It will be managed by the OSWALI under the Fire Service Directorate.

Officials said the unit would be strategically located near the Kushabhadra river mouth and the Bay of Bengal offering practical training in real water conditions. At present, OSWALI functions without a dedicated campus, offering limited training since 2014. The upcoming facility is set to bridge that gap and transform into a centre of excellence for aquatic rescue and diving operations.

Trainers will utilise the nearby river and sea for field exercises while infrastructure at the centre will enable simulation-based training. Fire Service personnel, who were earlier sent to naval institutions for scuba training, will now be trained within the

The project, officials added, would not only bolster the state's disaster preparedness but also pave the way for adventure tourism and watersports. The facility is expected to be operational by

'Advanced Materials in Energy, Env' conf at IIT



35 oral presentations, 50 posters presented during 3-day event

PNS Bhubaneswar

 ${f A}$ n international conference on "Advanced Materials in Energy, Environment and Sustainability" (AMEES-2025) was held at the Indian Institute of Technology Bhubaneswar, in association with Materials Research Society of India (MRSI) during May16-18.

The conference was inaugurated by Dean (Continuing Education), IIT Bhubaneswar Prof V Pandu Ranga and MRSI-Bhubaneswar Chapter Prof Kulamani Parida. Prof Snehasis Chowdhuri, HOD, Department of Chemistry, School of Basic Sciences, IIT Prof Umaprasana Ojha, Convenor and Dr Palas Roy, Co-Convenor also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the

Several practicing researchers from premier research institutes of the country and abroad with an exceptional track record, participated in the conferences and presented their research outputs in the key areas of renewable energy, water purification, solar photovoltaics, environment restoration, energy storage devices and nanotechnology etc.

More than 35 oral presen-

tations and 50 posters were presented during the threeday event. Several awards from the American Chemical Society and Royal Society of Chemistry were distributed to the poster participants in recognition of their efforts. The Anusandhan National Research Foundation of Government of India financially supported the conference along with several equipment and chemical suppliers.

The conference was aimed to

Forest Rights claims rejected

tribal families face eviction threat State's 1

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

Over 1.44 lakh tribal and traditional forest-dwelling families in Odisha face the risk of eviction after their claims for forest land rights were rejected by district-level committees under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. The move has sparked widespread concern across tribal regions of the

As per official data from the uled Castes Development Department, a total of 1,44,175 individual forest rights claims have been turned down by February this year. These include 73,838 claims by members of Scheduled Tribes and 70,266 by Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs), leaving tens of thousands vulnerable to displacement from lands they have inhabited for generations.

Among the worst-hit districts are Gajapati with 16,585 rejected claims, Nuapada with 16,367, Sundargarh with 16,320, Keonjhar with 15,270, Sambalpur with 14,853, and Mayurbhanj with 8,729. Significant numbers have also (4,355), Balangir (4,130), Cuttack (3,583), Malkangiri (2,976), Jajpur (2,787) and Kendrapada (2,545), with reiections recorded across other

The Forest Rights Act was enacted in 2006 to correct historical injustices by granting legal recognition to forest dwellers' traditional rights over forest land. Section 4(5) of the Act specifically prohibits the eviction of forest dwellers until the entire process of recognition and verification of their rights is complete. However, tribal rights groups allege that this provision is being ignored, putting thousands at risk of forcible re-

A deeper analysis of the rejected claims reveals troubling grounds. Over 94,000 families were denied rights on the basis that they occupied forest land after the December 13, 60,000 were rejected for failing to provide three-generation proof of residence. Another 27,567 claims were turned down on the grounds of nonforest land occupation while 2,125 applications were reiected due to lack of supporting documents. An additional 25,641 claims were dismissed citing vague "other reasons," sparking allegations of arbitrary and opaque procedures.

Adding to the complexity, recent policy changes at the national level have not been taken into account. In January 2024, the President of India approved the inclusion of two new communities and 23 synonymous groups into the

sult, many applicants who were previously categorized as OTFDs are now eligible for recognition as Scheduled Tribes. Rights groups argue that the government's failure to update its records and reevaluate claims accordingly has unjustly disqualified thousands of rightful claim-

"This is not just a bureaucratic failure; it's a moral and legal betrayal," said a tribal "The law was enacted to restore dignity and justice to forest dwellers. But instead, we are witnessing another wave of historical injustice."

According to official fig-

cially in light of recent legal and demographic shifts, has led to growing calls for a fresh state-wide survey and urgent intervention by both the State and Union Governments. Unless the government halts the eviction process and initiates a thorough re-verifisoon face a grave humanitar-

vidual forest land rights were

submitted to Gram Sabhas

across the state by December

2024. The rejection of more

than one-fifth of these, espe-

Bhubaneswar, ian crisis, one that threatens to displace lakhs of forest dwellers and undermine the very spirit of the Forest Rights importance of this conference.

contribute towards the promotion of renewable energy utilisation, environmental restoration and adoption of sustainable practices of the nation.

To tackle heat woes in BBSR

Reinvent natural streams, thick green cover in city



PIYUSH RANJAN ROUT

With early summer arrival and day temperature on a constant rise, Bhubaneswar has already experienced the worst so far this year. Early summer in fact has been a trend for the city. Population rise, infrastructure expansion, heavy constructions, vehicular movements, loss of urban than surrounding rural regions. sponges and green areas have only

added to the woes. Bhubaneswar is actually trapped inside the urban heat island effects. This happens when cities trap more heat than its sur-



SWAPNA SARITA SWAIN

rounding. Roads, buildings, and pavements soak up sun's energy during the day and release it slowly at night. Trees and open land, which naturally keep places cool, are often missing in the urban areas. As a result, Bhubaneswar's temperatures can be several degrees hotter

Extreme heat events are projected to become more frequent and severe with continued climate change, and public policy along with public health efforts are appropriately needed to focus on

viduals better prepare for such

In simple terms, if you don't plan and manage cities then you will be left behind in the race towards economic prosperity of people living in cities.

Cities and towns are currently being tested to the extreme heat wave the way they face health, social and economic crises. Arrival of early summer opened up our vulnerabilities as to how illequipped our cities are planned and managed. Its impact is showing the extent to which each city is able to function or not especially

during times of crisis. Cities trying to be more resilient expanded their borders, developed early warning facilities, opened larger and less cluttered public spaces and deployed professionals with specialized expertise, from surveyors to architects to engineers to urban planners. Similarly, cities across the globe are now taking appropriate steps to bounce back from heat wave However,

Bhubaneswar still is going by the old traditional approach of dealing with heat waves by shutting down educational institutions, issuing advisories, creating artificial sheds on major traffic junctions

At the individual level, air conditioning provides the most obvious protection against extreme heat, but access to air-conditioned spaces is far from ubiquitous, particularly more at public places. Air conditioning can be provided in multiple settings, including homes, places of work, and public spaces.

In various parts of the globe, cooling centers have become an important place to seek refuge from the heat for at least some of the hundreds of thousands of residents that do not have access to air conditioning in their homes or place of work. Cooling centers are a common, low-cost extreme heat intervention, currently being used in many major cities across the globe under the common-sense premise that providing relief to people from the heat and distributing water help reduce the risk of heat-related morbidity and mortality. However, this intervention deserves further scrutiny in order to determine how to optimise its effectiveness and guide appropriate implementation.

Distribution of drinking water, shutting downs schools, restricting working hours under the sun, and carrying water bottles are just the tip of the iceberg that local leaders are doing but innovation is the key to running cities. Because the way cities are being governed will drastically change, of course for the best interest of in-

These innovations will see new building design that would function like passive cooling systems, encourage the work from home culture, adding more AC buses to the existing fleets etc. Green roofing canopy trees over roads also are quite useful. Cycling is a viable

option to support mobility. South Korean capital Seoul has created many public plazas like water park for the public, integrated trees to cool the streets,

more buses running without fossil fuels, cycling favourable streets, dedicated air conditioning buses, long canopy-based trees and revitalisation of rivers inside the city for amusement as well as cool-

In Bhubaneswar, public spaces are the heart of the city. Parks, plazas, sidewalks, and squares-they're where people gather. They are more than just "empty" land; these are places that make a city feel alive and inclusive. There is a saying 'A city without good public spaces is just a collection of buildings. A city with them is a home.' Hence Bhubaneswar must integrate these sites with canals or ponds or foun-

tains for making them cool. Bhubaneswar used to have a history of having extensive trees and vegetation. The trees are the first line of defence against urban heat. Bhubaneswar must bring back its lost defence system as street trees are not just decorative, they are cli-

mate champions. Together with Bhubaneswar once used to have many natural urban sponges along

with a series of parallel streams flowing from Chandaka forest in west into the Gangabati river on the east, making it a valley of wonder. But those are now the city's archives. Which Bhubaneswar needs to reinvent the natural streams and urban sponges with artificial interventions. Such as constructing a series of canals parallel to major streets to rejuvenate urban biodiversity just like irrigation canals for agri-

the heat island effect. This is a pressing issue that exacerbates the challenges posed by climate change. By implementing effective strategies, mitigation Bhubaneswar can become more livable and resilient. Public policy collaborative efforts between governments, communities, and individuals are essential to cool our cities and protect public health.

Bhubaneswar is at the centre of

(Dr Rout and Swain are faculty members in Department of Planning, Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR). They *can be reached in X @piyushrout)*

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Demolish cottage on Deomali: NGT to Odisha Govt sion by the Supreme Court. It held for kidnapping, attacking BJD leader him. Rohit suffered serious injuhim. Rohit suffered s

environmental

PNS Bhubaneswar

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Odisha government to demolish a cottage constructed on Deomali, the State's highest peak in Koraput district, citing violations of environmental laws. Deomali, a proposed reserve forest rich in biodiversity and bauxite deposits, is protected under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the



Forest Rights Act, 2006.

The Wildlife Society of Orissa (WSO), represented by environmentalist Biswajit Mohanty and advocate Shankar Prashad Pani, filed a petition with the NGT, arguing that the eco-tourism

project lacked necessary approvals and violated sustainable development norms.

The State claimed exemption under the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023, but the NGT noted that the amendment is under suspenobserving that the project area of 5.93 hectares exceeds the one-hectare limit allowed for forest land diversion under the Act. The Tribunal found that the

construction used conventional materials, contradicting the State's claim of ecofriendly building practices. It ordered the State to either secure central approval within three months or demolish the structure and restore the land to its natural state, prohibiting any further non-forest use.

A man was arrested on Tuesday in Jajpur district on the charges of assaulting and kidnapping a BJD leader on Monday evening.

The arrested person has been identified as Deepak Deo (40) of Baragadia village. He, along with four miscreants, forcefully kidnapped and attacked Rohit Khuntia (30), a BJD youth leader of Damodarpur village under Sukinda police station. "The accused has been booked on



charges of kidnapping and attacking Rohit. Other accused fled from their villages. We are raiding their hideouts to nab them," said Sukinda police station IIC Bilwamangal Sethi.

The mother of Rohit lodged an FIR in Sukinda police station on Monday night and alleged that Deepak and others assaulted his son with iron rods at Sukinda Chhak after kidnapping ries in the attack. He was first admitted to the Community Health Center (CHC) at Danagadi. Later, he was shifted to SCB MCH, Cuttack as his condition grew serious, added the police officer.

The attack on the BJD youth leader snowballed into a fullblown political controversy in the area as BJD leader and former MLA of Sukinda Pritiranjan Ghadei blamed the BJP supporters for their role in the attack which was vehemently denied by the latter.

Biker attacked, robbed in Naygarh

Miscreants torch bike before fleeing

PNS Nayagarh

A biker was attacked and robbed by a group of miscreants along the Daspalla-Bhanjanagar road near Sakeni village in Nayagarh district on Tuesday morning.

The attackers also set the bike on fire before fleeing the

The victim was identified as Jatia Behera of Khandapada village in Daspalla. He was on his way to Bhanjanagar for work when the incident occurred. Around eight unidentified miscreants intercepted him near Sakeni, attacked him with a blade and snatched away cash and belongings.

Locals found him lying in a pool of blood and rushed him to a nearby hospital. His condition was stated to be stable by doctors.

Following a formal complaint, police have launched an investigation into the incident. Search operations are underway to nab the culprits.

"We were three people travelling on a bike when the miscreants in an SUV intercepted us near Sakeni area. They thrashed me and attacked with blades before decamping with the cash with me," Behera said Normal life disrupted as 12-hr Talcher Bandh held

Coal production, dispatch hit **DHIRAMOHAN RAY TALCHER**

Normal life in the Talcher industrial belt in Angul district was disrupted on Monday during the 12-hour bandh in protest against the gang rape and brutal murder of Subhadra Padil, a Dalit girl belonging to Kaniha block.

The bandh call was given by various social organisations, including the Talcher Dalit Mahasangha, demanding swift action in bringing the culprits to book. Shops and business establishments of Talcher and Kaniha areas were closed, while commercial vehicles including buses and trucks were off roads through-



out the day. Government and private offices, banks and other financial institutions too downed their shutters during the strike. While NTPC, Kaniha plant continued to function normally, coal production and dispatch from MCL mines were partially af-

The agitators demanded that the concerned police officials who are negligent in their work, leading to the crime, should be dismissed from their posts.

a CBI investigation be ordered into the rape and murder of 50 lakh compensation to the

family of the victim who happened to be the only bread earner of the family, job to one of her family members and a house; road stretch from Talcher Railway Station to Talcher Road Railway Station be under CCTV glare; the registrations of all auto rickshaws and other rental vehicles plying between the two stations and drivers' criminal records be under scrutiny; government buses be run between the two stations; complete address of the passengers and the vehicles hired by them should be recorded in the office of the Drivers Association; special rest rooms be provided for passengers of de-

layed and cancelled trains; and

Sasmita Behera, Digambar Garanaik, Keshab Bhutia and Rajkishore Sahu, leading the agitation, said the bandh was peaceful and successful, adding that people of Talcher voluntarily supported the strike

Padil was missing since April 26 while going to the Talcher Road Railway Station in an auto rickshaw to board a train to Bhubaneswar where she was working in a private company. Her decomposed body was recovered from Kuspangi village under Banarpal police limits on Sunday. It is suspected that the 25year- old girl was set on fire after being gang-raped.

KEMS students excel in CBSE exams



PNS Champua

he Kerala English Medium School (KEMS), Champua made a remarkable academic achievement in CBSE class X and XII Board exam -2025. Out of 259 students who appeared for class X examination, 257 passed. Aditi Priyadarshini emerged as the class X topper with 96 per cent followed by Anshuman Padhi with 95 per

The school also excelled in class XII CBSE Examination in Science and Commerce. In

the Science stream, Debashree Deepsikha topped with 91.4 percent. Out of 73 students who appeared for the exam, 71 students passed. Similarly in Commerce stream, all the 22 students cleared the exam. Ronit Sahu topped with 85.2

Founder chairman of the institution Dr Rajmohan PS, secretary Uma Rajmohan, manager Muralidharan KS, office manager Daitari Sahu, Principal BK Bharati and all the staff congratulated the students for their outstanding performance.

Hundreds join Tiranga rally in Delang



To celebrate Army's success in Op Sindoor

PNS Delanga

The streets of Delang in Puri district on May 18 erupted in patriotic fervor as thousands gathered for the Tiranga rally, a stirring tribute to the Indian Armed Forces' triumph in Operation Sindoor-a bold campaign that dismantled Pakistanbacked terrorist networks.

Orchestrated by the Pipili Sanskritik Parishad and led by revered Army veteran Lieutenant General Narayan Prasad Mohanty, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.), the electrifying Padayatra united men, women, and youth in a vibrant display of national pride.

Puri MP Dr Sambit Patra and Pipili MLA Ashrit Pattanayak marched shoulder-to-shoulder with the crowd, their presence amplifying the rally's resonance. Both leaders hailed the indomitable spirit and selfless bravery of the soldiers who secured the historic victory.

Lt. Gen. Mohanty, the driv-

ing force behind the event, radiated pride as he addressed the sea of tricolor flags. "Leading this rally to honor our soldiers' courage and sacrifice is a moment of profound unity and inspiration," he said Joined by Pipili Sanskritik Parishad's general secretary Ramesh Mohapatra, he galvanized the crowd to salute the Armed Forces.

Bariki community in Re-include in this regard. Pradhan and submitted a

Chikiti MLA demands in Delhi meetings

PNS Brahmapur

During a recent visit to New Delhi, Chikiti MLA Manoranjan Dyan Samantara strongly advocated for the longstanding demand of reincluding the Bariki community in the Scheduled Caste list, terming the 2016 exclusion of the community as a serious administrative lapse that continues to cause deep social and economic injustice.

memorandum highlighting Digapahandi, socio-economic deprived them of constitutional safeguards and welfare benefits, further pushing the community into backward-

the Bariki people still suffer



tural and occupational simi- moral imperative," the MLA larities with other SC-listed said, urging the Union Govgroups. "Re-inclusion is not ernment to take urgent steps surrounding region.

tion, despite their socio-cul- just a policy correction, but a

He also submitted a sepa-

rate demand for establishing a Kendriya Vidyalaya (Central School) in Chikiti, citing the area's proximity to the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border and the economic backwardness of the region's population. The absence of quality English-medium education is depriving underprivileged children of equal academic opportunities, he said.

In another key meeting, the Chikiti legislator met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and discussed multiple railway-related demands of his constituency and the

Let's promote love marriage for caste-free, modern India



BRAMCHANDRA CST VOLTAIRE

ndia has been caste-ridden Lsince time immemorial. Since the days of Muslim regime in India for four centuries it has been divided on lines of religion.

Casteism, communalism or Hindu-Muslim conflicts have remained a factor of Indian politics even after the creation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947 and Independent India adopting a Secular Democratic Constitution on January 26, 1950.

All sorts of blind beliefs that were very much in sociopolitical fabrics in the days of feudalism and monarchy are still in existence as political leaders make them a plank for seeking vote.

Secular education or prayerless scientific education in English medium pattern is not available to all school-going children and college-going youths. Besides, caste-based cultural functions like Ganesh Puja, Saraswati Puja, Durga Puja vacation are there to communalise the minds of the younger generation.

On March 8, 2018 the Supreme Court of India led by Justice Dipak Misra, the then CJI, decided the Kerala Hadia Case in favour of the lovers after declaring a judgement of the Kerala High Court null and void. It made it clear that "an Indian young woman, aged 18+, enjoys absolute autonomy over her person." Meanwhile, more than 7 years have gone by. But not a single political party, be it the Congress, the BJP or any others like CPI, CPM or SP or TMC or BJD, has dared to welcome the historic judgment of the top

Grant-receiving NGOs are extremely cowardly. They are 1000s in number. But none of them can say that it is for "Annihilation of Caste", the objective that Babasaheb Dr BR Ambedkar proclaimed in 1936 through his

book: Annihilation of Caste. Unless dowryless, priestless, casteless love marriages are promoted in large numbers, we cannot make India casteless and creedless and communalism-free.

Socio-political

organisations like political

parties and NGOs do not have the mind and enthusiasm to make India really modern. They want to continue with all blind beliefs rooted in reliactivities like Mahakumhamela Prayagraj, Rath Yatra etc. So, in order to have a casteless, hate-free India with scientific outlook we must encourage more and more lovers to marry with minimum expenditure sans heavy dowry, extravagant feasts and elaborate Barat. No rich man like Mukesh Ambani should waste Rs 5,000 crore in the marriage function of his son Ananta Ambani that lingered on and on from July 12 to 30 in 2024. With that sort of money

> (The writer is general secretary, Freethought Party of In-

AMOFOI would have orga-

nized 1,000 crore love mar-

riages involving 2,000 crore

young men and women.

how the Bariki community, predominantly residing in Chikiti, Sanakhemundi, Brahmapur, Gopalpur and other parts of Ganjam district, has historically faced untouchability, temple entry restrictions, and marginalisation. He emphasized that the 2016 delisting

The MLA held a courtesy meeting with Union Educa-

Samantara pointed out that tion Minister Dharmendra from caste-based discrimina-



Transmitting Power, Transforming Lives

Extract of the Financial Results for the Quarter and Year ended 31st March 2025

Particulars 31.03.2025 31.03.2024 31.03.2025 31.03.2024 31.03.2025 31.03.2024 31.03.2025 31.03.2024 (Unaudited) (Unaudited) (Audited) (Audited) (Unaudited) Total Income from Continuing Operations Net Profit before Tax from Conti 18,009.46 5,142.51 5.033.80 18.619.43 5.061.69 5.124.80 19.294.20 18.513.95 ing Operations [including Regulatory Deferra Account Balances (net of tax)] Net Profit after Tax from Continuing Operations 4,336.17 15,377.48 4.142.87 4,166.33 Net Profit after Tax from Discontinued Operations 97.13 4.336:17 4.127.77 15.353.57 4,142.87 4.166.33 15.521.44 15.573.16 Net Profit after Tax for the period 15,474.61 Total Comprehensive Income comprising Net Profit after Tax and Other Comprehensive Income 4.254.45 4.099.98 15.114.24 15,241.72 4,065.38 4.137.21 15.285.16 15.338.55 Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face value of share: ₹10/- each) 9,300.60 9,300.60 9,300.60 9,300.60 8 Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Balance shee 82,915.05 77,566.45 82,915.05 77.566.45 77.844.51 9 Securities Premium Account 5.509.28 5,509.28 5,509.28 5.509.28 5,509.28 5.509.28 5,509.28 5,509.28 92,662.81 87,145.11 87,145.11 10 Net worth 92,215.65 86,867.05 92,215.65 86,867.05 92,662.81 11 Total Borrowings 123,448.62 130,964.96 12 Debt Equity Ratio 1.42 1.42 1.42 1.41 1.42 1.41 1.42 1.42 13 Earnings per equity share from continuing and discontinued operations including movement in Regulatory Deferral Account Balances (Face value of ₹10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in ₹) 16.74 4.66 4.44 16.64 4.46 4.48 16.69 16.51 14 Earnings per equity share from continuing and discontinued operations excluding mo 4.61 4.63 16.21 17.25 4.40 4.67 16.39 17.36 in Regulatory Deferral Account Balances (Face value of ₹10/- each); Basic and Diluted (in ₹) 3,193.24 3,193.24 4,064.11 15 Bonds Redemption Reserve 4,064.11 4,064.11 3,193.24

1.55

3.83

2.26

4.61

1.48

3.94

Place : Gurugram Date : 19 May 2025

16 Debt Service Coverage Ratio

17 Interest Service Coverage Ratio

The above is an extract of the Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulations 33 and 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements)
Regulations, 2015. The Complete Financial Results are available on the Investors section of our website https://www.powergrid.in and under Corporates Section of BSE Limited &
National Stock Exchange of India Limited at https://www.bseindia.com and https://www.nseindia.com respectively. These can also be accessed by scanning Quick Response Code:

For and on behalf of POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.

1.65



1.69

4.27



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Registered Office: B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Saral, New Delhi 110 016 Tel : 011-26560112, 26560121 CIN : L40101DL1989G0I038121 A Maharatna PSU | Channelling Energy Towards Growth

4.28

2.33

Rahul aiming for Nishan-e-Pakistan: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

pping the ante against Rahul Gandhi for his remarks on the Indo-Pak conflict, the BJP on Tuesday called the Congress leader "new age Mir Jafar" and asked if he was aiming for Nishan-e-Pakistan, the highest civilian award of the neighbouring country, by echoing Islamabad's

A day after Rahul Gandhi launched a fresh attack on External Affairs Minister SJaishankar, the BJP flayed the Congress, alleging the Opposition party has undergone a "disgraceful fall" from leading India's freedom struggle to "questioning' the country's armed forces

The Congress leader had on Monday said that Jaishankar's silence over his question that how many aircrafts India "lost" after Pakistan was "informed" about the military action under Operation Sindoor was "damning".

The BJP asked why Rahul Gandhi has not asked about the planes lost by Pakistan in the Indian military strikes. The Congress leader had earlier targeted the government, suggesting that the Indian side informed Pakistan ahead of the military strikes on terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The Congress leader had earlier targeted the Government, suggesting that the Indian side informed Pakistan ahead of the military strikes on terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)

"Rahul Gandhi is the new age Mir Jafar", BJP IT department head Amit Malviya wrote on social media on Tuesday, posting a meme showing the Congress leader asking Indian Army, "How many aircraft we lost" while standing on the back of Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif who prods him to "ask loudly'

It is said Mir Jafar, who served as a com-

mander in the Bengal army under Siraj ud-Daulah, had betrayed him during the Battle of Plassey, paving the way for British rule in India

Malviya also posted a picture on X with the blended faces of Pakistan Army chief General Syed Asim Munir and Rahul Gandhi and the caption, "One agenda".

"It is not surprising that Rahul Gandhi is speaking the language of Pakistan and its benefactors," he said in the post.

Rahul Gandhi has not congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a flawless Operation Sindoor, which "unmistakably" showcases India's dominance, the BIP leader noted.

"Instead, he repeatedly asks how many jets we lost — a question that has already been addressed in the DGMO briefings. Curiously, he hasn't once inquired about how many Pakistani jets were shot down during the conflict, or how many were destroyed while parked in their hangars when Indian forces pounded Pakistani airbases," the BJP leader charged.

"What's next for Rahul Gandhi? The

Malviya said there are multiple satellite images that confirm India's powerful strike on terror sanctuaries deep inside Pakistan including damage to their air bases and loss of several jets and personnel. "And what did Pakistan offer in return? Memes, doctored videos, and propaganda," he said.

Worse, their most reliable allies seem to be sitting right here in India — Rahul Gandhi and Congress leaders, whose statements conveniently echo Pakistan's narrative," Malviya said, adding, "What a disgraceful fall for the Congress party from leading India's freedom struggle to questioning its own armed forces.

BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari alleged Gandhi's "consistent attempts" to undermine India's global narrative, especially after Operation Sindoor, where the world stood firmly with India, revealed a "dangerous intent".

"His heart beats not for Bharat, but for Pakistan. He isn't just misguided. He's a threat," Bhandari charged.

now operating at Kalpakkam, Rawatbhata Kaiga, Kakrapar, and Narora are all shin-

ing testimonies to his yeoman contributions to nation-building," Ramesh

said. "He was a man of varied interests

and in later years became deeply con-

cerned with environmental issues. His

2002 memoir is essential reading and tells

the story of India's nuclear programme

from his unique perspective," he said.

Srinivasan had been the chairman of the

Atomic Energy Commission from 1987

to 1990 and also a member of the

Planning Commission between 1996-98,

"It has been my good fortune to have

Ramesh pointed out.

PM Modi to launch multiple development project in Rajasthan



PM Narendra Modi during a meeting to review progress of tourism sector in New Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

rime Minister Narendra Modi will launch a number of development projects across railways, roadways, power, water and new and renewable energy sectors during his visit to Bikaner in Rajasthan on Thursday.

An official statement said Modi will also inaugurate 103 redeveloped 'Amrit Stations' in 86 districts across 18 states and Union Territories, which have been built at a cost of Rs 1,100 crore, besides launching other development projects costing over Rs 26,000 crore.

The prime minister will inaugurate the redeveloped Deshnoke Station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme and flagoff Bikaner-Mumbai express train. He will then lay the foundation stone, inaugurate and dedicate to the nation multiple development projects worth over Rs 26,000 crore and also address a public function in Palana, the statement said.

In line with Modi's commitment to constantly improve and enhance the rail infrastructure in the country, it said over 1,300 stations are being redeveloped with modern facilities, designed to reflect regional architecture and enhance passenger amenities under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

Deshnoke railway station, serving pilgrims and tourists visiting the Karni Mata temple among others, is inspired with temple architecture and arch and column theme. Begumpet railway station in Telangana is inspired by the architecture of the Kakatiya empire, while

Thawe station in Bihar incorporates various murals and art works representing Maa Thawewali, one of the 52 Shakti Peethas and depicting Madhubani paintings.

The statement said Indian Railways is marching towards 100 per cent electrification of its network, making railway operations more efficient and environment friendly.

In line with this, Modi will lay the foundation stone of Churu-Sadulpur rail line (58 km) and dedicate to the nation Suratgarh-Phalodi (336 km), Phulera-Degana (109 km), Udaipur-Himmatnagar (210 km), Phalodi-Jaisalmer (157 km) and Samdari-Barmer (129 km) rail line electrification.

In a major boost to road infrastructure in the state, Modi will lay the foundation stone for construction of three vehicle underpasses, widening and strengthening of national highways. He will also dedicate seven roadways projects in Rajasthan.

Furthering the vision of electricity for all and green and clean energy, the statement said, Modi will lay the foundation stone of power projects, including solar projects at Bikaner and Nawa in Didwana Kuchaman, and transmission systems among several other projects.

He will also lay the foundation stone, inaugurate and dedicate 25 important state government projects across Rajasthan to enhance infrastructure, connectivity, power supply, health services, and water availability in the

PM, leaders mourn nuclear pioneer MR Srinivasan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

rime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday condoled the passing away of former Atomic Energy Commission chairman MR Srinivasan and said his instrumental role in developing critical nuclear infrastructure has been foundational to India being selfreliant in the energy sector. He was 95. Srinivasan, who played a key role in the

country's indigenous nuclear energy programme, died in Udhagamandalam, Tamil Nadu, on Tuesday, his family said. He is survived by his wife and daughter. Tamil Nadu chief MK Stalin and Congress leader Jairam Ramesh also expressed their

"Deeply saddened by the passing of Dr MR Srinivasan, a stalwart of India's nuclear energy programme. His instrumental role in developing critical nuclear infrastructure has been foundational to our being self-reliant in the energy sector," Modi said in a social media post.

"He is remembered for his inspiring leadership of the Atomic Energy Commission. India will always be grateful to him for advancing scientific progress and mentoring many young scientists. My thoughts are with his family and friends in this sad hour. Om Shanti,"



the prime minister said. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh in his tributes to Srinivasan said the nuclear power stations at Kalpakkam, Rawatbhata, Kaiga, Kakrapar, and Narora are shining testimonies to his yeoman contributions to nation-building.

"India's legendary nuclear technologist Dr MR Srinivasan has just passed away. Picked by Homi Bhabha himself, he played a pivotal role in the setting up of

India's very first nuclear power plant at Tarapur in the late 60s. Later, he led the team that established India's extensive nuclear power complex at Kalpakkam," Ramesh said in a social media post.

It was under his inspiring leadership that India resolutely and successfully withstood the withdrawal of Canadian association after India's nuclear test of May 1974, the former environment minister said. "The nuclear power stations

known him for a long time and he is someone who has left a deep and lasting impression on me by the strength of his commitments, his deep appreciation of the larger social functions of science, and his profound understanding of India's rich cultural traditions," Ramesh said. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin

hailed Srinivasan as a "nation builder." "We mourn the passing of Dr MR Srinivasan, a pillar of India's atomic energy programme. He began his journey with Dr Homi J Bhabha, the father of India's nuclear programme, building our first reactor," he said in a

Government may try to cover up 'India's biggest scam', truth coming out: Congress on Adani issue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

he Congress on Tuesday flagged media reports claiming that SEBI has warned two offshore funds holding Adani Group shares with penalties and said the market regulator's actions might appear on the surface to represent progress but the probe has dragged on for over two years with the conglomerate benefitting from the delay. There was no immediate reaction from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) or the Adani Group on the claims. Congress general secretary in-charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said the "double-engine" Modani saga continues.

SEBI has reportedly threatened two Mauritius-based offshore funds controlled by Elara Capital? Elara India Opportunities Fund and Vespera Fund? with penalties and licence cancellations for failing to provide shareholding details," he said on X. Ramesh said, these funds have been accused of "stock parking" — being fronts for benami Adani investments in their own



FILE PHOTO Congress leader Jairam Ramesh companies in violation of SEBI rules.

"The two funds have reportedly offered to settle the matter without admitting guilt and paying a token fee, which is the course of action most convenient for Modani," the Congress leader said. In December 2022, 98.78 per cent of the India Opportunities

Fund was invested in three Adani Companies, while in June 2022, 93.9 per cent of Vespera was invested in Adani Enterprises, he said. "SEBI's actions might appear on the surface to represent progress but the fact is that the Supreme Court had required this investigation to be completed in two months, but it has dragged on for more than two years.

The only people who have benefited from this delay are Modani," Ramesh said.

Try as the government may to cover up "India's biggest scam", the truth is coming out, he asserted. "And if not via India's compromised institutions, they will come out through foreign jurisdictions that Modani cannot bribe, bully or co-opt," Ramesh said. The Congress has been persistent in its attack on the government since the Adani Group stocks took a beating on the bourses in the wake of US-based shortselling firm Hindenburg Research making a litany of allegations, including fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation, on the conglomerate headed by industrialist Gautam Adani.

Vikram Misri briefs multi-party delegations

¬oreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Tuesday briefed three of the seven multi-party delegations Pak-occupied Kashmir and not on Pakistan's long sponsorship of ter- against military installations and forism in India and how the country is determined to respond strongly to

any terror incidents on its soil.
"Our message to world leaders will be that enough is enough and that Pakistan has acted like a thief asked to probe his own crime whenever India has in the past trusted its words on acting against terrorism,"

JD(U) leader Sanjay Jha said. Jha is leading a delegation to Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia. Shiv Sena leader Shrikant Shinde, who is leading a delegation to the UAE and some African countries, said they will highlight Pakistan's links to terror incidents in India.

and other members of the delegations that Indian action was targeted civilians.

It was only after Pakistan's attempts to attack Indian military installations and the civilian population that India hit back, he said. Members of the delegations headed by JD(U)'s Sanjay Jha, Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde and DMK's Kanimozhi attended the briefing in which they are expected to be told about their agenda and its finer details.

Kanimozhi, however, could not attend the meeting. TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee, who was included at the last minute after his party protested the government's "unilateral" decision to pick its MP Yusuf Pathan, also joined the briefing.

Padma Awards deadline set for July 31

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ominations and recommendations for the rauma arrest to be announced on the occasion tions for the Padma Awards-2026 of Republic Day, 2026 started on March 15 and the last date for nominations for Padma Awards is July 31, Ministry of Home Affairs said on Tuesday.

tions for Padma Awards will only be received online on the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal (https://awards.gov.in). The Padma Awards, namely, Padma

It said the nominations/recommenda-

Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri, are amongst the highest civilian awards of the country.

Instituted in 1954, these Awards are announced on the occasion of the Republic Day every year.

The Award seeks to recognise 'work of distinction' and is given for distinguished and exceptional achievements/service in all fields/disciplines, such as Art, Literature and Education, Sports, Medicine, Social Work, Science and Engineering, Public Affairs, Civil Service, Trade and Industry etc.

The Padma Awards, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma **Bhushan and Padma Shri, are** amongst the highest civilian awards of the country

All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these Awards. Government servants including those working with PSUs, except Doctors and Scientists, are not eligible for Padma Awards.

The Government is committed to transform Padma Awards into "People's Padma".

All citizens are, therefore, requested to make nominations/recommendations, including self-nomination.

Concerted efforts may be made to identify talented persons whose excellence and achievements really deserve to be recognized from amongst women, weaker sections of the society, SCs and STs, divyang persons and who are doing selfless service to the society.

The nominations or recommendations should contain all relevant details specified in the format available on the above said Portal, including a citation in narrative form (maximum 800 words), clearly bringing out the distinguished and exceptional achievements or service of the person recommended in her/his respective field/discipline.

Indian Navy to induct Ancient Stitched Ship

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ndian Navy will induct and unveil the name of the Ancient Stitched Ship ■during a ceremonial event on Wednesday at Naval Base, Karwar.

Minister of Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, will preside over the ceremony as the chief guest, formally marking the induction of the ship into Indian Navy, Defence Ministry said here on Tuesday. The stitched ship is a recreation of a 5th century CE ship, inspired by a painting from the Ajanta Caves. The project was formally initiated through a tripartite agreement signed in July 2023 between Ministry of Culture, Indian Navy and M/s Hodi Innovations, with funding from Ministry of Culture. The Keel laying of the Stitched Ship took place on September 12, 2023.

The construction of the Stitched Ship was carried out using entirely traditional methods, and raw materials by artisans from Kerala, led by master shipwright Babu Sankaran, who executed thousands of hand-stitched joints. The ship was launched in February this year at M/s Hodi Shipyard, Goa. The Indian Navy has overseen the entire spectrum of implementation of this project, including concept development, design, technical validation and construction in collaboration with M/s Hodi Innovations and tradition-

posed unique technical challenges. With no surviving blueprints or physical remnants, the design had to be extrapolated from a two-dimensional artistic iconography. The project demanded a unique interdisciplinary approach, combining archaeological interpretation, Naval architecture, hydrodynamic testing and traditional craftsmanship. Unlike any modern vessel, the stitched ship is equipped with square sails and steering oars, which are entirely alien to modernday ships. The hull geometry, rigging and sails had to be reimagined and tested from first principles. The Indian Navy collaborated with the

Department of Ocean Engineering, IIT Madras, to conduct model testing to validate the vessel's hydrodynamic behaviour at sea. Further, the Indian Navy undertook an in-house structural analysis to assess the wooden mast system, designed and constructed without the use of contemporary materials. Every aspect of the ship had to balance historical authenticity with seaworthiness, leading to design choices that were both innovative and true to the maritime traditions of ancient India. The combination of a stitched hull. square sails, wooden spars, and traditional steering mechanisms makes the vessel unlike any ship currently in Naval ser-

vice anywhere in the world.

Geeta Samota becomes first CISF personnel to conquer Mount Everest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ub Inspector Geeta Samota has become the first CISF personnel to Sconquer the world's tallest peak Mount Everest in the 56-year-long history of the force, a spokesperson said Tuesday.

She summited the 8,849 m tall mountain on Monday. "Geeta stood on the 'roof of the world', a triumphant moment symbolising not just a personal victory, but the incredible resilience and strength fostered within the CISF and the Indian nation," the spokesperson said in a state-

The 35-year-old subordinate officer joined the paramilitary force in 2011 and is currently posted at the Udaipur airport unit of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). The mountaineer hails from the Chak village in Rajasthan's Sikar district and had initially started as hockey player in her local college.

Her upbringing was traditional in a house that had five daughters including her. An injury led her to move away from hockey and upon joining the force she found CISF did not had a mountaineering team then and she saw an sporting and adventure opportunity here, the spokesperson said. Samota went on to undertake specialised training in mountaineering and in 2019 she became the off due to technical reasons.



first woman from any Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) to scale Mount Satopanth (7,075 meters) in Uttarakhand and Mount Lobuche (6,119 meters) in Nepal, he said.

In early 2021, the CAPF contingent for a Mount Everest expedition of which Geeta was part, was unfortunately called

She then set an ambitious goal — the "Seven Summits" challenge, which involves climbing the highest peak on each of the seven continents.

Between 2021-2022, she summited four of these formidable peaks: Mount Kosciuszko (2,228 m) in Australia, Mount Elbrus (5,642 m) in Russia, Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895 m) in Tanzania and Mount Aconcagua (6,961 m) in Argentina.

The CISF official achieved this feat in a "remarkable" span of just six months and 27 days, making her the fastest Indian woman to do so, he said. Samota, the spokesperson said, also

became the first and fastest woman to climb five peaks in Ladakh's Rupshu region in just three days, including three peaks over 6,000 m and two over 5,000 m.

"The CISF director general and force members have extended their profound congratulations to Samota. Her extraordinary journey and successful summit, shine as a beacon of inspiration for the youth of India and stand as a moment of immense pride for the entire CAPFs fraternity," he said.

The about 2 lakh personnel strength force guards vital installations in the government and private domain including airports, nuclear power centres and historical monuments.

The Pioneer BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY | MAY 21, 2025

Pakistani troops caught napping: Indian Army



Army personnel displaying the preparedness along the LoC, during a media tour in Poonch

MOHIT KANDHARI Jammu

asking in the glory of the success of 'Operation Sindoor', a senior commander of the Poonch Brigade, Brigadier Mudit Mahajan on Tuesday said that the Poonch brigade was not a part but the heart of Operation Sindoor. Briefing visiting teams of media persons at one of the forward locations along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch, Brigadier Mahajan revealed the Army struck with unmatched precision and purpose — six of nine critical terrorist targets struck were opposite Poonch, Rajouri, and Akhnoor and these were neutralised effectively that night (May 7).

He said the high-impact retaliatory strikes across the Line of Control completely decimated the terror havens. Referring to the degree of alertness and preparations going on to further secure the frontiers of the Nation, Commander Poonch Brigade warned, Operation Sindoor is not over, it only remains suspended for the time being. And therefore the Indian Army remains alert, ready and if challenged again, we will respond yet again, not with words but fire and resolve of the nation".

On the occasion, the Indian army showcased its military might and shared details with the media on how, at ground zero, a new chapter of the glorious history of the Indian Army was written.

The army officers, while showcasing the working of the next-generation weapon systems, briefed media persons on how, from the planning stage to its final execution, the Operation Sindoor established the supremacy of the Indian Armed Forces and took the enemy by surprise. The Pakistani troops were caught napping. Ground inputs indicated they even failed to comprehend the scale of the attack until substantial damage had already been done.

Brigadier Mudit Mahajan said the Pakistan-sponsored terror strike at Pahalgam was met with a calibrated response from the Indian Army, initially focusing solely on terrorist infrastructure The Army struck with unmatched precision and purpose — six of nine critical terrorist targets struck were opposite Poonch, Rajouri and Akhnoor and these were neutralised effectively that night.

"Only when the Pakistan Army escalated by indiscriminately targeting civilian areas did the Indian Army decisively shift to hitting their military assets. As the enemy unleashed a new threat of drone swarms, it was the Army Air Defence that truly emerged as the shining shield, demonstrating exceptional skill, resilience, and cutting-edge coordination to intercept every aerial menace, safeguarding our troops and territory with unwavering vigilance and valor", he added.

Brigadier Mudti Mahajan said the Pakistani army has lost its credibility before their nation.

"Pak Army losses were not just in numbers but in morale and initiative. So far, we have inputs of imposing heavy numbers of fatal and non-fatal casualties upon the enemy. The numbers are still adding up with each passing day as our intelligence agencies are on the job to corroborate and verify these inputs.



Himanta-Gaurav clash over posts on Pakistan's 2022 flood

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

ssam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi engaged in a social media duel on Tuesday over an old post by the Jorhat MP expressing sympathy to the victims of the devastating flood in Pakistan in 2022. Amid Sarma's relentless attacks on Gogoi, alleging that he and his family have links with Pakistan, state Information and Public Relations Minister Pijush Hazarika dug out the old post on X.

Referring to India's victory over Pakistan in an Asia Cup T20 match in Dubai a day earlier, Gogoi in a post on X on August 29, 2022, had said, "While celebrate the victory of our Indian cricket team over Pakistan, we must not forget the humanitarian disaster that has claimed 1,000 lives in our neighbouring country. Unprecedented flooding has destroyed towns and homes. Pakistani

people need urgent relief and support." Sharing a screenshot of this post, Hazarika said that while the entire nation rejoiced in India's glorious victory over Pakistan, some chose to divert attention and sympathy toward a country that breeds terror against India. "This is not just misplaced empathy — it's a pattern. From escorting students to the Pakistan High Commission, to standing with narratives that weaken India's resolve, Gaurav Gogoi has repeatedly positioned himself closer to Pakistan than to patriotic sentiments. Let's be clear: India first. Always," he posted on X.

Terming it unfortunate, the CM shared his cabinet colleague's post and said that some individuals enjoy "every privilege India offers — salary, power and position yet their loyalty lies across the border".

They draw everything from Bharat but work only for Pakistan's interests. This is betrayal," he added. Reacting to this, Gogoi then shared a screenshot of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's X post on the Pakistan floods, expressing grief and condolences. "I am worried about the Chief Minister of Assam. In his desperation he is calling the position taken by PM Modi in 2022 as a betrayal. Is he the right person for the chair of Chief Minister?" asked the Congress leader.

In a post dated August 29, 2022, Modi said on X, "Saddened to see the devastation caused by the floods in Pakistan. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, the injured and all those affected by this natural calamity and hope for an early restoration of normalcy.

Decline in Government school enrolment worrying, says Mayawati

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

ahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati has raised serious con-Mayawati itas raised series.

cerns over the sharp decline in student enrolment in Government schools in Uttar Pradesh and criticised the state government's ongoing crackdown on private madrasas. She termed the developments as a blow to the goal of accessible education for the underprivileged and called for an immediate

In a post on social media platform X, Mayawati pointed out that enrolment in primary and upper primary Government schools in UP dropped from 1.74 crore in 2023-24 to 1.52 crore in 2024-25 a decline of approximately 22 lakh students. "Such a poor condition of the government school system is serious and worrisome. The Government must pay proper attention to the importance and need of education," she said.



Mayawati also criticised the government's stance on private madrasas, which often provide low-cost education in underserved areas.

Instead of supporting the private madrasa system, which is part of an affordable and accessible education model, the Government is shutting them down by declaring them illegal. This is an unfair and unnecessary step that will only weaken the foundation of basic education," she stated, urging the Government to reconsider its attitude toward madrasas.

She added that while the condition of government schools is alarming across several states, the situation in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar is particularly dire. "This has a direct impact on the longawaited progress of poor Bahujan families and pushes the future of their children into darkness. In such a scenario, the focus should be on strengthening school education, not shutting institutions down." Mayawati's remarks have reignited the debate over the state's education policy, especially its treatment of traditional and community-based schooling systems.

Mamata Banerjee slams Centre, cries deprivation; divisive politics

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ME Kolkata

engal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has once again trained her guns on the Centre for depriving her State of its legitimate funds impeding its development works.

Stopping short of naming the saffron outfit, the Chief Minister said that there were "some toxic people whose only job is to create differences in the society, incite riots and insult the people of Bengal by bringing false charges," asking the people to remain united against all kinds of diabolic machinations to drive a wedge in the society.

"They have stopped all the Centre funds, rural housing schemes, rural road projects and what not, they have withheld ₹1.75 lakh crore that belongs to the

Bengal all in the name of misutilisation of funds and they are telling us to give details about the previous funds. We don't have any problem, we will provide all details before them but still they will not give us our money because they the amount of developmental work we have done for Bengal and we were the first in the world to start an initiative like Lakshmir Bhandar and Kanyashree — in the dignity of our mothers, sisters and women and that has been acknowledged by the UNO as a model project," Banerjee said contrasting her Government's performance with that

of the ones run by the Opposition parties.
"Unlike them when I give my words I keep it or else I don't give words. They (read the BJP) are now claiming they will give benefits under (similar) scheme but they do not fulfill pre-poll promises.

They did not give (benefits) in Mumbai, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and elsewhere but before the elections they promised a sky," the Chief Minister said adding even in the face of Central neglect, north Bengal had seen significant development. "I had promised Kanyashree, Laxmir Bhandar, Sabuj Saathi, Swasthya Saathi, Siksja Shree and such other schemes and kept them," she said.

Announcing a slew of developmental projects from Dabgram-Phulbari off Siliguri, Banerjee she was ready to receive criticisms but would never accept humiliation of her State. As part of her developmental roadmap for North Bengal, Banerjee announced a series of new projects including the construction of a skywalk at the Jalpesh Temple in Jalpaiguri and the restoration of the historic Morgan House in Kalimpong.

We have earmarked 77 acres of land for industrial park, have made the Bengal forest safari 🛭 at Siliguri, many houses and schools in the rural areas for the tribal communities... our Government is providing ₹1.2 lakh per family under 'Banglar Bari (rural housing project)' scheme to 12 lakh families... and they say that we have done nothing for the State and the region," the Chief Minister who has recently been under attack for allowing a massive flight of industries and students from the State.

She wondered, "If we have not developed this region of North Bengal then how come the electricity consumption has gone up by so many times... earlier there this region required 800 MW of power and now it needs about 3,500 MW... is it not for nothing," Banerjee who was speaking

at a public meeting on the second day of her trip to North Bengal said.

Asking the people to "hate those who

spread hatred and riots," Banerjee alleged how some parties were inciting communal violence to reap political dividends. Apparently taking a swipe at the BJP she said "they use of divisive politics... when peace and harmony is the need of the hour."

Drawing inspiration from Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam Banerjee said "these great men did not promote communal harmony for nothing," adding how "some people are born to spread hatred and riots. They do not care about people's welfare. Riots burn homes, claim lives, and give politicians a chance to exploit the situation. I want

UP to revamp religious routes with ₹4,560 crore investment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

¬he Yogi Adityanath Government will invest ₹4,560 crore to revamp and strengthen roads connecting sites of historical, mythological and spiritual significance in Uttar Pradesh, an official statement said on Tuesday. Besides ensuring safer and more convenient travel for pilgrims, the initiative also aims to establish Uttar Pradesh as the leading destination on the global religious tourism map.

Devotees and travellers will benefit from this plan, especially, in terms of better transportation facilities. This will reduce their travel time and make their journeys easier, safer and more organised, the statement said. The project focuses on improving connectivity and enhancing the appearance of sacred routes linking major pilgrimage destinations such as Ayodhya, Varanasi, Mathura, Chitrakoot, Prayagraj, Naimisharanya and Mirzapur, the statement said, adding that priority has been given to widening, strengthening and constructing these routes during the financial year 2025-26.

According to the Public Works Department's (PWD) plan, 272 projects will be completed under this initiative, the

statement mentioned. The strengthening works for roads connecting important religious sites across the state are approved by the State Government, the PWD plan states. Priority is being given to developing, reconstructing, and strengthening those roads that have the highest number of visitors. For the 272 planned projects, the main focus is on the roads that see an average annual traffic of around five lakh devotees.

Besides ensuring safer and more convenient travel for pilgrims, the initiative also aims to establish Uttar Pradesh as the leading destination on the global religious tourism map

The projects include widening roads, repairing surfaces, building sidewalks, strengthening carriageways, lane marking, beautification, expansion, improving traffic management and promoting road safety standards. Special attention is being given to routes where land acquisition can be minimised to ensure smoother progress.

Official arrested in Chhattisgarh linked liquor scam

PRANAV PRATYUSH Ranchi

↑he Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday arrested former Jharkhand Excise Secretary Vinay Kumar Choubey, a senior IAS officer along with Excise Department official Gajendra Singh. The arrests are connected to allegations of a liquor syndicate operating out of Chhattisgarh, which reportedly exerted undue influence on Jharkhand's excise policies.

Choubey was first detained and questioned at his residence early on Tuesday, while Singh was brought to the ACB office for questioning. Following intensive interrogation, they were formally arrested and subsequently presented before ACB special court that sent them to judicial custody till June 3.

The ACB's investigation centres on claims that Choubev colluded with the Chhattisgarh-based liquor network. This alleged collaboration facilitated the introduction of a new excise policy in Jharkhand, which, according to the ACB, resulted in substantial financial losses for the state. The agency's initial inquiries stemmed from FIR No 36/2024, filed by the Chhattisgarh Economic Offences Wing (EOW). Both



IAS officer Vinay Chaubey being taken to be produced in court by ACB sleuths in Ranchi on

Choubey and Singh had been subjected to multiple rounds of questioning throughout the investigative process.

Based on preliminary findings, the ACB registered a formal case. In March 2025, the Chhattisgarh EOW, having completed its own investigation, formally requested the Jharkhand government's permission to prosecute the two officials. The Jharkhand Government then sought legal

details of its own parallel investigation.

The roots of the controversy trace back to late 2021, when liquor traders began circulating rumours of an impending shift in Jharkhand's excise policy for the 2022-23 fiscal year. These rumours suggested that entities within the Chhattisgarh liquor industry were actively lobbying for these changes. Subsequently, the Jharkhand Excise Department engaged Chhattisgarh State Marketing Limited (CSML) as a consultant, ostensibly to boost revenue from the liquor sector. A consultancy fee of Rs 1.25 crore was paid to Arun Pati Tripathi for his policy recommendations.

The draft policy was then forwarded to Revenue Council member Amrendra Prasad Singh for approval. Singh raised concerns about CSML's track record in its home state, noting that Jharkhand's liquor revenue was already showing healthy growth. Despite these reservations, the new excise framework was ultimately adopted. This policy effectively granted significant control over Jharkhand's liquor trade to businesses with ties to the Chhattisgarh syndicate.

Specifically, the new terms allowed

counsel from a senior Supreme Court companies like Ishita and Omsai to domlawyer, S Nagamuthu and shared the inate wholesale distribution. Prism, another company linked to the syndicate, secured the contract for supplying security holograms for liquor bottles. Even the staffing of government-run liquor outlets was outsourced to firms from Chhattisgarh. The new regulations had immediate and detrimental consequences for local country liquor producers. The policy, allegedly pushed by the syndicate, mandated the use of glass bottles instead of the previously used plastic ones. This change forced the closure of numerous local bottling units, paving the way for the syndicate to distribute its own products from Chhattisgarh within Jharkhand.

Notably, Choubey is the sixth serving IAS officer of Jharkhand cadre to be sent to jail on corruption charges and is the first IAS officer to be arrested by a State Investigation Agency. Also, he was considered a close confidant of CM Hemant Soren as he has also remained on the post of Secretary to CM during the 2019 -24 stint of Hemant Soren as Chief Minister.

Earlier, AK Singh, Sajal Chakraborty, Dr Pradeep Kumar, Pooja Singhal and Chhavi Ranjan were sent to judicial custody on corruption charges.

Vijay Shah excluded from MP Cabinet meeting

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

n a significant political development, Tribal Affairs Minister Vijay Shah was deliberately excluded from the special Madhya Pradesh Cabinet meeting held at the historic Rajwada Palace in Indore on the occasion of the 300th birth anniversary of Devi Ahilyabai Holkar.

His absence from the event, widely viewed as a symbol of the government's growing distance from the embattled minister, has sent strong signals about his precarious standing within the ruling party. However, State BJP president VD Sharma told media persons claimed that Shah did not turn up at the meeting. At times, it happens that ministers are not able to attend, he added.

The Cabinet meeting, convened at the iconic heritage site for the first time, was intended as a grand tribute to Devi Ahilyabai Holkar's legacy of good gov-

ernance and women's empowerment. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav posed for an official group photograph with all ministers outside Rajwada prior to the meeting, but noticeably, Vijay Shah was missing. Sources confirm that Shah was not sent the cabinet agenda - a routine practice followed before every such session.

Political insiders suggest that the decision to keep Shah away was deliberate, aimed at avoiding controversy during the high-profile gathering. Given the serious allegations and legal scrutiny surrounding Shah, his presence could have overshadowed the event's significance.

'Not sending the agenda itself is a clear message," said a senior government official, requesting anonymity. "It indicates he is being sidelined without formal removal."

Vijay Shah has been at the center of a storm following his controversial remarks about Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, which led to an FIR being registered on the directive of the Madhya Pradesh High Court. Subsequently, the Supreme Court ordered for a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe comprising three IPS officers from outside

The SIT, appointed by the state DGP, is expected to submit its report to the Supreme Court by May 28. While the apex court has stayed Shah's arrest, the investigation continues, keeping the minister's future uncertain.

Since the controversy erupted, Shah has maintained a low profile, avoiding public appearances, media interactions, and social media engagement. He has also not been seen with party leaders, reinforcing perceptions of his political

Despite not being officially removed from the cabinet, the state government and the BJP appear to be adopting a wait-and-watch approach. Shah's exclusion from the Rajwada meeting is being interpreted as a clear signal that he is no longer publicly endorsed or fully trusted by the leadership.

Political analysts note that such sidelining often precedes formal action but also serves to mitigate public backlash while legal processes unfold. As the SIT's findings approach, all eyes will be on how the party navigates this delicate political and legal challenge.

Varanasi police fail in grievance redressal audit **BISWAJEET BANERJEE** ■ Varanasi

recent internal audit of the Varanasi police has uncovered startling levels of inefficiency and negligence in public grievance redressal — particularly through the CM Window, Uttar Pradesh's Integrated Grievance Redressal System (IGRS). The findings have raised serious concerns about policing standards in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

parliamentary constituency. The first-of-its-kind review, conducted after the implementation of the police commissionerate system, evaluated the performance of 589 sub-inspectors and dozens of inspectors. Shockingly, not a single sub-inspector was found to have addressed public complaints lodged through the Chief Minister's dashboard. All of them received zero marks in the IGRS disposal category — a crucial bench-

mark for citizen-centric policing. Worse still, 107 sub-inspectors scored zero across all evaluated parameters, while 345 failed to cross even 10 marks out of 100. Only a handful of officers managed to show minimal initiative, with some scoring as low as 1 or 2 marks. The audit also revealed that none of the inspectors could qualify with first division marks, reflecting an overall failure in complaint resolution, case

investigation, and public engagement. Police Commissioner Mohit Agarwal, who led the review, expressed deep disappointment over the findings. He disclosed that more than 50 inspectors were unable to draft a basic FIR, and nearly 100 sub-inspectors were flagged for poor ounctuality, indiscipline, and failure to follow departmental protocols. The audit exposed a breakdown in not just efficiency, but also core professionalism within the police ranks.

Adding to the controversy was the abrupt transfer of Inspector Meenu Singh, who had been publicly felicitated just a day earlier for topping among female subinspectors with 34.5 marks. Within 24 hours, she was removed from her post at Teliyabagh and reassigned to Kotwali police station by DCP Kashi — without any stated reason.

Other top scorers included Rajdarpan Tiwari and Amarjeet Kumar from Manduadih and Vikas Kumar Maurya from Rohania. At the bottom of the list was Shyama Prasad, who scored just 0.5 marks.

The audit also exposed systemic failures beyond IGRS. Over 400 inspectors had no notable achievements, no major arrests, commendations, or contributions to community policing. More than 300 failed to execute even a single non-bailable warrant, and 350 did not act on a single illegal loudspeaker complaint. Nearly 550 were cited for negligence in urgent policing matters, and over 200 had not closed a single investigation during their tenure.

In response to the audit, the department has compiled a list of underperforming officers. Many are expected to be sent to police lines for retraining, and future postings will depend on monthly performance evaluations. Disciplinary action is also being considered against the 107 subinspectors who scored zero.

The report has cast a shadow over law enforcement in Varanasi, a city often held up as a model for development and governance. With public trust in the police at stake, the revelations are expected to trigger administrative and political repercussions in the days ahead.



India-Turkey relations at their lowest ebb

Backlash over Turkey's support for Pakistan pushes India-Turkey Relations to a new low

nce defined by shared civilisational ties, mutual trade interests, and diplomatic engagement, the bilateral relationship between India and Turkey is now under strain following Turkey's overt support for Pakistan in the wake of a deadly terrorist attack on Indian soil. The resulting public backlash in India has snowballed into a wide-ranging boycott campaign affecting tourism, education, trade, and aviation; raising serious questions about the future of India-Turkey relations.

The current diplomatic fallout began after a heinous terror attack in Pahalgam claimed the lives of 26 tourists. In response, India launched precision strikes on terrorist infrastructures in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and air defence systems in Pakistan. While much of the international community called for restraint, Turkey stood out in its explicit support for Pakistan. This perceived bias from Ankara, particularly given President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's repeated calls for a multilateral solution to the Kashmir dispute sparked widespread outrage in India.

The response from Indian civil society, businesses, and institutions has been swift and sweeping. A grassroots boycott campaign, amplified through social media with hashtags like #BoycottTurkey, has taken on a life of its own. Bookings to Turkey have dropped by 60 per cent. Major Indian travel platforms, including MakeMyTrip and EaseMyTrip, have suspended Turkish promotions. Indian traders have begun rejecting Turkish goods. The Indian civil aviation ministry revoked the security clearance of Turkish ground-handling company Celebi, citing national security concerns.

Historically, India and Turkey have maintained cordial if not deeply strategic relations. Erdogan's visit to India in 2017 focused on economic cooperation and counter-terrorism. Despite ideological differences, trade between the two countries has flourished — India exported \$5.2 billion worth of goods to Turkey between April 2024 and February 2025. The present strained relations would result in massive loss to both countries. While the current crisis is steeped in emotion and national interest, it is not beyond repair. However, both countries will have to work deliberately - and delicately - to untangle this knot. Immediate high-level talks may be politically unviable, but diplomatic backchannels must remain active. Turkey's leadership must recalibrate its public stance on Kashmir and adopt a more balanced position. Turkey must acknowledge India's legitimate security concerns. Acknowledging Turkey's complex geopolitical compulsions without excusing one-sidedness can offer a more nuances understanding to an emotional public. International diplomacy is far more complex than emotional outburst. Boycotts may offer immediate satisfaction, but lasting diplomacy demands patience and vision. The public sentiment in India is strong and justified in its condemnation of terrorism and foreign support for it.

But as history has often shown, anger is a poor long-term strategist. If India and Turkey can find a way back to honest dialogue, mutual respect, and pragmatic cooperation, this rift may yet become a turning point - not an end - in their long-shared journey.



A beautiful sight in Morigaon, Assam: A farmer's toil meets nature's flow. Egrets patiently follow the plough, finding sustenance as the land is prepared. A perfect example of peaceful coexistence. PTI

A new era for Catholic church

With deep ties to both the United States and Peru, Pope Leo steps into spiritual leadership of 1.4 billion Catholics, inheriting a Church divided by doctrine, challenged by global crises, and yearning for unity, reform, and renewal

he world's attention has been on Rome for the past few days. The Catholics have made history with the election of Robert Francis Prevost, a 69-year-old American cardinal of Spanish descent.

He has taken over as the 267th occupant of the throne of St Peter. This momentous event, the first time an American has ascended to the papacy in the 2000-year history of the Catholic Church, is a significant milestone.

The Pope is the leader of the Roman Catholic Ĉhurch. He guides about 1.4 billion Catholics worldwide and is the head of Vatican City. Due to his position, the Pope is regarded as one of the world's most powerful people. He has extensive diplomatic, cultural, and spiritual influence. He is considered the successor of St Peter, the first apostle. He is believed to have the highest teaching authority in faith and morals.

Though born in Chicago, Pope Leo XIV spent over two decades working in Peru. He became a dual US and Peruvian citizen

What do the global Catholics want from a new Pope? Pope Leo will lead a divided Catholic Church of 1.4 billion members, almost the size of India or China. The Church may be losing strength in Europe but is growing rapidly in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. About 40 per cent of all Catholics worldwide are in Latin America, roughly a quarter in Europe, and 16 per cent to 18 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa.

While his predecessor, Pope Francis, accomplished many things during his 12year papacy, he left an unfinished agenda and many challenges for the new Pope to address. These, such as divorce and remarriage, LGBTQ Catholics, the role of women, and climate change, are significant and will require careful consideration and action.

The new Pope will exercise supreme power in faith, morals, church discipline, and Government. He is expected to continue the reforms started by his predecessor, focus on poverty and marginalised people, and build a "bridge" between different groups within the Church.

Many watched with interest when Pope Leo appeared on the Vatican balcony. In his first speech, Pontiff spoke to the crowd in Spanish, mentioning "his beloved Diocese of Chiclayo in Peru." This shows that his identity as both an American and a Peruvian will influence his papacy. Many Peruvians remember him as a priest who stood with the country's poorest people.



identity and capacity to bridge a hemisphere. The crowd cheered when he said, "Peace be with you." What reforms will

Pope Leo XIV focus on during his papacy? How will he address the issue of sexual

abuse in the Church? How will he balance traditional beliefs with modern concerns?

KALYANI SHANKAR

These will become clear as time goes on. The new Pope has to take several key steps. The new Pontiff has given hints about his priorities as head of the Catholic Church - peace, climate change and technology. But abuse scandals and the role of women will remain important.

Like his predecessor, Pope Leo wants to

would like to continue to open the Vatican and listen to voices outside the church hier-

Pope Leo XIV's vision is global and inclusive, following Pope Francis's path. He must find ways to balance the Church's rich traditions with important modern issues like climate change and technology. Pope Leo has taken charge of the Catholic Church during a challenging time.

The Vatican faces serious financial issues, including a budget deficit of over £73 million and a pension fund deficit exceeding £2 billion. The late Pope Francis started important reforms at the Vatican Bank, known as the IOR, to fix long-standing financial problems, but this work is still unfinished. Pope Leo needs to continue these reforms and address the economic issues to maintain the Church's stability and integrity. A sensitive topic is same-sex couples.

In 2023, Pope Francis said Roman Catholic priests can bless same-sex couples. Also, that year, he allowed transgensupport the poor and marginaliszed. He der people to be baptised and to act as god-

parents. People around the world will closely watch how he addresses these

Pope Leo has recognised that artificial intelligence significantly challenges human

dignity, justice, and labour. He has stated that the Church will address these issues. Vatican observers see this commitment as a positive sign of his leadership. It gives people confidence in his ability to guide the Church through

modern problems. Additional challenges include balancing tradition with modernity, maintaining unity while implementing reforms, and navigating an increasingly volatile global environment. These are the hurdles that Pope Leo must overcome.

Pope Leo XIV's leadership can change the Church, bringing hope for the future. His background, challenges, and goals suggest that he could lead to significant changes and progress for the Catholic Church.

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

When entertainment crosses the line

SECOND

he recent announcement by the I&B Ministry of the Indian Government regarding the banning of some OTT platforms for publishing obscene and vulgar content has sparked widespread attention and has reignit-

ed the discussions on the crucial issue of women's safety in society. That's because the ministry took the above decision under the provisions of the IT Act, 2000 after consultations with other Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, and domain experts specialising in media and entertainment, women's rights, and child rights.

We all know about the #MeToo movement, which started as a #hashtag and became a global phenomenon. But then how many of us remember that movement? Not many. But, the recent growth in the number of cases of people holding high public offices being held for charges of crimes against women is an indicator of the extent of moral downfall in our society.

It's a fact that most women around the world have experienced sexual harassment, assault, and

violence, or have at times been pushed into a zone where they knew it did not feel right. In a recent high-profile case involving an ambassador of a powerful country, it was a maid at a big establishment accusing the international figure of

the charges. But this is only the tip of the iceberg, as in most imagery which is in no way relatable to the actual product. of the cases, many economically weaker and socially backward victims are silenced under pressure. As a result, many such crimes and lesser crimes go unreported across the world due to fear, shame, absence of social support or lack of will on the part of the authorities to pursue the case.

The media highlights such reports as a custodian of the public. However, if statistics of people involved in adultery

or having a criminal eye were to be taken, the results would be shocking and go beyond the limits of class, age, gender and public profiles. So, when such cases are mounting in the media and courts, and even juveniles and senior people are being tried for them, what is civil society doing to stop them?

We look at three of the most influential mediums of our times — the television, cinema and the internet and we realise that every segment of society is instrumental in fanning the fire of lust. The entertainment channels and filmmakers

manufacture suggestive, indecent images and sell them in the name of entertainment, the concerned authorities also allow them to be aired or screened in the name of freedom of speech and expression and the public consumes them day in and

It is shocking to see that nowadays even ice cream ads

or animations meant for children are stuffed with such

Even if a film gets an 'A' certificate, how does it ensure that younger people do not watch it? And who can confirm that such films are not detrimental to the moral health of adults? How do we expect a generation fed on skin shows to bring up a society safe for women? In light of the situation, our society is doomed to an even greater moral downfall.

The present state is thus a distress call to spiritual organisations, women groups and human rights custodians like the UN to take up the fight against the objectification of women in a big way.

Channels that affect public mentality must be properly guarded and proper steps like the ones mentioned above should be taken to nurture high moral principles in our society that's reeling under the crisis of varied forms as the monster of lust has been on the loose. Such organisations and Government agencies need to impress upon the people that the moral strength of any society is strongly linked with the respect it accords to its women.

Lastly, it has been found that the role of education & media becomes very important in propagating values in society. For, unless and until education is value-based and media, especially electronic and film media make their contribution to creating awareness for values like respect, gender equality, tolerance, and humility, there will not be any peace and harmony in society nor will there be safety for women.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist.

Letters to the Editor

Hardline Turkey drifts away

Turkey has long shared historical ties with undivided India and, quite understandably, enjoys even closer relations with present day Pakistan, with whom it shares a common sectoral identity within Islam. However, India had nurtured a warm relationship with a modern, forward-looking, and secular Turkey. President Erdogan was once admired for his efforts to harmonise democracy with Islamic values, all while driving impressive economic growth. Though Turkey showed an openness to integrating with the European Union, its deep-rooted, complex love-hate relationship with the Arab world remained a persistent undercurrent.

The country found itself entangled in regional conflicts, first Íran's imbroglio, then Syria's civil war reflecting the geopolitical intricacies of its neighborhood. Today, many hardline Muslim-majority nations are facing internal turmoil, much like other states, but their struggles are often cloaked in the language and force of religious fundamentalism. It is disheartening to see historically secular Turkey increasingly pulled toward religious extremism.

Even Bangladesh, once a symbol of progressive moderation, is facing ideological regression. Pakistan continues its slow descent into deeper Talibanisation. Across the board, current leadership in many of these countries appears ill-equipped to counter this rising tide. R NARAYANAN | MUMBAI

Social media: The new battlefield

Social media has emerged as a pivotal weapon in the evolving hybrid warfare between India and Pakistan, shifting the battlefield from land to the digital realm. Platforms like X, WhatsApp, and Facebook are now central to psychological operations, influence campaigns, and the spread

of disinformation. During recent skirmishes, Pakistan's ISPR circulated deepfake videos and doctored images of supposed victories, including fake footage of downed Indian jets. These viral posts aimed to confuse, demoralise, and distort public perception.

In response, Indian agencies like PIB Fact Check and Maharashtra Cyber debunked thousands of fake posts while countering with narratives highlighting Pakistan's human rights abuses. This digital conflict often coincides with cyberattacks. Pakistani hackers disrupted Indian networks as troll armies spread fake news about fuel shortages and unrest. Social media also deepens internal divides. Pakistan pushes communal tensions in India, while Indian actors exploit sectarian rifts in Pakistan. Both aim to destabilise societies from within.

Alarmingly, viral falsehoods have even risked military escalation. As Lt Gen Shivane noted, social media now delivers "psychological bullets" - cheap, deniable, and dangerously effective.

AMARJEET KUMAR | HAZARIBAGH

Pak must change its way for lasting peace

BRAHM

KUMAR NIKUNJ J

The question aries when there will be peace in the region. We are fighting with Pakistan since its birth. Pakistan started to sow the seeds of terrorism and now harvesting too. America financed the war against Russians. And, the ground for terror infrastructure started to built. It was helped by US to fight Russians in Afghanistan.

Once the Russians left the terror machinery started it actions against Kashmir. It's army got radicalised. A whole generation grew with India hate in their syllabus. Mullas got powerful. Pakistan politics got controlled by the army.

Pakistan army became the kingmaker. US and europe were not concerned as all the problems remained in another continent. Pakistan got funds from sources and countries taxpayers paid. Things started to change when they got hit. Osama bin Laden was the US creation. For peace in the region we need terrorist free and dismantling of terror schools. Start an education system which teaches peace. An elected Government which controls the army. Peace will come when selish interest is shed to make way for healthy democracy.

The core contention is that lasting peace necessitates a complete eradication of terrorist infrastructure, a fundamental shift in Pakistan's education system towards peace, and the establishment of a truly democratic, civilian-controlled Government.

SUNIL PRADHAN | NUAPADA

COLONEL SOFIYA QURESHI FACES POLITICAL FIRESTORM



lonel Sofiya Qureshi, along with Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, has become the face of 'Operation Sindoor'! Unfortunately, Sofiya Qureshi appears

differently to different people; and so affects them also differently! Ashoka University, HOD of Political Science, Ali Khan Mahamudabad welcomes her appointment, though he considers it as tokenism!

Mahamudabad hopes that such sensitivity and care should also be shown to the lynch victims. On the other hand, a nameless lady files a complaint and in a blink of eve Harayna police arrests the Professor for insulting the country and the gallant Indian Army!

On the other side we have a Minister in Madhya Pradesh who calls Sofiya Qureshi 'sister of terrorists'. The intellectual qualification of this BJP Minister, Kunwar Vijay Shah, is unknown but he has won the elections 8 times! He also has a prominent reputation of serial foul-mouthed insults to others. The High Court is outraged and directs the party to take action, even the Supreme Court has displayed serious disappointment. However, the party or police has their heads firmly buried in the sand! The CM Mohan Yaday and other leaders of BJP have come out to defend him! He joins a horde of arrogant and tainted BJP leaders who are roaming free.

ANIL BAGARKA I MUMBA

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com in not more than 200 words We appreciate your feedback.

Self-reliance in natural gas: Clearing hurdles in the way

The share of natural gas in India's energy mix has barely moved, reaching only 6.7 per cent. Achieving a boost will require scaling up indigenous output, lowering import dependence, and establishing a supportive policy and regulatory framework



elivering the 75th Independence Day (ID) address on 15th August 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to achieve self-reliance in energy production by boosting the gas-based economy. He wished the share of natural gas (NG) in the total energy mix to go up from subsisting at around 6 per cent to 15 per cent by 2030. He reiterated this at India Energy Week (IEW) held on February 11-14, 2025. Presently, the share is a mere 6.7 per cent. The only way to reach the target is to build indigenous production capabilities to the desired scale.

Where do we stand?

According to the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MPNG), during the financial year (FY) 2024-25, India's consumption of NG was 72.293 billion metric standard cubic meters (bmscm) — an increase of 7 per cent over the level during FY 2023-24. However, the import of NG (it is imported in a liquefied form commonly known as LNG) during FY 2024-25 was 36.699 bmscm — an increase of 15.4 per cent.

Taken as a proportion of consumption, imports were 50.8 per cent during FY 2024-25 up from 47.1 per cent during FY 2023-24. In contrast, the country's production of NG registered declined by 1 per cent to 36.113 bmscm during FY 2024-25.

The State-owned major Oil and Natural Gas Corporation or ONGC produced 18.736 bmscm of NG during FY 2024-25, which was 3 per cent less than 19.316 bmscm during FY

2023-24. The share of production in consumption of NG during FY 2024-25 was 49.2 per cent down from 52.9 per cent during FY 2023-24. The upshot is: that even to comply with the 6 per cent share, India had to import more than 50 per cent of its NG requirement.

Increasing the share of NG in the total energy mix to 15 per cent would require its consumption to increase from its current annual of 72.293 bmscm to 161.791 bmscm (72.293x15/6.7). The current consumption includes domestic production of 36.113 bmscm. If domestic production stagnates at the current level (in sync with the trend of the last few years) then, to achieve the 15 per cent target, the import of LNG will have to be 125.678 bmscm (161.791-36.113) which works out to about 77 per cent of the consumption.

The above calculation assumes no increase in total energy consumption. But, it is increasing at a rapid pace. The country's power demand alone is projected to grow at a compound annual rate of 7 per cent during the next five years (according to the Central Electricity Authority). In that scenario, reliance on imports will be even higher.

How can India increase production?

India has 26 sedimentary basins (SBs) covering an area of 3.4 million sq km that could be searched for



hydrocarbon resources. However, only six of the SBs are under commercial exploitation; these too are sub-optimally utilised. Hydrocarbon exploration is a highly capital-intensive and technology-intensive business involving a long gestation period. It is risky, especially when drilling in deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature (D/UD/HP/HT) fields in offshore areas such as the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin.

Multinational companies

UTTAM GUPTA

(MNCs) such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, Total etc. which have the technology and resources can be enthused to take long-term bets in the Indian hydrocarbon sector provided the Government offers them an opportunity to earn an attractive return on their investment on a 'sustained' basis. This, in turn, requires that their efforts in the discovery and development of NG fields don't face regulatory hurdles and that they can sell

the gas 'freely' at a 'remunerative' price.
On the regulatory front, Modi — Government has removed many hurdles. In recent years, its major

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decisions are: releasing 0.69 million sq km of hitherto 'No go' area (out of a total of 1.73 million sq km SB area lying offshore) for exploration and production (E&P) activity; granting lease rights over the entire economic life of the allotted fields instead of the extant system of short tenure with extensions; amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act to enable prompt access to forest areas for exploration of hydrocarbon resources; allowing E&P firms to pick up a block of their choice and give the operator a composite license to search for hydrocarbon in whatever form vis NG, 'shale gas', CBM (coal bed methane) etc under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing.

Policy decisions ease the process

For long, E&P efforts were hamstrung by cumbersome procedures, multiple approvals and bureaucratic red tape. Approvals were needed at every stage. As many as 37 procedures were required to be followed by a firm awarded block under the New Exploration Licensing Policy or NELP (NELP was launched in 1999 and blocks awarded under it till

Team Modi has substantially liberalised and debureaucratised approvals by providing for self-certification of documents and pre-approved clearance of blocks. Under the Oilfields (Regulations and Development) Amendment Bill, 2024 passed by the Parliament on March 12, 2025, the definition of mineral oils has been broadened/expanded to include crude oil, NG, petroleum, condensate, CBM, shale gas and oil, and other varieties (the earlier definition included only petroleum and NG). Besides, the Bill introduces the concept of 'petroleum lease' to separate oil and gas exploration projects from mining projects. This will prevent the former from getting hamstrung by delays due to land and environmental clearances germane to the latter. The latest amendments in the ORD Act, 2024 also moot an alternative dispute resolution method within or outside India besides decriminalising violations.

decriminalising violations.

The MPNG has also proposed joint development of fields where these are found to be interconnected. This will help avoid disputes like the one seen between ONGC and Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) when the former accused latter of stealing gas from fields given in the KG basin area under NELP. It will also ensure better utilisation of assets and cost savings.

What about freedom of pricing?

Of the domestic gas, on around two-thirds of supplies (mostly from so-called 'legacy fields' given on nomination to ONGC and OIL and from fields given under NELP), the Centre has full control over 'to whom' the supplies will be made and at 'what price'.

Although, from April 1, 2023, based on the recommendations of the Kirit Parikh committee, this price expressed on a per million British thermal units (Btu) basis is arrived at by taking 10 per cent of the monthly average of the Indian crude basket in the preceding month and notified every month, the price thus calculated is subject to a ceiling of US\$ 6.50 per Btu.

Even the pricing of the remaining one-third of domestic NG supplied from the D/UD/HP/HT fields isn't free from control.

Technically though, the firms can go for competitive bidding to determine the price for such supplies (referred to as a 'premium' price), this too is subject to a ceiling linked to the prices of alternate fuels including fuel oil, naphtha, and LNG.

The legacy fields also suffer from high taxes such

as an oil industry development (OID) cess of @20 per cent, higher royalty payments and land taxes in Assam and Rajasthan. Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB) also levies the so-called 'consent for operation fees'.

Besides, NG is not covered under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) which means E&P companies don't get credit for taxes paid on inputs leading to higher cost of gas. The Government should de-regulate the price, allow full freedom of marketing and withdraw taxes and duties.

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

Precision, Power, and Innovation: The Science Behind Operation Sindoor

BY VINAY PATHAK AND SANDEEP JOSHI

n a night, while around 1.7 billion people across two countries were asleep, India decided to settle a score for a cowardly act done by terrorists in Pahalgam.

No declarations. No televised warnings. Just precise and impactful action. In a few minutes, retaliation wasn't just delivered — it was redefined and reframed. That night, revenge gave way to a new doctrine: swift, surgical, tech-driven warfare. A clear and loud message was sent by the top leadership to the harbinger of terror.

But that night, instead of just revenge, a new chapter was silently written — neither in speeches nor headlines, but in the precise language of strategic retaliation.

It is a remarkable new lesson in modern warfare and technology-driven military tactics where silence carries the weight of power and revenge. A hard-hitting message — enough is enough, the nation will not sit quietly in the face of such acts — was sent, powerful enough to reflect the intent of bold leadership. It echoed far beyond borders, impossible for global leaders to ignore. The world took notice of it.

Operation Sindoor — from a precision missile strike by India across the border, deep into the heart of Pakistan, targeting the terrorist camps they had nurtured — was not just a military response to the wounds inflicted in Pahalgam, but it was also a message to our adversaries about our technological advancement.

It signified that India is no longer merely a

It signified that India is no longer merely a buyer of military equipment; rather, it has become a proud producer capable of indigenously developing and deploying next-generation war technologies with excellence.

This wasn't a case of luck or last-minute brilliance. It was the result of the hard work of our scientific community, and its years of relentless effort which was highly focused and deeply purposeful. Behind the calm and composure was a nation often underestimated, steadily transforming the way it thinks about, builds, and commands its defence sector.

Operation Sindoor wasn't just a mission; it became a milestone in the journey that began with one bold, simple idea: What if India no longer had to depend on anyone else to defend itself? That question became a vision, that vision became a resolve, and that resolve became

This transformation is the result of the grand vision of the nation's visionary leadership — a vision patiently nurtured over the last decade years through bold initiatives like NIDHI (National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations), Make in India, the rise of defence-tech startups, and the emergence of a thriving innovation ecosystem. Operation



grand proclamation of this transformation.

This vision became a reality. It stepped out of boardrooms and policy papers and roared onto the global stage. In the labs where startups take birth our young engineers and scientists are fighting a silent war, battling challenges with innovative ideas, crafting technologies that ensure peace through power and strength. Warriors working in the field of science, technology and research are fighting a different kind of battle — not with guns and grenades, but with the grit, code and relentless innovative imagination.

These are the warriors working in the startups. Each breakthrough is a victory for them which motivates them to undertake a new challenging task.

There are quite a few remarkable startups that have made us proud by showcasing their capabilities in drone technology and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). Apart from HAL and IIT-Bombay, it is companies like L&T, Paras Defence and Space Technologies, Drone Destination, IdeaForge Technology and Zeus Numerix are doing path-breaking work.

Their innovations tackle real-world problems, from defence tech to climate solutions, proving that technology is India's strongest shield and startups are its sharpest edge.

Rafale, the magic of engineering from France, soared in perfect synchrony with our very own BrahMos, together executing one of the most precise strikes the modern world has witnessed. This was not mere retaliation; it was a symphony of bold intent and sovereign resolve, where every note was calibrated, every movement deliberated against the attack made by terrorists on the sovereignty of the nation.

India's method of retaliation, language of retaliation, and grammar of retaliation in response

to the point-blank killings by asking about the religion of innocents by Pakistani terrorists in Pahalgam have now become a case study for military strategists and defence experts across the globe.

This wasn't just a military manoeuvre — it was a calibrated expression of resolve and bold intent. With the help of fifth-generation fighter jets like Rafale in the skies and the S-400 Sudarshan Chakra air defence system on guard, India showed that the fusion (Sangam) of global fire-power and homegrown innovation isn't just possible — it's formidable and too powerful.

At a critical hour, indigenously developed technology spoke louder than words, with precision, clarity, and impact and delivered a message that — one the world won't soon forget. The unwavering contribution of our armed forces — marked by sacrifice, dedication, and deep love for the nation — is truly invaluable and incomparable.

We salute their valour and honour their commitment towards protecting our country. And how can we forget the contributions of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the "Father of India's missile programme"? Dr Kalam was instrumental in adding muscle to India's defence capabilities.

Operation Sindoor was not just retaliation — it was India's declaration of a new era in warfare: silent, swift, tech-driven, and sovereign. It marked the rise of indigenous innovation, the boldness of visionary leadership, and the resilience of a nation ready to defend its people with precision and pride. From Pahalgam's pain emerged a powerful message: India will not bow — it will build, strike, and lead. A new doctrine was born, and the world could no longer look away.

(Vinay Pathak is Assistant Professor, IIIT-Sonepat, and Sandeep Joshi is a freelance journalist. Views are personal)

Indus Waters Treaty: A watershed moment for India-Pakistan relations

The brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir — claiming the lives of 26 innocent tourists — has not only shocked the nation but reignited a serious conversation about India's ongoing relations with Pakistan, especially in the context of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The gruesome nature of the attack has prompted a broader reassessment of strategic, diplomatic, and humanitarian ties between the two countries. One major outcome of this reassessment is a renewed scrutiny of the IWT — an agreement that has endured since 1960, but now appears increasingly outdated given Pakistan's repeated provocations.

In a significant development for the first time since the Treaty's inception, Pakistan has expressed a willingness to revisit its terms. This shift comes amid India's stern measures following the attack, including the bold decision to consider suspending elements of the Treaty. It is a move that has been debated in the past but never seriously acted upon — until now.

The Indus Waters Treaty, brokered by the World Bank in 1960 after nine years of negotiations, governs the distribution of water from six rivers in the Indus basin. It allocates exclusive use of the eastern rivers — Sutlei, Beas, and Ravi — to India, while

granting Pakistan control over the western rivers — Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab. India, under the Treaty, is allowed to generate hydroelectric power on the western rivers through "run-of-the-river" projects, but is prohibited from altering the flow through large-scale storage or irrigation.

At the heart of the Treaty lies a spirit of cooperation, goodwill, and mutual trust. The preamble clearly states both countries' intent to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory utilisation of river waters through a cooperative frame-

work. Unfortunately, while India has largely honored this commitment, Pakistan has repeatedly violated the underlying principles by abetting terrorism and interfering in India's internal affairs. The recent Pahalgam massacre — unprecedented in its direct targeting of tourists — underscores a serious breach not only of bilateral trust but also of the moral framework that underpins the Treaty.

India's response was swift. Recognising the attack as a violation of the basic tenets of peace and diplomacy, the Government of India announced a reassessment of the IWT, signaling that continued goodwill cannot be taken for granted. Unlike in previous instances where debate on the Treaty was limited to academic and diplomatic circles, this time the Government took proactive steps, sending a clear message to Islamabad and the international community.

community.

Pakistan's sudden openness to renegotiation reflects a quiet but clear acknowledgment of its vulnerability. Much of the country depends heavily

on the western rivers, especially Jhelum and Chenab,

for agriculture and daily consumption. Any change in India's approach to water flow - whether through infrastructure expansion or short-term flow adjustments — could have significant consequences for Pakistan's water security. This looming reality may have prompted Islamabad to reconsider its rigid stance. It is also worth noting that the IWT includes provisions for revision. Changes can be made, but only through a newly ratified treaty agreed upon by both nations. Given the evolving geopolitical and ecological realities, and especially in light of persistent hostilities, India is well within its rights to propose modifications. The infrastructure required to implement such changes, like increased storage and diversion capacity, would demand long-term planning, but the very possibility is enough to concern Pakistan's leadership.

The Treaty also includes mechanisms for resolving disagreements. These range from bilateral discussions through the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC), to more structured dispute resolution methods involving a Neutral Expert or even an ad hoc Court of Arbitration. Disagreements have arisen in recent years over India's construction of two hydroelectric power plants — Kishenganga (330)

MW) and Ratle (850 MW) — in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan has claimed that aspects of these projects violate Treaty provisions, particularly in terms of design parameters. However, these are "run-of-the-river" projects, and India maintains that they fall within its rights under the IWT. The World Bank is not funding either project, and technical design disputes have remained unresolved despite multiple rounds of talks. India's recent steps to enhance the reservoir capacity of these hydroelectric projects — through desilting and other improvements — are

within the permissible framework but carry potential for temporary control over water flow. Even short-term restrictions, such as temporarily closing dam gates, could have significant repercussions downstream, further highlighting Pakistan's dependence on Indian goodwill

dence on Indian goodwill.

The Pahalgam attack has exposed the fragility of any agreement rooted in one-sided responsibility. India has abided by the IWT even during the most challenging times, while Pakistan has continued to harbor and support terrorism. The attack has given India the moral and strategic justification to question whether the current form of the Treaty serves its national interest. Pakistan's expressed willingness to engage in renegotiations could mark a turning point — either toward genuine cooperation or further tension. The burden now lies on both sides to either reforge a partnership based on mutual respect or prepare for a prolonged period of uncertainty.

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



WORLD 08

UK, European Union ink fresh deals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

ritain and the European Union hailed a new chapter in their relationship Monday after sealing fresh agreements on defence cooperation and easing trade flows at their first formal summit since Brexit.

Five years after the UK left the EU, ties were growing closer again as Prime Minister Keir Starmer met European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and other senior EU officials in London for talks.

The deals will slash red tape, grow the British economy and reset relations with the 27-nation trade bloc, Starmer said, while von der Leyen called the talks a "historic moment" that benefits both sides.

"Britain is back on the world stage," Starmer told reporters. "This deal is a winwin." He hailed Monday's agreements the third package of trade deals struck by his government in as many weeks following accords with the US and India — as "good for jobs, good for bills and good for our borders.

But Britain's opposition parties slammed the deals as backtracking on Brexit and "surrendering" anew to the EU. "We're becoming a rule-taker from Brussels once again," Conservative Party leader Kemi

Here are the main takeaways from the summit:

Cutting red tape on food trade

Officials said they will remove some routine border checks on animal and plant products and align with EU regulations, which will reduce costs on food imports

and exports and make it easier for goods to flow freely across borders.

Businesses have complained about trucks waiting for hours at borders with fresh food that cannot be exported to the EU because of laborious post-Brexit cer-

Five years after the UK left the EU, ties were growing closer again as Prime Minister Keir **Starmer met European Commission President Ursula** von der Leyen and other senior **EU officials in London for talks**

The changes will mean the UK can sell products like raw British burgers, sausages and seafood to the EU again, officials said. The benefits will apply also to movements between the British mainland and Northern Ireland, where post-Brexit customs checks have been a thorny issue for years. While the EU is the UK's largest trading partner, the government said the UK has been hit with a 21 per cent drop in exports since Brexit because of more onerous paperwork and other non-tariff

Defence procurement pact

A new security and defence partnership will pave the way for UK defence firms to access a new EÚ loan programme worth 150 billion euros (USD 170 billion.) That will allow Britain to secure cheap loans backed by the EU budget to buy military equipment, in part to help Ukraine defend itself. The EU has said that the loan pro-

European defense as well as enable more coordinated support for Ukraine.

Fisheries

The deal included a 12-year extension of an agreement allowing EU fishing vessels to operate in UK waters until 2038, which angered UK fishermen and their supporters. While economically minor, fishing has long been a sticking point and symbolically important issue for the UK and EU member states such as France. Disputes over the issue nearly derailed a Brexit deal back in 2020.

Elspeth Macdonald, head of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, called the agreement a "horror show for Scottish fishermen" that was granted in order to secure other objectives. Scottish First Minister John Swinney said the deal was "the direct opposite of what was promised by Brexit."

Easing movement for young people

Post-Brexit visa restrictions have hobbled cross-border activities for professionals such as bankers or lawyers, as well as academic and cultural exchanges, including touring bands.

The UK and EU said they agreed to cooperate on a youth mobility plan that's expected to allow young Britons and Europeans to live and work temporarily in each other's territory, though no details were provided.

British officials insisted that numbers would be capped and stays would be timelimited. The free movement of people remains a politically touchy issue in the UK, with the youth mobility plan seen by

gram will help boost the readiness of some Brexiteers as inching back toward completely free movement for EU nationals to move to the UK. The UK has similar youth mobility arrangements with countries including Australia and Canada.

Cutting airport waits

British passport holders will be able to use e-gates at more European airports as part

Since Brexit, many British travellers cannot use automated gates when they arrive at EU airports. The new measure will end "the dreaded queues at border control," officials said.

Opposition objects to a 'surrender'

Britain's opposition parties have criticised Starmer's bid to reset relations with the EU. The pro-Brexit and anti-immigration Reform UK party, which recently won big in local elections, and the Conservatives have called the trade-offs in the deals a betrayal of Brexit.

Starmer "has surrendered many of the gains we secured, on sovereignty, on money and control over our laws, to the European Union," said Badenoch, the Conservative leader.

Starmer stressed that he did not violate his "red lines": The UK won't rejoin the EU's frictionless single market and customs union, and will not agree to the free movement of people between the UK and the EU. David Henig, a UK trade policy expert at the European Centre for International Political Economy, suggested that while some will continue to argue against agreeing to EU regulations, most Britons likely believe it's time to move forward.

Donald Trump talk with leaders of Russia, Ukraine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kyiv

S President Donald Trump's phone calls with the leaders of Russia and Ukraine deepened expectations that progress might soon be made on ending those countries' more than three-year war, though frustration at the slow pace of negotiations and the absence of any significant breakthrough kept hopes low.

"It is obvious that Russia is trying to buy time to continue the war and occupation," Ukrainian President Volodvmvr Zelenskyy said Tuesday on Telegram. "We are working with partners to put pressure on the Russians to behave differently," he added in an apparent reference to further international sanctions on Russia. Ukraine has offered a comprehensive 30-day ceasefire, which Moscow has effectively rejected by imposing farreaching conditions, and Zelenskyy proposed a face-to-face meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin but the Russian leader spurned that offer.

Trump said his personal intervention was needed to push peace efforts forward, and on Monday he held separate talks over the phone with Zelenskyy and Putin. Russia and Ukraine will "immediately" begin ceasefire negotiations, Trump announced, though there was no detail on when or where such talks might take place.

"The status quo has not changed," Mykhailo Podoliak, a senior adviser to Zelenskyy, wrote on the social platform X on Tuesday. US officials have for the past few months urged Russia and

Ukraine to reach a settlement, as Trump sought a swift end to Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.

Trump said his talks with Putin on Monday were "excellent," but European officials were sceptical about Russia's intentions.

"Putin has never changed his position," Estonian Defence Minister Hanno Pevkur said in Brussels on Tuesday. "Russia actually doesn't want to end this war." The European Union's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, said Russia's failure to negotiate in good faith should trigger threatened US sanctions.

"We really haven't seen, you know, the pressure on Russia from these talks," she told reporters. Also, some were unconvinced by Putin's promise to Trump that Russia is "ready to work with" Ukraine on a "memorandum" outlining the framework for "a possible future peace

"It appears that Putin has devised a way to offer Trump an interim, tangible outcome from Washington's peace efforts without making any real concessions," Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre, said on X. The warring countries are insisting on apparently irreconcilable conditions for peace, and even a temporary truce has been out of reach.

The first direct Russia-Ukraine peace talks since the early weeks of Moscow's 2022 invasion ended after less than two hours last Friday, and while both sides agreed on a large prisoner swap, they clearly remained far apart on key conditions for ending the fighting.

Friction between friends, says **Taiwan President on US Tariff**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Taipei

↑he Taiwanese president said Tuesday that trade tensions between the United States and Taiwan are just "frictions between friends" in a show of optimism as tariff negotiations are underway with Washington.

US President Donald Trump imposed 32 per cent tariffs on all imports from Taiwan as part of sweeping duties levied against all US trading partners last

The tariffs on Taiwanese goods were subsequently lowered to 10 per cent for 90 days to allow for trade negotiations. Officials from both sides held a first round of talks last month, to be followed by another one in the coming weeks.

In a speech marking his first year as president and focusing on Taiwan's strategies to defuse the effects of US tariffs and military threats from China, Lai Chingte struck an accommodating tone despite the tariff pressure.

The US and Taiwan have long "cooperated and have also encouraged each other to grow," he said. "There are bound to be frictions between friends, but they can eventually be reconciled."

"Even if there are differences of opinion, as long as there is a foundation of trust and sincere dialogue, they can understand each other better and deepen their friendship," he added.

The US has traditionally been Taiwan's strongest unofficial ally in the face of mil-

itary threats by China, which considers the self-ruled island its own territory, to be retaken by force if necessary.

Washington is bound by its own laws to provide Taipei with the means to defend itself. Lai said Taiwan would continue to strengthen its national defense capabilities, both through foreign military procurement and domestic arms development, and stand "shoulder to shoulder" with its allies "to exert deterrent power."

"We will prepare adequately to avoid war and achieve the goal of peace," he

He kept open the possibility of talks with Beijing, saying that "Taiwan is very willing to engage in exchanges and cooperation with China" as long as there is mutual respect and dignity. Taiwan's economy is supported by

massive semiconductor firms that supply microchips globally as well as other electronics, advanced manufacturing and green tech makers. Lai said he would continue to encour-

age foreign investment in Taiwan, citing Monday's announcement by American technology company Nvidia about opening a new office in northern Taipei.

Nvidia's Taiwan-born CEO Jensen Huang also announced his company would build an artificial intelligence supercomputer on the island in partnership with TSMC, tech firm Foxconn and the Taiwanese government.

He also backed increased investments by Taiwanese firms in the US.

US President Trump to seal deal on 'big, beautiful' bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Washington

S President Donald Trump is heading to Capitol Hill early Tuesday to seal the deal on his "big, beautiful bill," using the power of political persuasion to unify divided House Republicans on the multitrilliondollar package that is at risk of collapsing ahead of planned votes this week. Trump has implored GOP holdouts to

'STOP TALKING, AND GET IT DONE." But negotiations are slogging along and it's not at all clear the package, with its sweeping tax breaks and cuts to Medicaid, food stamps and green energy programmes, has the support needed from the House's slim Republican majority, who are also being asked to add some USD 350 billion to Trump's border security, deportation and defence agenda.

Conservatives are insisting on quicker, steeper cuts to federal programmes to offset the costs of the trillions of dollars in lost tax revenue. At the same time, a core group of lawmakers from New York and other high-tax states want bigger tax breaks for their voters back home. Worries about piling onto the nation's USD 36 trillion debt are stark.

"I think it's pretty obvious that they're going to need more time," said Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., the chairman of the House Freedom Caucus. "These are complicated issues with trillions of dollars," he said. "We've got to do this thing right." Trump's visit to address House Republicans at their weekly conference meeting comes at a pivotal moment, testing the president's dealmaking powers. House Speaker Mike Johnson is determined to push the bill for-



President Donald Trump holds up a bill for the "Take it Down Act" that he and first lady Melania Trump signed in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington

ward and needs Trump to provide the momentum, either by encouragement or political warnings or a combination of both. With House Democrats lined up against the package, GOP leaders have almost no votes to spare. A key committee hearing is set for the middle of the night Tuesday in hopes of a House floor vote by Wednesday afternoon.

Democrats argue the package is little more than a giveaway to the wealthy at the expense of health care and food programs

Americans rely on. "They literally are trying to take health care away from millions of Americans at

this very moment in the dead of night,"

said House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York. "If this legislation is designed to make life better for the American people, can someone explain to me why they would hold a hearing to advance the bill at 1 a.M. In the morning?"

Trump has been pushing hard for Republicans to unite behind the bill. which has been uniquely shaped in his image as the president's signature domestic policy initiative in Congress.

The sprawling 1,116-page package carries Trump's title, the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," as well as his campaign promises to extend the tax breaks approved during his first term while adding new ones,

including no taxes on tips, automobile loan interest and Social Security. Yet, the price tag is rising and lawmakers are wary of the votes ahead, particularly as the economy teeters with uncertainty. The Committee for a Responsible

Federal Budget, a nonpartisan fiscal watchdog group, estimates that the House bill is shaping up to add roughly USD 3.3 trillion to the debt over the next decade. Republicans criticising the measure

argued that the bill's new spending and tax cuts are front-loaded, while the measures to offset the cost are back-loaded.

In particular, the conservative Republicans are looking to speed up the new work requirements that Republicans want to enact for able-bodied participants in Medicaid. They had been proposed to start January 1, 2029, but GOP Majority Leader Steve Scalise said on CNBC that work requirements for some Medicaid beneficiaries would begin in early 2027.

At least 7.6 million fewer people are expected to have health insurance under the initial Medicaid changes, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said last week. Republican holdouts are also looking to more quickly halt green energy tax breaks, which had been approved as part of the Biden-era Inflation Reduction Act, and are now being used for renewable energy projects across the nation. But for every change Johnson considers to appease the hard-right conservatives, he risks losing support from more traditional and centrist Republicans. Many have signed on to letters protesting deep cuts to Medicaid and food assistance programs and the rolling back of clean energy tax credits.

22 Punjabis make historic gains in Canada's House of Commons elections



SURJIT SINGH FLORA ■ Brampton

aple Leaf Canada has achieved a historic milestone with the newest ▲ federal election: a record 22 candidates of Punjabi descent have earned seats in the House of Commons. This represents a significant rise from the 18 candidates of Punjabi descent in 2021 and the 20 candidates in 2019, respectively.

An important new chapter in Óttawa's multicultural scene has begun, as this surge highlights the increasing political power of one of Canada's major immigrant populations. But none of the political parties won a majority in Canada's 343-member House of Commons in the April 28 snap federal election. On March 23, the New Democratic Party (NDP) had 24 seats, the Bloc Quebecois 33, the Green Party 2, the Conservatives 120, and the governing

Daily tariff threats, threats to Canada's sovereignty, unity, integrity, and reputation, and strategic, immigration, and economic challenges from US President Donald Trump to become the 51st state threatened Canada's economy. Some assumed the voters would elect a majority government with a skilled leader this time. The electorate has picked a hung parliament five times in eight elections. The country has shaped foreign, administrative, security, and economic policies.

Statistics indicate that Canadians have supported Liberal Party Prime Minister Mark Carney with a minority administration and hung parliament in 2019, 2021, and 2025. According to current estimates, the Liberal Party will receive 169 seats, the Conservative 144, the NDP 7, Quebec 23, and the Green Party 1.

The US president unexpectedly intervened embarrassingly on election day. He wished you luck and urged Canadians to vote for me because I can cut taxes in half, strengthen your military, take you to the top of the world for free, buy your products, and develop you fourfold with no taxes or tariffs if you become the 51st state. Marco Rubio, US Secretary of the Interior, said Trump's real goal is to fix the Canada trade deficit. Addressing trade policies directly will solve this. Pierre Poilievre and Mark Carney, Conservative and Liberal party leaders, immediately said Trump should not run in the Canadian elections. Canadians will pick their destiny at the voting box. Canada values independence, sovereignty, unity, and integrity. The US 51st state will never be Canada.

Unexpected election outcomes have occurred. Although Pierre Poliver wanted political change, he aimed for a significant victory in the January 2025 federal elections to form a government. The Conservative Party's 2015, 2019, and 2021



Indian-origin candidates elected as Canadian MPs

federal election defeats and his loss of Carleton, Ontario, drove him to campaign vigorously. His constituency had 19 candidates. The Conservatives won the district but lost Poliver's seat. It went to Liberal Party leader Bruce Fanjoy. Voters chose him over Poliver 42374 to 38581. This shocked conservatives.

The second surprising result is the defeat of NDP leader Jagmeet Singh in British Columbia, where his party is also in government. Singh's party lost its status as a recognised opposition party in the House

of Commons. Any political party needs 12 House seats for this status. Punjabis are gaining ground in outcomes. Of the 65 candidates battling with Punjabi and Sikh groups, 22 are winning this time, up from 18 last time. Ruby Sahota, Maninder Sidhu, Anita Anand (Cabinet Minister), Bardish Chagar (Former Minister), Anju Dhillon, Mukh Dhaliwal, Ikwinder Singh, Randeep Singh, Gurbaksh Saini, and Liberal Party member Param Bains are key victors. Conservative Party Punjabi candidates Jasraj Hallan, Davinder Gill,

Amandeep Gill, Arpan Khanna, Tim Uppal (former minister), Param Gill, Sukhman Gill, Jagsharan Singh Mahal, Herb Gill, etc. won.

Another surprise was that opposition conservative party leader Poilievre will immediately oppose the gallery instead of the house floor because he has lost his own seat. It might take months for Poilievre to run in, even if someone bows out from sapphire-blue Alberta.

It was an extremely humiliating political experience. Catching a 200+ seat wave

election is different. Losing your seat while your party performed well is much more humiliating. Election results confirmed that the leader's image weighed down the party. It's uncertain if anyone can withstand such political embarrassment, but Danielle Smith has become the Premier of Alberta after defecting to a party that has seen a decline from 70 to 9 seats, and she also lost

her seat. Therefore, anything can happen. Key Liberal Party candidate Kamal Khera (Cabinet Minister) lost. Canada will again lead the minority Liberal Party under new economic guru Mark Carney. With an 85% majority, Mark Carney took over from Trudeau and called a quick federal election on March 23. October 2025 was the general election date. He won the Nepean constituency election on April 28.

Mark Carney was Governor of the Banks of Canada and England. He became famous for helping Canada recover from the 2007-08 recession. Like Dr. Manmohan Singh, he is a world-renowned economist. Instead of repairing relations with the US, he wants trade and commercial ties with the EU, China, and India.

After becoming PM, he visited the UK and France for this. As the 25th prime minister, he leads the nation. The Trump catastrophe, tariffs, and adding Canada as the 51st state are his government's greatest challenges. The giant rise in the cost of living, the economic slump, the shortage of housing and healthcare providers for families, government expenditures, crime and drug trafficking, immigration, the environment, and taxation are among major issues.

We are strengthening national security. In the following months, Mark Carney, Canada's economic specialist, will guide a nation through numerous obstacles.

(The writer is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton,

WORLD 09

Syria driest winter triggers severe water crisis in Damascus

nside a mountain above the Syrian capital, Hassan Bashi walked through tunnels that used to be filled with water from a spring famous for its pure waters. The spring rises inside the ruins of a Roman temple in the Barada Valley and flows toward Damascus, which it has been supplying with drinking water for thousands of years.

Normally, during the winter flood season, water fills all the tunnels and washes over much of the temple.

Now, there is only a trickle of water following the driest winter in decades. Bashi, who is a guard but also knows how to operate the pumping and water filtration machines in the absence of the engineer in charge, displayed an old video on his cell phone of high waters inside the ruins. "I have been working at the Ein al-Fijeh spring for 33 years and this is the first year it is that dry," Bashi said. The spring is the main source of water for 5 million people, supplying Damascus and its sub-

the city suffers its worst water shortages in years, many people now rely on buying water from private tanker trucks that fill from wells. Government officials are warning that the situation could get worse in the summer and are urging residents to use water sparingly while showering, cleaning or washing dishes.

'The Ein al-Fijeh spring is working now at its lowest level," said Ahmad Darwish, head of the Damascus City Water Supply Authority, adding that the current year witnessed the lowest rainfall since 1956.

The channels that have been there since the day of the Romans two millennia ago were improved in 1920 and then again in 1980, he said.

Darwish said the springwater water comes mainly from rainfall and melted snow off the mountains along the border with Lebanon, but because of this year's below-average rainfall, "it has given us amounts that are much less than normal." There are 1.1 million homes that get water from the spring, and in order to get

down their consumption, he said.

The spring also feeds the Barada River that cuts through the capital. It is mostly dry this year.

In Damascus's eastern area of Abbasids, Bassam Jbara is feeling the shortage. His neighbourhood only gets water for about 90 minutes a day, compared with previous years when water was always running when they turned on the taps.

Persistent electricity cuts are making the problem worse, he said, as they sometimes have water but no power to pump it to the tankers on the roof of the building. Jbara once had to buy five barrels of undrinkable water from a tanker truck that cost him and his neighbours \$15, a large amount of money in a country where many people make less than \$100 a month. "From what we are seeing, we are heading toward difficult conditions regarding water," he said, fearing that supplies will drop to once or twice a week over the summer. He is already economising.

"The people of Damascus are used to

tap water coming from the Ein al-Fijeh spring, but unfortunately the spring is now weak," Jbara said.

During Syria's 14-year conflict, Ein al-Fijeh was subjected to shelling on several occasions, changing between forces of then- President Bashar Assad and insurgents over the years.

In early 2017, government forces captured the area from insurgents and held it until December when the five-decade Assad dynasty collapsed in a stunning offensive by fighters led by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group, or HTS, of current President Ahmad al-Sharaa.

Tarek Abdul-Wahed returned to his home near the spring in December nearly eight years after he was forced to leave with his family and is now working on rebuilding the restaurant he owned. It was blown up by Assad's forces after he left the area. Abdul-Wahed looked at the dry area that used to be filled with tourists and Syrians who would come in the summer to enjoy the cool weather.

Greece's top diplomat calls war in Gaza 'nightmare'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ United Nations

he world is facing the most turbulent times since World War II, Greece's top diplomat says, pointing to a crossroads in democracy and saying Europe is facing a "political identity crisis?

In a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press, Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis weighed in on two of the globe's major conflicts, saying the "nightmare" and escalating death toll in Gaza must end and Greece stands by Ukraine.

He also noted that US President Donald Trump's tariffs are not "good news."

Here are some takeaways from Monday's interview:

A crisis in democracy tied to inequality Gerapetritis, whose country holds the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council this month, said inequalities between nations and people are challenging "the essence of democracy and the rule of law." As a result, "we have turned into an era where populism and demagogues

are essentially ruling the state," he said. He said global turmoil is also the result

160525.

of technology and the world's mobility, which mean every challenge — from pandemics to climate and migration — touches evervone.

The upheaval also follows a crisis in overall global cooperation and belief in international organisations, which have failed to address challenges in recent years. Nonetheless, Gerapetritis said, Greece believes "democracy has a self-corrective mechanism" and what's needed at this challenging time is strong leadership in major nations and international organizations "to make people believe in the noble cause of being together in peace and prosperity."

Europe is seeking resilience amid the war in Ukraine

The Greek foreign minister said the European Union's requirement that decisions be adopted unanimously by its 27 members — giving a single nation veto power — has become an obstacle.

On the other hand, he said, the veto reflects national interests that should be at the core of European politics.

At the moment, Gerapetritis said Europe is in a "political identity crisis."

DELHI TRANSCO LIMITED

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS Delhi Transco Ltd (A Government of NCT of Delhi Undertaking)

Tender No.T25P111787: Purchase of O/D 245 kV SF6 Circuit

For complete details of the tender please visit following website:-

https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in (Tender ID No.

2025_DTL_272311) and www.dtl.gov.in with Unique No. DTL-9602

All Corrigendum/Addendum/ Amendments/Date of

Extension/Clarifications, if any, to the above e-tenders would

appear only on the above mentioned websites.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE No. 16/2025-2026 Dated: 19/05/2025

Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi - 110001, fo and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procuremen

Last date for bid submission: 17.06.2025 at 1.30 P.M.

tends to invite online tender for the following work:

Breakers as per DTL Technical Specifications.

Pakistan should hand over terrorists to India: Indian envoy to Israel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Jerusalem

akistan should hand over key terrorists Hafiz Saeed, Sajid Mir, and Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi to India, just like the US did with one of the masterminds of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack

Tahawwur Hussain Rana India's Ambassador to Israel JP Singh has said.

Contending that terrorism is a global menace, Singh also called for the formation of an international coalition against it. In an interview with Israeli TV channel i24 on Monday, Singh stressed that India's Operation Sindoor against Pakistan is "paused" and "not over".

Narrating the incidents leading up to India's offensive, Sing said that the oper-

http://gem.gov.in

Ashnoor Textile Mills Ltd.

Regd. Office : Behrampur Road, Village Khandsa, District Gurugram, Haryana 122001

Phone: 91 0124 4809756

CIN: L17226HR1984PLC033384

NOTICE
NOTICE NOTICE Shereby given, pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements

ation was against terror groups in Pahalgam attack of April 22. Pakistan.

"The terrorists killed people based on their religion. They asked people about their religion before killing them, and 26 innocent lives were lost," the Indian ambassador said on the

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public at large is hereby notified that Supriya Jain wife of Shri Ajay Kumar Jain

intend to purchase a Property No.G-118, Land Measuring Area 196.67 Sq.Yds. Situated at PREET VIHAR, Delhi-110092

From M/s. UH REALCON PVT. LTD. at 11, New Raidhani Enclve, Delhi-110092, who

New Rajchani Encive, Delhi-110092, who represent himself absolute owner of the property. It is therefore, Notified that anybody claiming any right, title, interest, share or lien over the aforesaid property may file such claim or objection to the undersigned within a period of 7 days from the date of Publication of this notice.

Otherwise, it will be presumed that the said property is free from all encumbrances, charges and/or lien, etc. and am free to purchase the said property

from the above named seller. Sd/SUPRIYA JAIN#F-184-C, Laxm Nagar, Delhi-110092, Near Paliwa

harmshala, Contact No.9811502365. (SUPRIYA JAIN)

"India's operation was against terror groups and their infrastructure to which Pakistan responded by attacking India's military installations", he emphasised. Citing a long list of terror attacks

NORTHERN RAILWAY

OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

2. Approx. Cost Rs. 98,50,125.75 (Rupees Ninety Eight Lakh Fifty

Earnest Money to be Deposited Thousand Only) Rs. 1,97,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Ninety Seven Thousand Only)

The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement

system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tende

system. • For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. • No

manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest mone

will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Rs. 0.00/

Annual zone work for PE 30.06.2026 for repair to service

buildings & station buildings in the section of JE/Yamuna

Bridge & SSB in the section of SSE/W/DLI/Line under

Thousand One Hundred Twenty Five and Seventy Five

13.06.2025 at 15:00 Hrs

in India that originated from Pakistan, Singh said that the "root cause is these two groups — Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba".

The leaders of Lashkar-e-Taiba, which was behind the Mumbai attack, in which several Iews were also

killed, continue to roam free, he noted.

"They need to do a very simple thing - when the preamble includes goodwill and friendship, they just need to hand over these terrorists to us," the envoy stressed.

LOST & FOUND

I, Abhishek Grover S/o Parveen Kumar Grover R/o G-11 Jangpura Extn. New Delhi-110014. I have lost my BBA degree (Bachelor of business Administration) my Roll No.- 9345505, degree year 2004 S.L No. 04-

PD(2066)C

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shakuntla Devi Mother Of No. 16020895N Hav Vikas Kumar, R/o- Vill- Kalali, PO-Mandholi Khurd, Teh-Siwani Dist- Bhiwani, Harvana-127046, have changed my Shakuntla, vide affidavit dated 20/05/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2067)C I, P. Saravani M/o- JC-774717H Sub Kantarao Ponduru, R/o- 1-83, Vill-Kesavaraopeta, Shermahmmadpuram, Teh-Etcherla, Dist- Srikakulam, A.P.- 532402, have changed my name from P. Saravani to Ponduru Saraveni, vide affidavit dated 20/05/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2068)C

CHANGE OF NAME

I, P. Srinivasa Rao F/o- JC-774717H Sub Kantarao Ponduru, R/o- 1-83, Vill-Kesavaraopeta, Shermahmmadpuram, Teh-Etcherla, Dist- Srikakulam, A.P.- 532402, have changed my name from P. Srinivasa Rao to Ponduru Srinivasarao, affidavit dated 20/05/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2069)C

I, JC-771712Y Rank Sub M Tech 'B' Veh Virender Singh R/o- Shastri Nagar, Bala Ii Colony, Bhiwani, Haryana-127021, Now at Unit-6121 (I) Fd Wksp Cov (608 EME BN) C/O 56 APO, I have changed daughter (Nilu Chauhan) DOB from 22/11/2006 to 28/01/2007, vide affidavit No. IN-DL87152437650894X, Dated 20/05/2025 by Notary Public Delhi.



PUBLIC NOTICE FOR INVITING OBJECTIONS REGARDING REGISTRATION OF THE

PROJECT NAMELY "TULIP VIOLET" UNDER LICENSE NO. 34 OF 2024 DATED 07.03.2024 IN ADITION TO LICENCE NO. 78 OF 2010 DATED 15.10.2010 LOCATED AT SECTOR 69 & 70, GURUGRAM BEING DEVELOPED BY M/S. TULIP INFRATECH PVT. LTD. It is for the information of the general public that M/s. Tulip Infratech Pvt

Ltd. has applied for grant of registration of the project admeasuring 4.176 acres forming part of licence no. 34 of 2024 & 78 OF 2010 granted by DTCP Haryana on 07.03.2024 & 15.10.2010. The project was earlier registered with the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugrar admeasuring 8.44 acres vide Registration No. 36 of 2018 dated 18.12.2018 valid upto 31.12.2020 namely "TULIP VIOLET (Phase-II)". It is further informed that the Director, Town and Country Planning

Department granted licence over an additional area measuring 7.64375 acres (Licence No.34 of 2024 dated 07.03.2024) in Group Housing Colony area measuring 25.44 acres (Licence no. 78 of 2010 dated 15.10.2010) thereby total site area 33.08375 Acres in Sector 69 & 70 Gurugram. Meanwhile the Town & Country Planning Department Haryana has approved the phasing plan (Phase1- 23.18875 acres, Phase 2 – 1.301 acres, Phase 3 – 2.875 acres, Phase 4 – 2.577 acres, Phase 5 – 1.0 acres, Phase 6 – 0.75 acres, Phase 7 – 1.392 acres) vide DRG No. DTCP 11019 having memo no. ZP-663-III/PA/(DK)/2025/13925 dated 18.04.2025 and revised building plan vide Memo No ZP-663 II/PA(DK)/2025/6649 dated 20.02.2025. Thereafter the promoter have applied for registration of Phase 2 & 3 and has approached the Harvana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram for the registration of the project namely "Tulip Violet" As per approval granted by the Director, Town and Country Planning

Department, the promoters have already obtained consent of two-third o existing allottees in respect of earlier license no. 78 of 2010 dated

If anyone concerned have any objection with respect to above, the details are available in the office of the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram which can be seen by any concerned on any working day during office hours i.e., 11.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. upto 30.05.2025 Objections, if any, may be filed on or before 30.05.2025, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and he or she may appear before the authority in person or 02.06.2025 at 11:00 am.

Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority

Brief Description

system for supply of the following items:-

01 19253871 IOH KIT FOR PRAG POLYMERS 111 SET 09-06-25 02 03252226 DECORATIVE THERMOSETTING 33059 NOS 09-06-25 03 02250052A BLOWER MOTOR 1.1 KW 16-06-25 4445 NOS 04 09252404 SNUBBER SPRING FOR BLC WAGON 16-06-25 05 07251096 HELICAL SPRING (CENTRELESS 06 01251725 CONTACT WIRE PARALLEL CLAMP 39000 SET 23-06-25 07 | 19253339 | GEAR CASE ASSLY 236 NOS 30-06-25

Note: 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained. 1477/2025 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY

the following work:-Annual operation and maintenance of track 2025-26 in the section of SSE/P-WAY/SSB under ADEN/DLI. ₹99,88,898.27 (Rs. Ninety Nine Lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Approx Eight Hundred Ninety Eight and Twenty Seven Paise Only) ₹1.99,800/- (Rs. One Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Eighty Earnest Money to be deposited

| ₹1,99,800/- (Rs | Hundred Only)

Cost of tender document Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of Tender | 15:00 Hrs Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen

The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.

No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

No.: 128-W/280/e-Tender Notice/NIT/08/2025-26/W-3 Dated: 19.05.2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 1470/2025

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot (Admission Branch) Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot

Admission Notice M.Sc. Nursing Courses (PMNET-2025)

Online applications are invited alongwith requisite fee for admission to M.Sc. Nursing course, session-2025 in the Govt./University constituent /Private colleges of Punjab through University website from 22.05.2025 to 16.06.2025. Prospectus for admission to M.Sc. Nursing course will be available on university website from 22.05.2025. The Entrance Test (PMNET-2025) for admission to M.Sc. Nursing course will be conducted on

Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing Courses (PPBNET-2025)

Online applications are invited alongwith requisite fee for admission to Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing course, session-2025 in the Govt./University constituent Private colleges of Punjab through University website from 22.05.2025 to 16.06.2025. Prospectus for admission to Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing course will be available on university website from 22.05.2025. The Entrance Test PPBNET-2025) for admission to B.Sc. Nursing course will be conducted on 28.06.2025

Note:- Any Notification/Corrigendum/Amendment by Govt. of Punjab will be followed. For Prospectus/fee details/schedule/online counseling/details & updates visit us at: www.bfuhs.ac.in.

00/12/440/2023/44623 Dated CHD :- 5/20/2025



Baba Farid University of Health Sciences Sadiq Road, Faridkot -151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236

E-TENDER NOTICE

1) Replacement of car door set, binding door with panel, header and skill, ARD with

E-tender are invited for the procurements of following items upto

05-06-2025

atterries for 2 nos. Lifts make ECE 8 person at BFUHS, Faridkot 2) Comprehensive naintenance contract (CMC) for 1.5 ton window a 1.5 ton a 2 ton split Air Conditioner for Faridkot site under BFUHS, Faridkot 3) Construction of Building to set up Medical Gases and laundry plant at TCCC, fazilka 4) Providing and installa tion of Copper pipes for Medical Gases. Vacuum Compressed Air. Oxycen Manifold nd LMO Tank 10KL for TCCC, Fazilka 5) Construction of Pharmacy Block Building in Hospital Complex in GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot 6) Supply and laying of 400 sq. M (3.1/2 core) Cable for new MRI installed Radio-Diagnosis department at super specialty block at GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot 7) Construction of Additional Block for University College of Nursing, faridko

E-tender are invited for the procurements of following items upto

1) Re-Construction of damaged boundary wall in front of University College lursing Nurse Hostel in GGS Medical College & Hospital, Faridkot 2) Specia Repair of Radiation Oncology Department (Cancer Department) of GGS Medical lospital, Faridkot 03) Refilling of 1020 No. Cylinder Fire Extinguisher Hose ssembly and 119 No. New Fire Extinguisher for different department unde BFUHS, faridkot 4) Providing & installing Oxygen, Suction & Air Point, isolation valve & Copper pipe in different department at GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot. Note:- Tender Document can be downloaded from http://eproc.punjab.gov.in

Registrar

00/12/441/2023/44632 Dated CHD :- 5/20/2025

The application form in all respects including the ra chart of items should be completed in all respec and be submitted in Bar Office of Dwarka Court Ba ssociation, New Delhi on or before 25th May 2025 The application received after the said date and tim shall not be entertained and considered in any case All the applications received previously along will

Dwarka Court Complex, Sector-10, Dwarka New Delhi-110 075, Tel: 011-28041409.

hen new application will be considered.

Karan Veer Tyagi, Hony. Secretary, DCBA,

Regulations, 2015, that a meeting of the Boari of Directors of the Company will be held of Thursday, May 29, 2025, inter-alia, to करवाने के उद्देश्य से नगरीय क्षेत्र में दीनदयाल रसोई योजना के तहत 5 स्थाई एवं 3 चलित रसोई केन्द्रों के संचालन हेत consider and approve Audited Financial Result विविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है -of the company for the Fourth Quarter & This information is also available on Company website at www.ashnoortex.com and also of the website of BSE, i.e. www.bseindia.com.

By the order of Boar

Suneel Gupt May 20, 2025 Managing Director DIN-00052084 Gurugram, Haryana NOTICE

INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR RUNNING THE CANTEEN AT DWARKA DISTRICT COURT COMPLEX firms/CATERERS and others Vendors with minimur 3 years' experience and sound financial capability for running the Canteen at Dwarka Court Complex.

PUBLIC NOTICE VASTÜ

VASTU HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED A Public Ltd. Company Incorporat under the Companies Act, 1956 Date of Incorporation:04.02.2005; CIN:U65922MH2005PLC272501,

Tel No:022-24190911; Email : cs@vastuhfc.com Website: https://www.vastuhfc.com SHIFTING OF BRANCH OFFICE

The Branch office of Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Limited ("Company")at **Noid** shall be shifted to the new premises as notioned below from 08th September, 2023 ffective date): Old Address Ground Floor, Plot No. 272, Block-G, Sector 63 NOIDA, Pincode-201309

New Address Plot No.187, Block G, Sector-63, Phase III, Dist. Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida-201301, Uttar Pradesh 201301, Uttar Pradesh
The Old Premises will remain operational ti
07th September, 2025 From 08th Septembe
2025 onwards, all transactions / custome
service requests of the Company should b
sent to the new address only.

In case of any queries, you may contact us at: customercare@vastuhfc.com ddress: Unit Nos. 203 & 204, 2nd Floor, ving, Navbharat Estates, Zakaria Bunc Road, Sewri (West), Mumbai–400015 e: 18-05-2025, Place: NOIDA, U.P.

SOUTH EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED
"A MINI RATNA COMPANY"

NOTICE

All the tenders issued by SECL for procurement of Goods

Works and Services are available on website of SECI

http://www.secl-cil.in,CIL e-procurement portal http://

coalindiatenders.nic.in and Central Public Procurement

Portal http://eprocure.gov.in In addition, procurement is also

done through GeM portal http://gem.gov.in. SECL's mining

services tenders are also now available on GeM portal

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल राष्ट्रीय शहरी आजीविका मिशन

Tender for the following work.

Cost of tender document

Date & Time of submission of

tender bid and opening of tender

Website particulars where complete

details of tender documents can be seen

No. 128-W/280/e -Tender Notice/ NIT/03/2025-26/W-3

paise only)-

E-Mail ID. nulmbhopal@gmail.com, PH No.- 0755-2701123

Dated: 19.05.2025

कं.276/रसोई/2025

भोपाल दिनांक 13.05.2025 -:: निविदा सूचना ::-नगर निगम भोपाल द्वारा मजदर वर्ग एवं जरूरतमंद व्यक्तियों को सस्ती दरों पर पौष्टिक सस्ता एवं स्वच्छ भोजन उपलब्ध

क्रं.	कार्य का नाम	निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क	ईएमडी
1.	5 स्थाई एवं 3 चलित रसोई केन्द्रों का संचालन	3,000/- रूपये	1,39,000/- रूपये

इस योजना के अंतर्गत रूपये 05/- (पांच रूपये) प्रति व्यक्ति की दर से भरपेट भोजन उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा। राज्य शासन द्वारा रूपये 10/- (दस रूपये) प्रति थाली की दर से अनुदान उपलब्ध कराया जावेगा।

रसोई केन्द्रों के संचालन हेत् इच्छक संस्थाओं/एरिया लेवल फेडरेशन/सहायता समह/व्यक्तियों से प्रस्ताव ऑन लाईन

स्थाई रसोई केन्द्र के साथ चिलत रसोई केन्द्रों का संचालन किया जा सकता है।

निविदा नियम एवं शर्ते बेवसाईड www.mptenders.gov.in से डाउनलोड किए जा सकते हैं।

सभी प्रकार के पूर्ण मोहरबंद निविदाएं एवं प्रति दिनांक 18.6.25 को सायं 4:30 PM बजे तक माता मंदिर, हर्षवर्धन कॉम्प्लेक्स स्थित एन.यू.एल.एम. नगर निगम कार्यालय में जमा करना होगा। संस्था द्वारा अपने अर्हता संबंधित समस्त अभिलेख निविदा के साथ संलग्न करना आवश्यक है, कोई भी अन्य अभिलेख निर्धारित तिथि के पश्चात स्वीकार नहीं किया जायेगा। निर्धारित तिथि एवं समय के पश्चात प्राप्त होने वाली निविदाओं पर विचार नहीं किया जावेगा।

निविदा से संबंधित कोई भी संशोधन सामाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित न करते हुए केवल उल्लेखित बेवसाईड पर ही सूचित किये जावेंगे जिला स्तरीय समन्वय अनुश्रवण समिति भोपाल के पास एक अथवा सभी निविदाओं को बिना कारण निरस्त करने का

अधिकार सुरक्षित रहेगा। (आयुक्त महोदय द्वारा अनुमोदित)

(ई-टेण्डर क्र 2025_UAD_424755_1)

नि.क्र. 1771/025/026

नगर निगम भोपाल Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency,

अपर आयुक्त

Chief Engineer

URRDA, Dehradun

First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp-IT Park, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun Ref. No.: I/174752/2025

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice- 04(P-III)/2025-26 The Chief Engineer, URRDA on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids

electronic tendering system for construction of works under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of Udham Singh Nagar for 01 number of packages with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 3.66 Crore including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors (Class-A and above) registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent*

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 20-05-2025. Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying

The bidders are required to submit original affidavit regarding correctness of information urnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with CONCERNED CIRCLE OFFICES, mentioned in SBD on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 26-05-2025 01:00 PM

For further details please log on to www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in

Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract. Note: For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2608125 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to

Secretary

Dated: 21.05.2025

Given under the approval of the Authority and its seal.

India, US discuss speeding conclusion of first phase of bilateral trade pact

ommerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday held discussions with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick in Washington to expedite negotiations on the first phase of the proposed bilateral trade agreement between the two countries. Goyal is in Washington for a ministeriallevel meeting to review the progress of negotiations of the trade pact.

"Good discussions with Secretary @HowardLutnick towards expediting the first tranche of India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement," Goyal said in a post on X. Goyal was in Washington in March also for the trade talks. The minister-level meeting is followed by the deliberations between chief negotiators of the two countries, which will continue until May 22. The meetings come against the backdrop of both countries exploring the possibility of an interim trade arrangement in goods to secure "early mutual wins" ahead of final-



Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal with US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick during a meeting in USA

ising the first phase of the trade agreement by fall (September-October) this year. The main issues that will figure in the negotiations include market access, rules of origin, and non-tariff barriers.

Officials from New Delhi and Washington aim to take advantage of the 90-day tariff pause window to advance the talks. The US has suspended the additional 26 per cent tariffs on India till July 9. It was announced on April 2 to bridge the widening trade deficit.

However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed on the countries will continue to remain in place. To boost bilateral trade, India is seeking duty concessions for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, chemicals, grapes, and bananas in the proposed pact with America. On the other hand, the US wants duty concessions in sectors like certain industrial goods, automobiles (electric vehicles in particular), wines, petrochemical products, dairy, agriculture items such as apples, and tree nuts. The terms of reference (ToRs) for the BTA have been finalised by India and the US, which include around 19 chapters covering issues like tariffs, goods, services, rules of origin, non-tariff barriers, and customs facilitation. The US has on multiple occasions raised

concerns over certain non-tariff barriers being faced by American goods in the Indian markets. The US remained India's largest trading partner for the fourth consecutive year in 2024-25, with bilateral trade valued at USD 131.84 billion. The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in the country's total merchandise trade. With America, India had a trade surplus (the difference between imports and exports) of USD 41.18 billion in goods in 2024-25. It was USD 35.32 billion in 2023-24, USD 27.7 billion in 2022-23, USD 32.85 billion in 2021-22 and USD 22.73 billion in 2020-21. The US has raised concerns over this widening trade deficit.

NITI Aayog's paper bats for revision of defence laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

NITI Aayog's working paper has proposed amendment and revision in defence laws to develop a resilient and efficient defence supply chain in the face of evolving geopolitical tensions, cybersecurity threats, and global supply chain disruptions.

The Aayog in the working paper said a resilient and efficient defence supply chain is vital for national security and operational readiness, and it is imperative to develop a robust logistics strategy that ensures supply chain resilience, efficiency, and security. "Legal and policy frameworks play a crucial role in safeguarding national defence supply chains and ensuring operational readiness," it said.

The paper noted that as defence supply chains are increasingly vulnerable to cyber threats, including espionage, data breaches, and sabotage, integrating robust cybersecurity measures, including blockchain security and end-to-end encryption, is critical to safeguard defence supply chains.

Update the Defence of India Act mise stocking strategies.

(1962) to address cyber resilience, supply chain security, and geopolitical risks, simplify procurement processes and mandate domestic sourcing for critical components. enforce mandatory cybersecurity audits and impose penalties for noncompliance," the paper suggested.

The paper also pitched for providing legal incentives for domestic manufacturers and simplify export regulations and establishing a review committee for periodic updates to defence procurement and cybersecurity laws. Noting that reliance on foreign suppliers for critical defence components poses significant risks during geopolitical conflicts, trade embargoes, and supply chain disruptions, it said strategic supplier diversification, regional sourcing, and domestic manufacturing are essential to mitigate these risks and enhance supply chain resilience.

While pointing out that the traditional 'Just in Case' inventory model used in military logistics results in high carrying costs and storage inefficiencies, the paper suggested that implementing advanced inventory management systems can opti-

BRICS nations call for increased financing for energy transition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

ndia along with BRICS countries has called for increased concessional and **▲**low-cost financing from developed nations to help emerging nations transition towards low-carbon energy usage.

Union Minister for Power Manohar Lal is leading a delegation to attend the BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting which began on May 19 in Brazil. Apart from India and Brazil, BRICS countries include Russia, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates.

"Affirming each country's right to determine its own energy transition path and pace, the ministers advocated efficient use of all energy sources and called for increased concessional and lowcost financing from developed to developing nations," a power ministry statement said on Tuesday. The energy ministers also highlighted the role of the New Development Bank (NDB) in promoting sustainable energy infrastructure, especially through local currency financing.

At the Energy Ministers' meeting, the

participants called for stronger partnerships, supported open, fair, and non-discriminatory international energy markets, and encouraged the use of local currencies in energy trade, the statement said. The ministers also advocated for the adoption of fair, transparent, and consistent guidelines for assessing carbon intensity, energy classification, and mutual recognition of taxonomies and certifications. Underscoring energy security as vital for socio-economic development, they highlighted the importance of market stability, resilient infrastructure, diversified energy sources, and critical

In his address, Lal underscored the vital role of fossil fuels in the global energy mix - especially for developing countries - and urged greater cooperation to promote their cleaner and efficient use through technologies such as coal gasification, carbon capture and storage, and green chemical innovations.

minerals for clean technologies.

BRICS energy ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening energy security and advancing UN Sustainable Development Goal 7.

Mango irradiation operations normalised at Mumbai facility

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

ndia's mango exports to the US are registering healthy growth, and irradiation Loperations at a key mango treatment facility in Mumbai have been normalised after a brief disruption due to a data recording error earlier this month, an official said on Tuesday. The Mumbai-based irradiation facility, which handles the highest volume of mangoes destined for the US, faced an issue during the irradiation process conducted on May 8 and 9, 2025

The error led to the rejection of 12 mango consignments by US authorities due to discrepancies in treatment data.

While the error and its cause are being examined at the senior level by the facility management, the mango irradiation process and its clearance were normalised at the impacted facility with effect from May 10, with no impact on the other two approved facilities," the official said.

The exports of mangoes to the US are done under the Cooperative Service Agreement between APEDA (Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

FSSAI SEEKS CURBS ON ILLEGAL RIPENING AGENTS facilities, particularly those suspected of using

New Delhi: Food regulator FSSAI has asked all states to check illegal use of ripening agents and synthetic coatings for fruits as part of its efforts ensue safe food for people.

"The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has urged all States and Union Territories to intensify inspections and carry out special enforcement drives to curb the illegal use of non-permitted fruit ripening agents, as well as colouring and coating of fruits with synthetic colours or non-permitted wax," the regulator said in a statement on Tuesday.

The Commissioners of Food Safety of all States/UTs and Regional Directors of FSSAI have been requested to maintain strict vigilance over fruit markets and mandis, to curb illegal use of fruit ripening using agents like calcium carbide, commonly known as 'masala'. As part of the enforcement drive, FSSAI has suggested that inspection of godowns and storage

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

The actual procedure and the terms and conditions for operationalising mango exports come under the purview of the "Irradiation operational work plan" signed substances like calcium carbide for ripening, may be carried out. "The presence of calcium carbide on the premises or stored alongside crates of fruits will be treated as circumstantial evidence against the Food Business Operator (FBO), potentially leading to prosecution under the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act Calcium carbide is strictly prohibited for the

artificial ripening of fruits under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011. "The use of this substance poses serious health risks and is known to cause mouth ulcers, gastric irritation and has carcinogenic properties," the regulator pointed out. Further, FSSAI has also identified cases where FBOs are using ethephon solution to artificially ripen bananas and other fruits by dipping them directly into the chemical.

between USDA-APHIS, the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO), under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers

Welfare and APEDA, as the Co-operator. As per the work plan, procurement of mangoes is done from registered farms, which are then graded and sorted at APEDA and NPPO (National Plant Protection Organisation) recognised packhouses, then followed by fungicidal treatment of hot water and finally irradiated at USDA approved irradiation facilities, which are three, in the current year. "All such treatment facilities have Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) addressing irradiation of commodities for the mitigation of plant pests," the official said.

In the 2024-25 period (as per First Advance Estimates), India produced about 22.66 million metric tonnes of mangoes, marking a 9 per cent increase over the previous year. The country contributes around 43 per cent of global mango production. Major mango producing states include

Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, contributing 6.07 million metric tonnes (27 per cent) and 4.98 million metric tonnes respectively, followed by Bihar, Karnataka and Guiarat.

India is the sixth largest exporter of mangoes in the world. India's exports of fresh mangoes, in terms of value have increased by 66 per cent to the world in the last four years from \$36.22 million in FY21 to \$60.14 million in FY 24.

Sensex, Nifty tumble 1 per cent on third day of decline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Mumba

alling for the third day in a row, benchmark stock indices ■ Sensex and Nifty tumbled 1 per cent on Tuesday dragged down by profit taking in blue-chips such as HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and ICICI Bank. Retreating from early highs, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 872.98 points or 1.06 per cent to settle at 81,186.44 as 27 of its constituents closed lower and three with gains. During the day, it dropped 905.72 points or 1.10 per cent to 81,153.70 as profit taking emerged in auto, financials and defence stocks.

The broader NSE Nifty tumbled 261.55 points or 1.05 per cent to 24,683.90. Analysts said investors opted for profit-booking as they awaited more clarity on the India-US trade agreement.

From Sensex firms, Eternal dropped the most by 4.10 per cent. Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Nestle, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Asian Paints were also among the laggards. HDFC Bank dropped by 1.26 per cent and index major Reliance Industries by 1.13 per cent. Tata Steel, Infosys and ITC were the gainers.

US tariffs unpredictability has negative credit consequences: Moody's PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi flare-up of tensions between India and including companies, governments and

oody's Ratings on Tuesday said the uncertainties around US tar-▲iffs have negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets, including companies, governments and banks.

The on-again, off-again US tariffs and difficulty predicting US trade policy have negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets," Moody's said. Besides, geopolitics is an additional stress for emerging markets, including the

Pakistan. Exporters are most directly exposed to US tariff changes, but most debt issuers face indirect effects, Moody's said, adding tariffs will reach a much bigger and varied group of debt issuers indirectly through slowing economic growth and, for many, commodity price declines, currency depreciation and investor risk aversion.

"The raft of tariffs the US administration has announced, altered and paused this year has negative credit consequences for debt issuers across emerging markets,

banks," Moody's said. Companies that rely on exports to the US are most exposed. But the wider effects of tariffs and trade uncertainty on consumer, business and financial activity will affect most emerging market entities, even as tariff deals emerge, it added. In early April, the US administration announced and then paused for 90 days the implementation of sweeping, country-specific tariffs on trading partners.

It maintained a base 10 per cent tariff with exemptions for some sectors and

higher tariffs imposed previously for other sectors including steel and aluminum. The US also raised tariffs to 145 per cent on imports of most goods from China, prompting China to raise tariffs on US goods to 125 per cent - both in addition to already existing tariffs.

reached an agreement to lower some of the tariffs on each other for 90 days, effective May 14 to 30 per cent for US imports of Chinese goods and to 10 per cent for Chinese imports of some US goods. "This development in US-China trade

global trade and improves the balance of risks around the global growth outlook," Moody's said. But, US tariffs on other key trading partners and sectoral tariffs are either in place or still to be negotiated, and trade uncertainty will continue to weigh A month later, the US and China on consumer and business confidence and on spending and investment decisions, it added. The US has begun trade discussions with a number of countries. And it reached a temporary tariff agreement with China in May, just days after reaching a separate deal with the UK.

POWERGRID posts PAT of ₹15,521 crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ower Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a 'Maharatna' Company under Ministry of Power, GoI, has announced financial results for period ended Q4FY25 and FY25. For Q4FY25, on standalone basis, company has reported PAT of ₹4,336 crore and total income of ₹12,482 crore registering a YoY growth of 5 per cent and 2per cent respectively. On consolidated basis company has reported PAT of ₹4,143 crore and Total Income of ₹12,591 crore. For FY25, on standalone basis, company posted PAT (including discontinued operations) and Total Income of ₹15,354 crore and ₹46,325 crore respectively. On consolidated basis, company posted PAT and Total Income of ₹15,521 crore and ₹47,459 Crore respectively.



The Company has proposed a final dividend of ₹1.25 per share on a face value of ₹10/- each (12.50per cent of the paidup share capital) in addition to interim dividend of ₹7.75/- per share. The total dividend for the year thus amounts to ₹9 per share. During FY25, the Company

incurred a Capital Expenditure of ₹26,255 crore and capitalised assets worth ₹9,014 crore (excluding FERV) on a consolidated basis. POWERGRID's Gross Fixed Assets on consolidated basis (including lease receivable) stood at ₹2,90,715 crore as on March 31, 2025.

Need five per cent growth in agriculture, says Chouhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

griculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday said India requires a five per cent annual growth rate in agriculture and allied sectors to become a developed nation by 2047. Chouhan highlighted that foodgrain is grown on 93 per cent of farmland, but the growth is just 1.5 per cent.

'We are working towards bridging the yield gap in crops and achieving a national average yield... If we have to make India a developed nation by 2047, agriculture and allied sectors have to grow at 5 per cent annually," he said. He was speaking at a press conference on the sidelines of the annual conference of Vice Chancellors of Agricultural Universities

and Directors of ICAR Institutes. The minister expressed confidence that the five per cent annual growth rate is achievable, emphasising that various agricultural institutes play a key role in this endeavour. "Research plays a very important role in increasing agricultural production and reducing costs. Our target is to maintain an annual agricultural growth rate of 5 per cent. Our effort is that all the research institutions work in one direction to achieve the goals," he said. Chouhan noted that the agriculture and allied sector must achieve \$1 trillion for India to become a \$5 trillion econo-

He also stressed the need to enhance farm exports to 20 per cent from the current level of six per cent.

Amrit Bharat station scheme: Transforming icons of change, mirrors of cultural identity



JAYA VARMA SINHA

India's transformation today is swift and visible-not just in policy documents or political statements, but in its physical landscape. The

changes are apparent in newly built roads, high-speed expressways and world-class airports that rival international standards. These developments reflect a deeper shift in how India connects its cities and empowers its people. Once neglected, the railway sector is now emerging as a crucial part of this progress, shedding its image of overcrowded and outdated stations to become a showcase of culture, efficiency and innovation. The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is a central component of this transformation. Led by Indian Railways, the initiative aims to modernise over 1,300 railway stations across the country. But this mission goes far beyond architectural upgrades or technological enhancements. It represents a fundamental shift in how India approaches public infrastructure-blending functionality with inclusivity, heritage with modernity and convenience with sustainability. The scheme envisions railway stations not just as transit points but as vibrant, integrated spaces that reflect a city's character and support its community.

At the heart of the scheme is the principle that quality public services contribute directly to the dignity and well-being of every citizen. Where stations once focused only on managing high footfall, they are now being repositioned as important civic spaces-hubs that interconnect culture, economy and daily life. The scheme involves preparing specific master plans for each station, tailored to its location, passenger traffic and local identity. These plans are not rigid; they are designed to evolve and adapt to emerging technologies, population growth and shifting urban

needs. Development proceeds in phases, ensuring minimal disruption to existing operations while allowing space for inno-

Rather than relying on cosmetic changes like new paint or expanded platforms, the initiative reimagines the entire purpose of a railway station. Stations are now seen as spaces that offer more than transportationthey serve as shopping areas, tourism gateways, business zones and community centers

Every design decision is centered on improving user experience. Passenger entry and exit points are being reorganised to reduce congestion and ensure smooth movement at all times. This is especially valuable for senior citizens, families with young children and those with mobility challenges. Inside the stations, modern waiting lounges, better lighting, improved air circulation and ergonomic seating have replaced the once-cramped and dimly lit spaces. Toilet facilities are being modernised to meet high standards of hygiene and comfort. Digital kiosks provide multilingual support and reduce queues at ticket counters, enhancing accessibility for all travelers. To ensure universal design, features like elevators, escalators and clearly marked signage are being added, empowering persons with disabilities and the elderly to navigate the space independently.

The project also emphasises cleanliness, cultural expression and environmental consciousness. Clean stations are seen not just as a hygiene requirement but as a sign of respect and dignity for passengers. Free Wi-Fi at stations allows travelers from even the most remote or underserved areas to stay connected, access information and continue working while in transit. This digital connectivity bridges gaps for rural users and supports modern professionals

In promoting sustainability, the scheme incorporates eco-friendly features such as green pathways and climate-sensitive landscaping.

These not only reduce the environmental footprint but also enhance the beauty and comfort of the station environment. Measures like energy-efficient systems, better air flow and the use of ballastless tracks help reduce noise, pollution and long-term maintenance challenges. Rooftop plazas, where feasible, add community value by creating public gathering spaces and opportunities for commercial activities. One of the most unique aspects of the scheme is the One Station One Product initiative. This program transforms stations into marketplaces where local artisans can showcase and sell regional handicrafts, handlooms, foods and specialty products. In doing so, it strengthens the local economy, revives traditional art forms and forges a deeper connection between travelers and the communities they pass through. This also promotes greater coop-

As the scheme continues to roll out, stations are being equipped with executive lounges, meeting areas and real-time digital updates to cater to tourists, pilgrims and business travelers alike. The design philosophy is deeply rooted in human-centered thinking-ensuring that every traveler feels welcome, supported and represented in the space.

\It marks a shift from a utilitarian design model to one that emphasises user comfort, civic pride and long-term resilience. India's railway stations are becoming spaces where journeys begin not just physically, but emotionally and socially. They serve as mirrors of the nation's diverse culture and as gateways to opportunity and unity. The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is not simply upgrading infrastructure-it is redefining the role of railway stations in Indian life.

(The author is former chairperson, eration between local governments and the Railway Board)

Ministry unveils directives for competitions, discomfort in IOA

iting the "prime importance" of national events in the context of India's bid to host the 2036 Olympics, the Sports Ministry has unveiled directives on the procedure and timeline for the conduct of marquee domestic competitions which has caused some discomfort in the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

In a six-page directive issued to the IOA, the Paralympic Committee of India and the National Sports Federations (NSFs), the ministry said it is imperative that the National Games and the Championships "honour their national character."

'Towards this end, the IOA/PCI/NSFs shall adopt a system of Olympic and Paralympic Cycle planning and publish in advance their respective annual calendars, so that all the stakeholders have a clear idea and opportunity to plan interventions and allocate and deploy resources," the ministry stated. "Compliance with the above-mentioned procedure and requirements will be reviewed at the time of annual recognition process in terms of the Sports Code," it added in the missive.

The ministry said the Games Technical

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Conduct Committee, list of disciplines in the National Games, and eligibility criteria for participants should be communicated to it at least six months prior to the showpiece. It then goes on to direct the IOA and the NSFs to submit a schedule of the events to be held at least 45 days before the actual commencement. The IOA and NSFs have also been told to provide a "written description of all measures that will be undertaken in respect of anti-doping, agefraud, match integrity, prevention of sexual harassment and athlete welfare and safety...Whistle-blower and reporting protocols and grievance redressal measures."

Although no official response was forthcoming from the IOA, it is reliably learnt that the body is not happy to these directives as they are being seen as government interference in what has purely been a domain of the NSFs and the IOA. The ministry said speedy dispute resolution is an essential aspect of well-organised events and all national competitions must have a robust ad-hoc panel to handle complaints from athletes and officials.

Government interference in the day-today functioning of the NSFs and the national olympic committee is viewed as violation of Olympic Charter by the International Olympic Committee. The ministry, on its part, acknowledged that the Olympic Charter, the Paralympic Charter and the National Sports Development Code "provide for the autonomy and responsibility of the IOA, the PCI and the NSFs for conduct of events such as the National Games and National Championships in association with their affiliate units." But it then went on to state that the ministry too has a role as these events also enable the medal winners to "enjoy the benefits of different government policies and programmes...

These include "Sports Quota benefits for admission in educational institutions and in recruitments, as also in the opportunities for recognition as Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit under various governance instruments.



Fitness prime focus of Indian women's hockey team: Salima

ndian women's hockey team captain Salima Tete on Tuesday said fitness is ■ the side's "prime focus" currently as it's the key in their quest to become a force to reckon with globally.

Harendra Singh, who took over as head coach of the team in April 2024, has always emphasised on the importance of fitness, strength, and speed, and Salima concurred. "Fitness is an area which (Harendra) sir always emphasised on after taking charge of the team. If you are an athlete and have fitness you can achieve everything in life. Our main focus right now is on fitness, if you have fitness you can beat any team in this world," Salima said.

She was speaking after a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Hockey India and Amiity University Online here. "I have speed but what I have observed is that players like

Sunelita Toppo, Navneet Kaur, Laremsiami, Sharmila and all others who didn't have speed, are now very quick on the pitch. "Our main focus is on fitness now. After every break when we rejoin the camp we have to go through yo-yo test."

Asked about their average yo-yo test score, Salima said it is 19.4. The Indian women recently toured Australia for a three-match exposure series which they lost 1-2 against the world no 5 side. But Salima preferred to look at the positives from the tour. "Have learnt a lot from the Australia tour. Australia is a very good team but we played well against them. The learnings from Australia tour is that whatever mistakes we did, we will rectiy them in European FIH Pro League," she said. "We lacked in finishing and Harendra sir is working a lot in that area.

"What we learnt is not to give up ever, which was visible in our 1-0 win against Australia in the last match."

Khelo India Beach Games reflect power of sports: PM Andaman & Nicobar Islands. rime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed the "transformative force" of sports while describ-

ing the inaugural Khelo India Beach Games as a watershed moment in the country's sporting history. The Games, being held under the ever-expanding Khelo India umbrella for the first time, were formally declared open on Monday by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, in a colourful ceremony on the Ghoghla Beach here.

Promising that the Games would make waves in India's sporting calendar, Modi congratulated the Games' organisers, and extended his best wishes in his message

In a nation as diverse as ours, sports has always held a unique power that unites cultures, regions and languages," Modi said in his message. "The vibrant energy of sports goes beyond entertainment and has become a transformative force, symbolising national pride and aspirations of our youth. "It is in this context that the Khelo India Beach Games hold a greater significance," he added. The PM said the choice of Diu as the venue for the inaugural KIBG was "fitting". "An amalgamation of sun, sand and water, they enhance the physical challenge and at the same time, celebrate our coastal heritage. As waves lash the shores and athletes compete, India will script a new sporting chapter," he added. Over 1,350 athletes from over

30 states and Union Territories will compete in the KIBG. Athletes will compete across six medal sports: football, volleyball, sepaktakraw, kabaddi, pencak silat and open water swimming. Mallakhamb and tug-of-war are the two non-medal (demonstration) disciplines

The opening ceremony showcased India's rich diversity through traditional dance forms. It was attended by several dignitaries including Praful Patel, Administrator of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep, K Kailashnathan, Lt Governor of

Puducherry and Admiral DK Joshi, Lt Governor of the

Mandaviya reiterated India's commitment to become a sporting superpower by 2047. "Today, we are not just inaugurating a sports event, we are heralding India's first beach sports revolution. I believe that where there are waves, there should be passion; where there is sand, there should be a fire of enthusiasm - and the Khelo India Beach Games have ignited that fire in all our hearts today," Mandaviya said.

Mandaviya laid emphasis on how the government has made significant investments over the last few years to strengthen the sporting ecosystem through improved infrastructure, better training facilities and enhanced support for sportspersons. Mandaviya said the Games are a way to "strengthen the domestic sports infrastructure and send a strong message to the world that India is capable of hosting international sporting events of any scale."

Mandaviya also added that the KIBG should be given their due significance. "Such sports like beach volleyball not only appeal to the youth as a hobby but also offer them career opportunities. This is the first time that competitive sports are being held on such a large scale on the beaches of India," he said. The minister added that India is becoming a fitness conscious nation and a culture of sports has become the "new normal".



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Delhi

lympian javelin thrower Shivpal Singh has failed a dope test for the second time in his career, a development which may see him being banned for a maximum period of eight years if found guilty. The 29-year-old, who competed at the

Tokyo Olympics, is learnt to have returned positive for a banned substance when his urine sample taken out of competition earlier this year was tested. He was training at the NIS Patiala then.

He has been provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency



(NADA). "Yes, he has tested positive for banned substance. It's his second dope offence," a source privy to the

development told to media on conditions of anonymity.

If proven guilty and handed a lengthy ban, Shivpal's career will be as good as

Under the NADA and WADA rules, an athlete can be banned for a maximum eight years for a second doping offence.

Shivpal's best achievement in his career is the silver medal he had won at the 2019 Asian Championships in Doha, where he

had thrown his personal best of 86.23m. Earlier in 2021, Shivpal's dope sample had tested positive for a steroid in an outof-competition test. The Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel of NADA, in August 2022, had handed him a four-year ban beginning from 2021, holding him guilty of committing a doping offence.

He was to serve the ban till 2025 but was able to argue successfully before the Appeal Panel of the NADA that "contaminated supplements" were behind his flunked dope test.

The Appeal Panel, in January 2023, accepted his contention and reduced the ban period from four years to just one.

He returned to action in April 2023 and won a bronze at the National Inter-State Championships in Bhubaneswar in June that year. He also won gold in the 2023 National Games in Goa.

Magnus forced into draw in showdown against 'the world'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Berlin

orwegian chess grandmaster Magnus Carlsen was forced into a draw Monday by more than 143,000 people worldwide playing against him in a single, record-setting game.

Billed as Magnus Carlsen vs. The World," the online match began April 4 on Chess.Com, the world's largest chess website, and was the first-ever online freestyle game to feature a world champion. The mega-match ended after Team

World checked Carlsen's king a third time, a stunning outcome after Chess.Com had predicted Carlsen would win by a wide margin.

Team World voted on each move and each side had 24 hours to make their play. Carlsen played the white pieces.

The world won on move 32 after checking Carlsen's king three times in the corner of the board where it could not escape. The rule is called "threefold repetition," meaning all of the pieces on the board are in the exact same position three times to prompt a draw.

Very, very sound chess'Carlsen, 34, became the world's top-ranked player in 2010 aged 19 and has won five World Championships. He achieved the highest-



remained the undisputed world number one for more than a decade. "Overall, the world' has played very, very

sound chess from the start. Maybe not

going for most enterprising options, but kind of keeping it more in vein with normal chess - which isn't always the best strategy, but it worked out well this time," Carlsen said in a statement Friday as Monday's draw seemed imminent.

Because it was a freestyle match, the bishops, knights, rooks, queen and king were randomly shuffled around the board while the pawns remained in their usual spots. Freestyle chess is popular because it allows players to be more creative and avoid memorization. We made history' This was the third "vs.

The World" record-setting online game. In 1999, Russian grandmaster Garry Kasparov played against more than 50,000 people on the Microsoft Network and won after four months.

Last year, Indian grandmaster Viswanathan Anand won his "vs. The World" match against nearly 70,000 players on Chess.Com.

In the Chess.Com virtual chat this week, players appeared split on whether to force the draw - and claim the glory - or to keep playing against Carlsen, even if it ultimately meant a loss.

"Don't Draw! Let's keep playing Magnus," one user wrote. "This is an opportunity that won't come along again. I'd rather play the Master all the way to the end and see if we can battle it out another 20 or 30 moves! Let's have some FUN!!!" Another added: "Thanks Magnus for such a great game.

HIL 2026 to start from January 5, says secretary general Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Noida

♦he 2026 edition of the Hockey from January 5, the national fed-cleared, it's a false news," he said. eration's secretary general Bhola Nath Singh said here on Tuesday. The HIL, which was revived after a gap of seven years, was last held from December 28 to February 1 this year.

"The HIL window is fixed and the men's HIL will continue to be an eightteam competition but the women's HIL will be of six teams from four from next year. The venues are yet not decided but we are in consultation with all stakeholders and soon we will have an update," Singh said after a MoU was signed between HI and Amity University Online Education. "Looking into the sentiments of foreign players and their Christmas celebrations, we have decided the next HIL will be from January 5," he added.

Singh also refuted reports that some national and foreign players haven't got their dues from franchises for their services in the last HIL. "We will follow the guidelines of HIL, if a franchise wants to keep the same setup, they are free to do

that. There is also a guideline that a franchise can keep their top 12 players and release rest for auction, then they will go India League (HIL) will begin into auction list. "All dues of players are

> As per the MoU singed on Tuesday hockey players of the country will get academic scholarships from Amity University to pursue any professional or undergraduate course. "The hockey players who want to study and build a career beyond the game can now do that because it's an online course. They can do the course from anywhere, while during national camp, or from abroad. It's a facility that Amity University has provided them," Singh said. Amity University Online chairman Ajit Chauhan elaborated on the MoU. "Hockey is pride of India and we wanted first to sign with hockey to transform lives of players through quality online education. We are also talking to Wrestling Federation of India, Archery Association of India and Athletics Federation of India, but we wanted to start with hockey," he said.

"For international players 100 per cent scholarships, for state and reginal players, there is 50 per cent, and for upcoming players 30 per cent."

US Open's Arthur Ashe Stadium to get overhaul

dhe US Open's Arthur Ashe Stadium will get an overhaul as part of an \$800 million project announced Monday that the US Tennis Association is touting as the "largest single investment" in the history of its Grand Slam tournament. The USTA said it is funding the improvements at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, with no help from the city government.

According to a class-action antitrust lawsuit filed in federal court in New York in March by a players' group cofounded by Novak Djokovic, the four major tennis tournaments — the US Open, Wimbledon, French Open and Australian Open — "generated over \$1.5 billion collectively in 2024, while only paying between (10 per cent to 20 per cent) of revenue to players."

Separately, in April, Djokovic, Jannik Sinner, Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff were among 20 leading tennis players who signed a letter sent to the heads of the Grand Slam tournaments seeking more prize money and a in Grand Slam tennis.

greater say in what they called "decisions that directly impact us." The USTA said there will not be interruption to scheduled play or fan access for the next two editions of the US Open. Play in the main draw this year begins on Aug. 24 — shifting to a Sunday start for the first time in the Open era, which began in 1968, and adding a 15th day of competition.

The USTA's work, which is expected to be done in time for the 2027 US Open, includes constructing a \$250 million player performance center.

The new player area will be next to the practice courts and include additional courts, locker rooms, lounges and an open-air warm up area so players be acclimated to the conditions before they go to the court for their matches.

USTA executives did not say if ticket prices would increase as a result of the project. Ashe's courtside-level seating capacity will increase from 3,000 to 5,000, while some seats in other sections will be removed, leaving the arena's total similar to what it is now — around 23,000 to 24,000, the biggest

Tour de France's new Montmartre climb could be game changer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Paris

reaking with tradition at the Tour de France is stirring controversy. Since race organisers announced plans last week to climb the iconic Montmartre hill in Paris during the final stage in July, the cycling world has been abuzz. Could the climb actually decide the Tour winner? Or disrupt the final sprint by injecting tactical uncertainty into what is usually a celebratory day?

Well, that remains to be seen. But one thing seems certain: The stage will be a spectacle. At last year's Olympics, massive crowds lined the streets of Montmartre the area in the northern part of Paris that is popular among artists and offers grand vistas of the city - to cheer on riders.

Inspired by the frenetic atmosphere and

willing to build on the momentum, Tour organizers said this month that riders competing in cycling's biggest race this summer would climb the Montmartre hill and pass beneath the Sacré-Coeur basilica before "battling it out on a stage that may break from the traditions established over the past 50 years in the heart of the capital." Traditionally, the Tour final stage is largely processional until a sprint decides the day's winner on the Champs-Élysées. Last year's final stage was held outside Paris for the first time since 1905 because of a



clash with the Olympics, moving instead to Nice. The world famous avenue is back on the program this year for the conclusion of the 3,320-kilometer (2,060-mile) race. The inclusion of the steep Montmartre climb could dramatically change the dynamics of the stage. If the hill features just a few kilometers from the finish line, or is climbed several times, pure sprinters will likely be dropped before they

general classification remains tight ahead of the final stage, the yellow jersey itself could be decided in Paris.

Riders not happy

Full details of the route will be presented at a news conference on Wednesday. With a peloton roughly twice as big as it was at the Olympics, organizers are working with Paris authorities and the Prefecture of police to ensure the securican compete for the stage win. And if the

streets of the area. But some top riders have already expressed their lack of enthusiasm about the addition.

"Montmartre was nice to do in the Olympics, it seemed good, a lot of people, a really good atmosphere," two-time Tour champion Jonas Vingegaard told reporters this week. "But when they came to the Montmartre, there was only 15 riders left in the bunch. And when we do the Tour de France, there will be 150 guys fighting for positions on a very narrow climb. It could end up being more stress than they want to have." Even Remco Evenepoel, who won the Olympic men's road race in Paris last year and the gold medal in the time trial, is also opposed to the idea. "There will be enough battle for posi-

tioning in the first week of the Tour," he told sports media Sporza. "With Montmartre added, that would mean we have to do the same on the last day. We will be tired enough by then." Evenepoel also lamented the fact that sprinters would be robbed of a rare chance to claim a prestigious win on the world famous avenue. They get a big chance every year to sprint for a stage win on the Champs-Elysées," he said. "That chance is then taken away from them. In my opinion, Montmartre is an unnecessary obstacle."

his reputation: Mitchell Marsh

ishabh Pant couldn't live up to his reputation of being a bonafide match-winner despite his staggering ₹27 crore billing and Lthe Lucknow Super Giants skipper would be the first one to admit that he didn't have a great IPL season, teammate Mitchell Marsh said after his team's ouster from the cash-rich league.

LSG lost to Sunrisers Hyderabad by six wickets and are now officially out of play-offs race with two more matches left. Pant, on his part, has scored 134 runs in 12 games and at a strike-rate of below 100 in what has been his worst IPL season since he made his debut for Delhi Capitals in 2016. "He would be the first one to say that he hasn't had a season that he would have liked, but I know for myself personally that that's the way cricket goes sometimes," Marsh, who has tallied 443 runs so far with five half-centuries told reporters. Marsh hoped that Pant will turn a corner in the last two games for LSG even though it would count for little in the larger context. "We know that he's a fantastic player, highly skilled and highly talented, so he will be back, but yeah, hopefully the last two games." Asked about the positives for the season, Marsh said that the balance sheet could be checked after the end of the 14th league game.

"I think the time for reflection is probably after the season and for me personally just focus on trying to contribute to winning the next two games for our team and for our franchise. Like I said, the IPL is a beast of a tournament and the margins are really small. "We lost a couple of close games throughout the season that now have come back to bite us, but yeah, it's all about finishing off the season as strong as we possibly can now."

Few times we have been tripped by conditions: Vettori

Sunrisers Hyderabad had changed the template of T20 batting last season with their attack-only philosophy but it didn't work during this season where they have been knocked out of the play-offs race with two matches still left, head coach Daniel Vettori accepted after winning the inconsequential game.

EVENTUALLY YOU WAKE UP, AND NIGHTMARE GETS OVER: AAKASH CHOPRA



Rishabh Pant could not live up to

New Delhi: Former India cricketer Aakash Chopra believes Rishabh Pant will need to reassess his approach in T20 cricket after enduring a "nightmare" IPL season squandering a vital opportunity to stake a stronger claim for a spot in India's T20 set-up. Pant, who is not a regular in India's T20 squad, was expected to make a mark this seasor However, the Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) skipper managed only 135 runs in 12 matches after being bought for a mammoth Rs 27 crore. LSG bowed out of the playoff race following their defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad on Monday night. "Success might teach you a few things. Failures, however, truly change your mindset - and often for good. He isn't a regular in the Indian T20 side, so this season was crucial. A chance to make a mark, to build a strong unit," Chopra, a former India opener, told

 $\hbox{`JioHotstar'."} It \ hasn't \ gone \ that \ way. \ His \ own \ form \ has \ been \ inconsistent-another \ lesson \ in$ itself. Does he stick to this approach in T20s or adapt? "When you're in a bad patch, it feels like nothing works. The nights seem longer, the days even more so. That's when you learn and bounce back. This has been a nightmare. The good thing about nightmares is that you eventually wake up." Former India pacer Varun Aaron echoed Chopra's view, saying Pant appeared tentative and must revisit his approach to regain form. "LSG were relying on him, especially in the middle order. Except Marsh, nobody really scored. Pant looked tentative from the start and never really got going this season. It's a sign of a player out of form," he said. "A prime Pant would've launched that shot into the stands. Today, he chipped it straight to the bowler. "He's a quality player and will wake up. He just needs to adjust his approach slightly. This year, he hasn't scored behind square - bowlers aren't letting him play those shots..." LSG have two matches remaining in the league stage - against Gujarat Titans on May 22 and Royal Challengers Bengaluru on May 27.

"People have talked about it, that obviously we came into the year with a reputation of being aggressive, and then the first game we made 280, and there was talk of that continuing on. I think for us it's just learning about conditions and understanding how we play in those certain conditions, and a few times we've been tripped up by them,"

Adaptability became a key issue for the 'Orange Army', the legendary former left arm spinner said. "Probably (we) haven't adapted as quickly as we want and played a game that wasn't suited to those sort of wickets, so that's the major learning, and today was a good example of that, that we could be aggressive in the power play, but then through those middle stages, we had to bat responsibility and take certain options, so I think that's a really pleasing factor for us." the New Zealander said.

Despite his staggering **₹27** crore billing the LSG skipper would be the first one to admit that he didn't a great IPL season

Spinner Rathi handed one-match suspension

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lucknow

ucknow Super Giants leg-spinner Digvesh Singh Rathi has been handed a one-match suspension after another instance of his "tick the notebook" celebration following his dismissal of Sunrisers Hyderabad opener Abhishek Sharma during an IPL match here. Abhishek was also reprimanded for the same incident and received a 25 percent fine along with one demerit point for what was his first offence.

For Digvesh, this was his third Code of Conduct breach and he has been suspended from LSG's next encounter against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad having accumulated five demerit points after three separate offenses of

"Digvesh Singh, Bowler, Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) has been fined 50 per cent of his match fees for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's match against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH)," the IPL release stated. "This was his third Level 1 offence under Article 2.5 this season and hence, he has accumulated Two Demerit Points, in addition to Three Demerit Points he had accumulated earlier - One Demerit Point against Punjab Kings on April 01, 2025 and Two Demerit Points against Mumbai Indians on April

"As he now has Five Demerit Points this season - which result in a one-game suspension - Digvesh will now be suspended for LSG's next game - against Gujarat Titans on May 22, 2025 in Ahmedabad.'

For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," it further stated.

The 25-year-old has been LSG's only silver lining in an otherwise disastrous campaign with 14 wickets from 12 games at an economy rate of 8.18 per over. However, he appears to have learned little from previous

incidents. His now customary "tick in notebook" celebration has gone viral on social media but match referees haven't taken too kindly to it. Most of the time, his celebrations come after being blast-

ed by the opposition batters. In this instance, it came after India opener Abhishek had smashed 59 off 20 balls, including half a dozen sixes.

LSG were completely outclassed by SRH and the defeat ended their chances of IPL qualification. In a social media video posted by LSG earlier in the season, teammate Nicholas Pooran was seen jokingly asking Digvesh about his obsession with the notebook celebration.

MI looks to seal playoffs spot against DC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Mumbai

ighting for the only available playoff spot, Mumbai Indians will take on Delhi Capitals in a potentially decisive showdown here on Wednesday with the five-time champion home team better-placed to advance against the erratic visitors. Sunrisers Hyderabad's sixwicket thrashing of Lucknow Super Giants on Monday ended the latter's chances of making the final four, leaving Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals to fight it out. Gujarat Titans, Punjab Kings and Royal Challengers have taken the first three knockout phase spots.

Both Mumbai Indians (14 points) and Delhi Capitals (13 points) are in control of their destiny for now, but it is the host side which starts favourite at the Wankhede Stadium.

While MI's win will take them to 16 points and beyond the reach of the Axar Patel-led side, Delhi Capitals need to win both their remaining contests, the last being against Punjab Kings, to sail



round depth tilt the scale in their favour even though they are coming off a narrow loss to Guiarat Titans nearly a fortnight ago. This was after recording six consecutive wins prior to emerge as one of the most formidable teams in the competition. While a win will carry MI into through. Mumbai Indians' form and all- the playoffs, a defeat will leave their fate from Test cricket.

on the outcome of the contest between DC and PBKS on May 24, and thus the Mahela Jayawardene-coached side will be eager to put its best foot forward.

Mumbai superstar Rohit Sharma will be the cynosure of all eyes as this will be his first game since announcing his retirement

Panel members select their squads

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

¬here might be an air of doubt about Mohammed Shami's ability to last a five-Test series but erstwhile national selection committee members MSK Prasad, Devang Gandhi and Jatin Paranjpe are unequivocal that the 'Amroha Express' is a must-pick for the tour of England.

Shami has played nine IPL games this season for Sunrisers Hyderabad with only six wickets in his kitty and has gone for over 11 runs per over.

However it has been learnt that Shami has already started bowling with the red Dukes at the SRH nets with an eye on England tour, now that SRH's play-off qualification hopes have been dashed. The Indian squad, which is expected to comprise 16 members, will be one of the trickiest ones in recent times as there is a debate around who the new captain should be. While the erstwhile committee members differed on their choice of vice-captaincy, they were unanimous that one can't look beyond Jasprit Bumrah even though there remains a question mark on his fitness status. The media now lists the "squad selected" by Prasad, Gandhi and Paranjpe individually and some of their insights into what made them pick their players.

MSK Prasad (former chairman of

"My captain would be Jasprit Bumrah as he has already

It's all or nothing for United, Tottenham

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bilbao

t's all or nothing when Manchester United and Tottenham meet in the Europa League

For the winner of the all-English showdown in Bilbao there is the mother of all get-out-ofjail-free cards with entry to the Champions League. For the loser, the abyss of no European soccer next year, the indignity of so many unwanted records broken, and uncertainty hanging over the futures of those who have presided over such a spectacular fall.

That's what's on the line at Estadio de San Mamés when two English soccer giants get one last shot at salvaging the season.

Seasons of woe

Long gone are the days when United dominated the Premier League and challenged the summit of European soccer on a regular basis. But even after 12 years without winning the English title, this season has represented a new low. United is 16th out of 20 in the standings after a club-record 18 defeats in a single campaign since the Premier League began in 1992. It is also certain to register its worst-ever points total in the era, as well as its lowest finish. "We know this season has been nowhere near good enough for this club and for our standards," United defender Harry Maguire says. Tottenham is one place below United having lost 21 times in the league — also a club record in the modern era. Spurs — Champions League runner-up in 2019 — are aiming for a first trophy since the 2008 English League Cup.

Champions League lifeline

It is rare that such a major final has so much riding on it beyond the trophy itself.

Neither team has looked capable of challenging for a top five position in the Premier League, which would secure Champions League qualification. But in a season when both teams occupy the last safe spots before relegation, they have a mind-boggling lifeline to the Champions League via the Europa League.

The Champions League offers the prestige of playing beside teams like Real Madrid and Barcelona, draws prospective signings, and comes with huge financial rewards. Real Madrid earned almost \$154 million from winning the competition for a record-extending 15th time last season. Total prize money has

increased from \$2 billion last season to \$2.7 billion in this expanded season.

United, in particular, could do with some of that money at a time of job losses and cuts under new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe, while coach Ruben Amorim hopes to rebuild his squad in the offseason. "We are supposed to be in the Champions League. Europa League here is not enough and you have that feeling here," Amorim says. "The best way to help us get in the top in a few years is the Champions League — it's not (winning) the cup (Europa League)."

Trophy drought

While a return to the Champions League is also enticing for Tottenham, the chance to end its trophy barren run may be even more appealing.

Not even top class managers like Mauricio Pochettino, Jose Mourinho or Antonio Conte ended Spurs' wait for major silverware. It could be destiny that Ange Postecoglou is the man to end the drought, having boldly predicted early in the season that he always wins a trophy in his second year. That was true at previous clubs Brisbane Roar, Yokohama F Marinos and Celtic - but it would be remarkable if he continued that run on the back of such a desperate campaign.

"It's not for the want of world-class players. This club has had world-class players," Postecoglou says. "It's not for the want of world-class managers. They've had worldclass managers. It's something else that's going to change this club."

By contrast, United has continued to win trophies despite its failure to win the Premier League since former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

This could be the third straight year United ends the season with silverware after winning the 2023 League Cup and the 2024

Under pressure

Amorim replaced Erik ten Hag as United coach in November but has not been able to turn its form around. He's lost 14 of his 26 league games, including six of the last eight. While there has been no suggestion his job is under immediate threat, he has raised doubts about his position, admitting he is embarrassed by his team's form.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KHARIAR (R&B) DIVISION, KHARIAR. E-mail: <u>eeroads.khr@rediffm</u> B-144

Invitation For Bids
Bid Identification No. SER&BKHR - 02 /2025-26 The Superintending Engineer, Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate composite bids (Civil+EI+PH) in Double cover system in ONLINE MODE only. Residence of the Junior Engineer, Komna (R&B) Section, Nuapada in the premises of Nuapada (R&B) Nature of work Sub-Division in the district of Nuapada for the year 2025-26. No. of work As specified in the notice for the respective Work, to be remit online Tender Paper cost only.

As specified in the notice for the respective Work.

10.00 hours of 29.05.2025 to 17.00 Availability of Bid Documents in the website Hours of 10.06.2025 Date of opening of Technical Bid Dt. 11.06.2025 at 11:30 hours As specified in the notice to be The Bidders shall have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any feason

Superintending Engineer Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar

OIPR-34062/11/0021/2526

NOTICE INVITING TENDER No. 1942 / Dated. 19.5.2025 The NAC Gopalpur invites sealed quotations from Area Level Federations (ALFs)/

WSHGs of NAC Gopalpur/ intending organizations/individuals for lease of Beach Parking fee collection of NAC Gopalpur for a period of one year. Interested ALFs/WSHGs/organizations/individuals can apply on or before 02:00 PM of 30.05.2025 at the office of the undersigned on official working days and time. Priority will be given to the highest bidder. The details of the Sairat proposed to be leased is listed below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Sairat	Offset price in Rs.	Security deposit in Rs. (10% of of Offset price)	Tender paper cost in Rs.	Period of lease	Remarks
1	Collection of Beach Parking fee	44,10,000.00	4,41,000.00	12,000.00 + 18% GST	One year	At parking locations designated by NAC Gopalpur

Date of purchase of Tender Documents: From 11:00 AW of 20.05.2025 to 04:00 PM of 29.05.2025 at official hours of working days only.
 Last date and time for submission of Tender documents: 30.05.2025 till 02.00 PM.

Last date and time for submission of Tonder documents: 30.05.2025 till 02.00 PM.

Date & time of Opening of Tender documents: 30.05.2025 at 03.00 PM

Tender documents along with all supporting documents as mentioned in the checklist and the security deposit in shape of Demand Draft (DD) in favour of Executive Officer, NAC, Gopalpur should reach NAC Office, Gopalpur through speed post/registered post/courier only on or before 30.05.2025 till 02.00 PM.

Any ALF/ WSHG/organization / individual, who has availed any Sairat lease earlier and have failed to abide by any terms & conditions or those who have not paid all dues to the NAC in previous Sairat leases shall not be eligible to participate in this bid competition. The bid submitted by any bidder, who has been declared ineligible or blacklisted by any Govt. Agency or by any Court of Law shall be liable to be rejected without any prior notice. The tender documents will be opened in presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives on the scheduled date & time in the Conference Hall of NAC Gopalpur. The highest bidder will be awarded the lease, and he/sho will have to deposit 25% of the lease amount by 5 PM of 06.06.2025, failing which the lease will be cancelled and it will be awarded to the second highest bidder and also the deposited lease amount along with security deposit will be forfeited.

be forfeited.

Bidders participating for Beach Parking fee shall submit a Solvency certificate or Bank Guarantee for a value of Rs. 30,000,00/-.

The tender papers may be purchased by the intending participants or their representatives from the office of the undersigned during official hours on any of the working days between 11:00 AM of 20.05.2025 to 04:00 PM of 29.05.2025 by depositing the Tender paper cost. The bidders shall submit their documents and Financial bid in two separate scaled envelopes

11. The bidders shall submit their documents and Financial bid in two soparate scaled envelopes respectively, as detailed in the Tender papers.

12. The Authority reserves the right to roject any or all of the tender documents at any point of time without assigning any reason thereof. -sd-Executive Officer

As far my vice-captain is concerned, I would like Shubman Gill to gain some experience as Bumrah's deputy. In case you have a problem with Bumrah's fitness then my choice is KL Rahul," Prasad said.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before The Executive Magistrate Nimapara dated 19.05.2025. I, Dibya Bharati Barik.(New name), Address At- Niangoroda, Po-Badalasasan, P.S Nimapada Dist- Puri, pin-752106 Declare that I have Changed my Name from Bidya Bharati Barik (Old name) to Dibya Bharati Barik (New name) Henceforth, I shall be known as Dibya Bharati Barik (New name) for all purpose. Dibya Bharati Barik (New name)

AFFIDAVIT Dibya Bharati Barik (New name)

By virtue of an affidavit sworr before The Executive Magistrate Nimapara dated 19.05.2025. I Basantamaniari barik (New name), Address At+Niangoroda Po-Badalasasan, PS Nimapada Dist Puri, pin-752106 declare that have Changed my name from. Basantamaniari Dei (Old name) to Basanta Manjari Barik (New name). Henceforth, I shall be known as Basantamanjari Barik New name) for 'all purpose. Basantamanjari Barik (New name)

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER CUM EXECUTIVE OFFICER E-procurement Notice
BID IDENTIFICATION No: ZP/SBP/CIVIL/01/2025-26

E-mail : ori-dsambalpur@nic.in No. 1877 /Engg/Dated.17.05.25

The Chief Development Officer-cum-Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Sambalpur or

behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE for construction of Buildings, as detailed in the DTCN from the eligible Class of Contractors.

2. No. of works 01 (ONE) Rs.10,000/-3. Tender Cost : "A" Class & "B" Class 4. Class of Contractor

5. Date and time Available in Web site & receipt of Bids: 12:00Hrs of 17.05.2025 to

Date of Opening of Tender: 03.06.2025 at 11:00 Hrs. 7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen

from the Web Site www.tendersodisha.gov.in only

8. Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the website

CDO-Cum-EO Zilla Parishad, Sambalpur GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA



Office of the Superintending Engineer, Bhanjanagar Irrigation Division, Bhanjanagar

Phone No. 06821-291004, e-mail ID:- bnjirrigation2010@gi

e-Procurement Notice No. e-BNID-01/2025-26

1.	Name of work	:	Flood Embankment, Canal & Road Works.
2.	Total No of works	:	104 (One hundred four) only.
3.	Estimated cost	:	Rs.4.61 Lakhs to 49.98 Lakhs
4.	Period of completion	1	02 calendar months to 04 calendar months.
5.	Date & time of availability of Bid Document in the portal	:	10.00 hours of 23.05.2025 to 5.00 hours 02.06.2025
6.	Last date/ Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	:	02.06.2025 upto 5.00 hours
7.	Date and place of opening of Bid		03.06.2025 at 10.00 Hours in the office of the Superintending Engineer, Bhanjanagar Irrigation Division, Bhanjanagar.
8.	Date of Lottery		1st phase:- On Dated 10.06.2025 (From work St. No. 01 to 52) at 11.00 A.M
-,			2 nd phase:- On Dated 11.06.2025 (From work Sl. No. 53 to 104) at 11.00 A.M
9.	Place of Lottery		In the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Bhanjanagar Irrigation Division, Bhanjanagar.
_			Constitution Fort

erintending Engineer Lagar Irrigation Divis OIPR-32010/11/0010/2526

Name and address of the O.I.T (Officer Inviting Tender)