



# CASTE CENSUS ROBS OPPOSITION OF AMMUNITION

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In a major decision, the Government on Wednesday announced that caste enumeration will be included in the next census exercise in a “transparent” manner and slammed the opposition parties for using caste survey as a “political tool”. Announcing the decision taken by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the census comes under the purview of the Centre, but some States have done caste enumeration in the name of surveys “non-transparently” which has created doubts in the society.

Noting that caste was not included in all census operations conducted since Independence, Vaishnaw alleged that the Congress Governments have always opposed caste census and the party had

used the issue as a political tool. “Considering all these facts and to ensure that the social fabric is not disturbed by politics, caste enumeration should be transparently included in the Census instead of surveys,” he said, adding that this will strengthen the social and economic structure of our society while the nation continues to progress.

The Minister alleged that the States ruled by opposition parties have done caste surveys for political reasons and emphasised that the Modi Government has resolved to transparently include caste enumeration in the forthcoming pan-India census exercise. Vaishnaw said the census comes under the purview of the Centre, but some States have done caste enumeration in the name of surveys “non-transparently” which has created doubts in the society.

The Congress and other opposition



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw briefs the media on cabinet decisions on Wednesday PTI

parties have been vociferously demanding a nationwide caste census, making it a major election issue, and some States like Bihar, Telangana and Karnataka have conducted such surveys. The Government decision comes ahead of assembly elections in Bihar, where several parties including some BJP allies have been coming out in support of the caste census.

Home Minister Amit Shah said the Congress and its allies opposed the caste census for decades while in power and played politics over it while in the opposition. “In the CCPA meeting held today under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, a message of strong commitment towards social equality and rights of every section has been given by deciding to include caste census in the upcoming census,” he wrote on X in Hindi. “This decision will

empower all economically and socially backward classes, promote inclusion, and pave new paths for the progress of the deprived,” said Shah.

The opposition INDIA bloc had made caste census a major poll plank in the recent elections, with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi promising representation to people based on their population.

“Better late than never,” Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X, reacting to the Government announcement. He said the party had raised the issue in its resolution on social justice, which was passed in Ahmedabad on April 9, 2025, and also shared an April 16, 2023 letter of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which he had demanded that the decennial census be carried out and a comprehensive caste cen-

sus be made a part of it.

The last nationwide census was completed in 2011 and the next decadal one was to commence in April 2020 but got delayed due to the Covid pandemic. Though Home Minister Amit Shah had said late last year that the census would be conducted “very soon”, there is no clarity as yet on when exactly the exercise would be carried out.

Vaishnaw said in 2010, the then prime minister Manmohan Singh had assured the Lok Sabha that the matter of caste census should be considered in the Cabinet. A group of ministers was formed to consider this after most of the political parties had recommended a caste census. “Despite this, the Congress Government decided to conduct only a survey instead of a caste census. That survey is known as SECC.

## After Pahalgam, India shall retain Ajit Doval as National Security Advisor

RAHUL DATTA ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday here reviewed the entire spectrum of security situation in the wake of Pahalgam terror attacks in the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting. It was the second CCS meeting since the dastardly act on April 22. Along with the high-level security meeting, two additional committee meetings - the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) and the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) were also convened at the Prime Minister's residence.

The Government, meanwhile, has revamped the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) — a move that came amid speculations about India's possible retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack in view of its cross border linkages. Former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief Alok Joshi has been appointed as NSAB

chairman. The NSAB is an advisory body that provides inputs to the National Security Council Secretariat.

Incidentally, the latest CCS meeting took

**The latest CCS meeting took place a day after the PM accorded operational freedom to the armed forces on the “mode, targets and timing” of India's response to attack**

place a day after the Prime Minister held a meeting here on Tuesday with the top military brass and accorded operational freedom to the armed forces on the “mode, targets and timing” of India's response to the April 22 attack that killed 26 people. In the first meeting on April 23, the CCS decided a raft of punitive measures against Pakistan, including suspen-

sion of the Indus Waters Treaty, shutting down of the only operation land border crossing at Attari and downgrading of diplomatic ties in view of cross-border links to the attack. In response, Pakistan shut its airspace to Indian airliners and suspended all trade with India, including through third countries. Pakistan rejected India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and said any move to stop the flow of water would be seen as an “act of war”.

In the high-level meeting with the defence brass on Tuesday, Modi asserted that the armed forces have “complete operational freedom” to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response, Government sources said. The meeting was attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and the chiefs of three services.

## Pakistan bears its fangs at India

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

The military and political leadership in Pakistan is growing ‘jittery’ with every passing hour, after India sent out a ‘strong and stern’ message by giving a free hand to its armed forces to respond to the Pahalgam massacre.

This was evident on Tuesday. Barely hours after the Director General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan spoke to each other to discuss the ‘unprovoked’ ceasefire violations by Pakistan since April 22, Pakistani troops once again resorted to cross-border firing along the International Border, for the first time in the last week, in the Pargwal sector of Jammu late Tuesday night.

Amid mounting tensions, India utilised the opportunity to warn Pakistan against the ‘unprovoked’ violations, but on the ground zero, the Pakistani troops breached the ceasefire agreement with impunity. The forward villages across the Jammu frontier have been kept in a state

of high alert as villagers have started making alternate arrangements to ensure their safety and security. At some places, the villagers have cleaned the community bunkers to utilise them during emergencies. The farmers have been rushing through the peak harvest season to prevent losses.

The Pak Army also traded fire at multiple locations along LoC on Tuesday, marking the sixth consecutive day of cross-border firing by Pakistani forces.

Following the firing in the Pargwal sector along the International Border, additional BSF personnel were deployed as Indian troops responded swiftly and in a calibrated manner to the Pakistani firing.

Along the LoC, the latest round of firing took place across the Nowshera and Sunderbani sectors in Rajouri district, as well as the Akhnoor sector in Jammu, and in Baramulla and Kupwara districts. Since April 22, the alert army troops have been maintaining a tight

vigil and have enhanced patrolling to ensure security along the border.

So far, the Pakistan army has been resorting to the use of small arms firing along the LoC. The artillery guns have not been utilised despite mounting tensions in the area.

Meanwhile, anti-terror operations are underway in the hinterlands of Anantnag, Pulwama, and Shopian, with security forces positioned on top of the mountains, clearing areas one by one and moving closer.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police and CRPF have been tasked with conducting house-to-house searches, including those of OGWs, and gathering more details about their connections.

Since the Pahalgam attack, cross-border firings by Pakistan have grown increasingly frequent, following a systematic pattern of provocation. On Monday night, multiple such incidents were reported from the Kupwara and Baramulla districts, as well as the Akhnoor sector.

## The Bystander



## Fourteen dead in Bengal hotel fire

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

At least 14 people including two women and two children died in a massive fire that broke inside an upmarket North Kolkata hotel late on Tuesday evening. About 12 people were injured and continue to recuperate in various hospitals, police said.

Most deaths occurred on account of choking from the smoke as the trapped guests and staff could not come out of the six-storey building at Mechua Bazar in North Kolkata's busy Bara Bazar area.

The fire broke out at about 8 pm and it took more than 10 hours for the fire-fighters to douse. “Initially what looked like a manageable fire the magnitude of it could be gauged only after the flames were put out and the dead people were rescued well past midnight,” a senior fire official said. Most of those dead are from Bihar Fire Brigade sources said holding the hotel owners guilty of flouting the building norms. “The emergency exit door was closed because some building materials had piled up there as the authorities were building an illegal dance floor and bar without permission of the authorities,” locals said. The Fire Brigade officials said the fire fighting system inside the hotel was not working and the water tank was empty adding the fire clearance certificate had lapsed three years ago.

A senior officer from the Kolkata Police said that, “There were 88 guests in 42 rooms at the time of the incident. A boy, a girl and a woman are among the dead.” Locals said that a short circuit inside the kitchen could be the reason of the fire.



Relatives console a woman after she identified the body of her relative who was killed in the Rituraj hotel fire incident, at the RG Kar Hospital in Kolkata PTI

Kolkata Commissioner of Police Manoj Verma said Special Investigation Team had been constituted to investigate the matter. While the two owners Akash and Atul Chopra were still at large, the police arrested the manager of the hotel.

“It is very difficult to keep a tab on such unscrupulous elements in such a big city. The owners had been indulging in illegal constructions and had also not followed fire rules. An inquiry will be conducted and the guilty will be brought to book,” Fire Minister Sujit Basu said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sanctioned an ex-gratia amount of ₹2 lakh for those dead and ₹50,000 for those injured. The Prime Minister's wrote

on the X: “Anguished by the loss of lives due to a fire mishap in Kolkata. Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon. An ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given ₹50,000.”

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who was away in Digha inaugurating the replica of Puri Jagannath Temple too expressed her condolences and announced an ex-gratia payment of ₹2 lakh for the victims. She wrote on the X “14 died eventually in total because there were combustible materials stored inside. Investigation has been ordered. My condolences to the victim families and solidarity for all affected.”

## Andhra Temple Stampede

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Visakhapatnam

Seven people were killed when a rain-soaked wall collapsed at the Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Simhachalam here in the early hours of Wednesday.

The Government said seven people died after the wall collapsed on the ₹300 ticket queue line near the shopping complex on the ghat road from Simhagiri bus stand at around 3 am.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, AP Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, among others, expressed grief over the incident. Both the Centre and the State Government announced ex-gratia to the families of those killed in the incident.

State Home Minister V Anitha, who was present at the site, said preliminary reports indicated that the wall collapse at the temple was triggered by soil loosening due to heavy rains in the area. According to Government sources, one person sustained injuries.

CM Naidu expressed deep sorrow and said he had spoken to the Collector and SP and directed for treatment be provided to the injured.

“Deeply saddened by the death of seven devotees at Simhachalam....My condolences to the families. I'm closely monitoring the situation and have ordered continuous review and support for victims,” said Naidu in a post on ‘X’.

The CM, who reviewed the situation via teleconference, announced an ex-gratia of ₹25 lakh each to the kin of the deceased and ₹3 lakh each to the injured, an official release said. An outsourcing

job in temples under the Endowments Department will be provided to a family member of each victim.

Naidu also ordered an inquiry into the incident by a three-member committee. The committee members are— Irrigation chief engineer Venkateswar Rao, Municipal Administration principal secretary S Suresh Kumar and senior IPS officer Ake Ravi Krishna. Naidu also reviewed the incident at his Undavalli residence with DGP Harish Kumar Gupta and other senior officials. They apprised the CM of the help being extended to the victims.

In her condolence message on “X”, President Murmu said: “Saddened by the loss of lives including those of women in a wall collapse incident in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. My thoughts and prayers are with the grieving families.” “May the injured recover soon,” she said. PM Modi mourned the victims.

“Deeply saddened by the loss of lives due to the collapse of a wall in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon.” He also announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh from PMNRF to the next of kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 to the injured. Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy also condoled the deaths. Earlier, the annual Chandanotsavam at the temple witnessed both grandeur and grief, as thousands gathered to witness the Nijaropa darshanam of the Lord, even as tragedy struck in the form of the wall collapse.

## Nation mourns, but Prime Minister offers hope, in Mumbai

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ Mumbai

The Mumbai sky wears its usual grey, humid veil, but outside the Jio World Convention Centre (JWCC), something extraordinary is brewing till this weekend. The sprawling façade of the JWCC shimmers under spotlights and massive LED displays pulsing with the WAVES Summit logo. Security details move with intent, cranes hoist final fixtures, and camera crews scurry across pavements, their lenses trained on every movement. There is a low but constant hum of walkie talkies, clinking scaffolds, and rehearsals filtering through the air.

On the eve of the first ever WAVES Summit, the JWCC has transformed into a coliseum of creativity, a nucleus of anticipation brimming with power, passion, and promise. Across the city too, the signs are unmistakable. Banners flutter, hotels are booked to capacity, and the cultural pulse of Mumbai beats louder in readiness for what promises



Commuters pass by hoardings put up for the World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES 2025) in Mumbai PTI

to be a landmark carnival of creativity and innovation

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi steps up to inaugurate the WAVES Summit on Thursday, it will signal more than just the opening of an event. It will

reflect India's bold move to lead the global conversation where storytelling, technology, and culture meet.

Organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the four-day summit, running from 1 to May 1-

4 in Mumbai, aims to position India as a creative and technological force across industries, from cinema and television to AI, immersive reality, gaming, and digital media. For creators, innovators, and investors alike, it offers a powerful platform to shape the future of entertainment.

At the heart of this extraordinary summit is the Bharat Pavilion, spread across 1,470 square metres, showcasing India's dynamic legacy under the theme “Kala to Code.” To be inaugurated by PM Modi, the Pavilion will take visitors on an immersive journey through the evolution of Indian storytelling, from ancient oral traditions and visual arts to cutting edge technological advancements, across four experiential zones: Shruti, Kriti, Drishti, and Creator's Leap.

In addition to the Bharat Pavilion, WAVES 2025 will feature exclusive State Pavilions, where Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and several other States will proudly showcase their cultural and cre-

ative strengths. As the Pavilion opens its doors to this rich journey through time and technology, the inaugural day sets the tone with an experience just as immersive, blending music, culture, and innovation on stage. The performances begin with an orchestral crescendo under the baton of M. M. Keeravaani, followed by legendary voices such as Shreya Ghoshal, Shankar Mahadevan, Sonu Nigam, Mangli, and K. S Chithra.

Together, they will unveil the WAVES Anthem, a sonic emblem of unity and creative strength. Sharad Kelkar will guide the audience through a visual journey connecting ancient narratives to contemporary innovations, supported by mixed-media storytelling and dynamic dance forms.

The cultural diversity of India finds its way to centre stage through performances by the Tetteo Sisters from Nagaland, followed by AR Rahman introducing JHALAA, his experimental band that blends Indian classical music with new-age sound design.







# CM Bhagwant Mann Reiterates ‘Not a Drop to Spare’ in Letter to Haryana CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A day after releasing a detailed video statement asserting that Punjab cannot spare even a drop of extra water for Haryana, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann escalated the confrontation on Wednesday by writing a blunt and strongly worded letter to his Haryana counterpart, Nayab Singh Saini.

Reiterating his firm stand, Mann accused the BJP-led Governments in Haryana and at the Centre of engineering a systematic conspiracy to rob Punjab of its water. “BJP through its Government in Haryana and Centre is trying to suppress the state and it is unfortunate that BBMB is passing new resolutions every day to rob share of Punjab’s water,” he said.

The Chief Minister asserted that Punjab’s water resources are already stretched thin and that any additional outflow to another state would be a direct injustice to his people — something he vowed not to allow under any circumstances.

“I have received the letter of Naib Singh Saini through media only and it is unfortunate that a person of his stature is misleading the people by saying that he has assured water to Haryana... This is nothing more than a bundle of lies as this promise was never made... and this doesn’t suit a person sitting on a constitutional post,” Mann said, adding that Haryana Chief Minister did call him, “but I never gave any assurance regarding water to Saini”.

Laced with sharp political undertones, the letter comes amid heightened tensions between the two states over water distribution through the Bhakra-Beas system. “Haryana has already overdrawn its share — 103 percent to be exact — yet continues to demand more,” Mann wrote, adding that Punjab has been supplying 4,000 cusecs of water daily since April 6 as a humanitarian gesture. “Despite this, Haryana now wants 8,500 cusecs per day, which is not only unjustified but technically infeasible,” he said.

Mann pointed out that Haryana, with a population of about three crore, requires only 1,700 cusecs for drinking purposes. The inflated demand, he alleged, is clearly meant to cater to irrigation needs after the state mismanaged its allocated share. Punjab, on the other hand, is preparing for the Kharif sowing season and facing a dire situation with falling water levels in all its key reservoirs — Pong Dam is 32 feet lower than the previous year, Bhakra Dam is down 12 feet, and

Ranjit Sagar Dam is 14 feet below normal.

Every year, BBMB distributes water to partner states of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan which is applicable from May 21 to May 20 next year. Mann argued that according to BBMB’s annual allocation, Punjab is supposed to get 5.512 MAF (million acre-feet), while Haryana’s share is 2.987 MAF, and that of Rajasthan is 3.318 MAF. Mann pointed that Haryana had exhausted its quota by March 31, while Punjab has received only 89 percent of its share so far — the lowest among all partner states.

“Haryana government has sought 2.5 times more water from Punjab than its actual need. Despite this, Punjab has been giving this water from April... A few days back, Haryana had pleaded that this water is not sufficient for it and it needs 8500 cusec additional water daily. It is evident that this water is needed for irrigation purposes and this problem has arisen as Haryana has not utilized its share of water properly,” said Mann.

Highlighting the logistical limits of the Bhakra Main Line (BML) canal — which can carry a maximum of 10,000 cusecs, Mann said that Haryana’s demand for 8,500 cusecs leaves no scope for Punjab’s needs and exposes the irrationality of the request. “This is nothing but an attempt to pressurize Punjab through central agencies and BJP’s control over BBMB,” he wrote.

The controversy deepened after BBMB recently wrote to the Union Power Ministry seeking appropriate action over the issue, prompting further political reactions. Union Minister and former Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar accused the Punjab Government of failing to uphold its constitutional duty and warned of central intervention if BBMB is pressurized. Mann, in turn, slammed the BJP for using power at the Centre and in Haryana to marginalize Punjab’s interests.

“Punjab’s water belongs to Punjab, and I will not allow a single drop to be taken away unfairly,” Mann concluded, warning that any move to override the state’s legitimate share will be met with stiff resistance.

**BJP VS AAP IN PUNJAB: BITTU ACCUSES MANN OF DIVISIVE POLITICS, AAP HITS BACK**

The ongoing water dispute between Punjab and Haryana has sparked a fierce political slugfest, with Union Minister and

PUNJAB-HARYANA WATER DISPUTE: KEY FACTS		
Annual Water Allocation by BBMB and Utilization (May 21, 2024 - May 20, 2025)		
State	Water allocated	Utilization
Punjab	5.512 MAF	89%
Haryana	2.987 MAF	103% (by March 31, 2025)
Rajasthan	3.398 MAF	110%

BJP leader Ravneet Singh Bittu accusing Punjab Chief Minister of stoking regional tensions, while AAP leaders hit back, calling Bittu’s concerns “politically motivated”. Bittu, the Union Minister of State for Railways and Food Processing, slammed Mann for making “irresponsible remarks” during a time of national mourning after a deadly terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir. “When the entire country is united against Pakistan-sponsored

terrorism, Mann chooses to divide states over water,” Bittu posted on X, adding, “This is no time for political posturing”. He criticized Mann’s controversial statement suggesting that water meant for Pakistan should be stored in Punjab’s dams instead, calling it “dangerous rhetoric” at a sensitive time. “Not a single drop of Punjab’s water will be given away, but we need unity, not division,” said Bittu, adding that holding BBMB meetings over water sharing is routine and not new.

AAP leaders responded sharply. AAP MP from Anandpur Sahib Malwinder Singh Kang accused Bittu of being more interested in preserving his ministerial post than defending Punjab’s rights. “Why are you so concerned about giving more water to Haryana?” Kang asked. “Punjab has already given Haryana its due share. We are ourselves facing a severe shortage,” he added. Punjab Education Minister Harjot Bains also echoed Kang, saying Haryana has already used 103 percent of its allocated water. “Our CM has taken a firm stand. Most blocks in Punjab are in the dark zone. We won’t allow Haryana to take more than its share,” Bains said.

**FARMERS URGE DIALOGUE, CALL FOR SHARDA-YAMUNA LINK WORK TO BEGIN**

As the Punjab and Haryana governments lock horns over water sharing, with the issue escalating to the Centre, farmers in Punjab

have urged both states to stop politicizing the crisis and resolve it through dialogue. They stressed that the matter should be addressed through legal frameworks like the Riparian Law and practical solutions instead of emotional posturing.

“Water is too vital to be reduced to a political weapon,” said Kisan Mazdoor Morcha’s convener and prominent farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher. Criticizing the ongoing political blame game, Pandher said: “The people of Punjab and Haryana are not enemies. Governments are staging drama just for public display while avoiding real solutions.”

Pandher insisted that the water-sharing issue must be settled in a spirit of cooperation. He also underlined the ground reality of Punjab’s own water crisis, where canal water often fail to reach many farms. “If there’s genuinely no water available, then that should be accepted — but stop inflaming tempers between neighboring states,” he added.

Echoing similar sentiment, another senior farm leader Rominder Patiala said that the Centre must take concrete steps, beginning with the long-pending Sharda-Yamuna Link. “If the government truly wants to solve this problem, reviving the Sharda-Yamuna Link project is the only sustainable way forward,” he said, highlighting the approaching paddy season in Punjab.

Current Water Supply to Haryana	
Supplied by Punjab	4,000 cusecs/day
Demand by Haryana	8,500 cusecs/day
BML Canal Capacity	10,000 cusecs/day

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Punjab's Stance	Haryana's Position
■ No additional water to spare for Haryana	■ Requests additional water for drinking and irrigation
■ Accuses BJP of pressuring Punjab through BBMB	■ Warns that excess water might flow to Pakistan if not utilized
■ Emphasizes the need to protect Punjab's water rights	■ Claims Punjab is not fulfilling its constitutional duty

## PSPCL to Expand Mohali Call Centre, Create 750 Jobs in Major Service Upgrade

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) has recorded a turnover exceeding Rs 100 crore for the first time, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Wednesday.

Presiding over a meeting of the HPTDC and Tourism department, he said that HPTDC has achieved the annual turnover from Rs. 78 crore during the previous BJP Government regime to Rs. 107 crore under the present State Government, despite facing the challenges posed by natural disasters in the State. This has been achieved due to effective management of the HPTDC hotels and restaurants, along with regular maintenance and optimal utilization of the properties.

Sukhu said that due to the profits earned by the HPTDC, the Corporation has been able to clear Rs. 41 crore benefits of the pensioners during the last two and a half years, whereas the previous BJP Government disbursed only Rs. 26 crore during its five years. He directed the officers to further improve service across the HPTDC properties and explore the possibilities of leasing out vacant properties of HPTDC on operational and maintenance basis to private players. He also lauded the purchase agreement between HPTDC and Food and Civil Supplies Corporation for the supply of materials to HPTDC hotels, including ration, groceries and other essential items.

He also reviewed various developmental projects of the tourism department and directed to expedite these projects to yield maximum revenue to the State and enhance infrastructure to the tourists visiting the State. Sukhu said that the State Government is investing Rs. 2415 crore to develop better infrastructure, wayside amenities and promote other adventure sports activities to attract tourists in the State. He instructed the Tourism department to provide food vans to the local people and commence Hop-on, Hop-off luxury bus rides on local tourism routes in the State.

## HPTDC records over Rs. 100 crore turnover for first time: Himchal CM

PNS ■ SHIMLA

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## Haryana opposition leaders slam Punjab CM Mann over water row

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana opposition leaders on Wednesday slammed Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann after he refused to release more water, with INLD chief Abhay Singh Chautala threatening to block all routes from Punjab passing through Haryana. Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda accused the Mann government of reducing the supply of water to Haryana, a BJP-ruled state, from 8,500 cusecs to 4,000 cusecs.

INLD president Chautala said that during the agitation against central farm laws, farmers from Haryana stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Punjab farmers. He urged the Punjab farmers to exert pressure on the Mann government so that Haryana is given its due share of water. “If the government does not take any immediate action, then we will have to take a big decision,” he said. “We will be forced to block all roads from Punjab which pass through Haryana and go towards Delhi and other parts of north India. This is not mere threat,” Chautala warned in a video message. The INLD chief said that districts like Sirsa, Hisar, and Fatehabad, which are Bhakra dependent, are facing water shortage.

Senior Congress leader and Sirsa MP Kumari Selja said that whatever steps the State Government takes to secure its full share of water from the Punjab Government, the Congress party will fully support it. “If the Haryana Government does not raise its voice regarding its share of water from the Bhakra canal, the situation will end up like that of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal,” she added. Selja further said that the central government must intervene to ensure Haryana receives its rightful share of water.

In her statement, the Senior Congress leader said that there was an agreement between the Punjab and Haryana governments regarding water distribution. Under this agreement, water from the Bhakra Canal is distributed to Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan. Until recently, Punjab was providing 9,500 cusecs of water daily to Haryana, which has been reduced to 4,000 cusecs over the past 15 days. Selja criticized the BJP-led Haryana government for failing to protect the state’s interests and for not being able to implement the Supreme Court’s order to con-

struct the SYL canal. “If the SYL canal had been completed, it would have served as a life-line for Haryana,” she added. Selja said that during the Congress regime, 85% of the SYL canal construction was completed. However, the BJP government failed to complete it. Meanwhile, the Punjab government took a rigid stance, disregarded the Supreme Court’s order, de-notified the canal, and filled it with soil to block it.

Selja further said that the Bhakra canal, constructed in 1954 during unified Punjab, was intended to provide irrigation and drinking water to Hisar, Sirsa, Fatehabad, Kurukshetra, and Jind. Under the inter-state agreement, Punjab cannot withhold Haryana’s share of water under any circumstance. Selja reiterated that Congress will fully support any initiative the Haryana Government undertakes to claim its rightful share of water.

**GIVE HARYANA ITS SHARE OF WATER, STOP PLAYING POLITICS, SAYS STATE MINSTER PANWAR**


Haryana Development and Panchayat Minister Krishan Lal Panwar criticised the Punjab government for stopping Haryana’s share of water. Punjab is deliberately playing politics and stopping Haryana’s rightful water, which is completely wrong and condemnable. He appealed to the Punjab government to stop politicising the issue and release Haryana’s full share of water.

Panwar said that Haryana needs 9,500 cusecs of water for drinking purposes, but Punjab has reduced the supply and is only providing around 4,000 cusecs. He condemned this decision. Recently, during the BBMB meeting, a decision was taken to give water, but the Punjab government is cutting this water, which is absolutely wrong, he added.

The Minister said the water flows from Delhi via the Munak head. He said that even when the Aam Aadmi Party was in power in Delhi, they never cut the water supply. But now the Punjab government is deliberately doing politics. He further said that Punjab is also politicising the issue of SYL water, to which Haryana has a rightful claim. The Supreme Court has already given its verdict in Haryana’s favour, so Punjab should comply and provide Haryana its share of SYL

BRIEFS

CM SAINTI UNVEILS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES FOR HODAL



**Chandigarh:** On Akshaya Tritiya, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Wednesday unveiled a series of development initiatives for the Hodal Assembly Constituency in Palwal district. While addressing the Brij Vikas Rally in Hodal, he inaugurated three key development projects worth Rs 10 crore and announced several others aimed at transforming the region. He announced an allocation of Rs 5 crore each for the development of both urban and rural areas of Hodal, Rs 3.54 crore for the construction of a new DHBVN office building in Hodal, and Rs 1.95 crore for a similar facility in Hasanpur. Other notable announcements included new sub-health centers in Neerpur, Korali, Pengaltu, and Siha; a crop procurement center in Siha; Rs 1.50 crore for drain up to Punhana turn; and the upgradation of Hasanpur from sub-tehsil to tehsil status, renovation of various ponds and the comprehensive repair and improvement of all roads in the area.

**60,000 STUDENTS REGISTER TO APPEAR FOR NEET UG EXAM IN HARYANA**

**Chandigarh:** Over 60,000 students have registered and are eligible to take the NEET (UG) exam on May 4 in Haryana. A total of 162 examination centres have been established across the state, with 60,687 students registered to appear. Haryana Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the state’s preparedness for the examination. The meeting was attended by Director General of Police Shatruijeet Kapur, Director, Higher Education, Rahul Hooda, while Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education, Vineet Garg, all deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, the director of higher education, representatives from the National Testing Agency (NTA), and senior officials from the Education Department joined in via video-conferencing. The chief secretary underscored the need for seamless coordination between the civil administration and the NTA to ensure a professional, transparent, and incident-free examination process. He directed all deputy commissioners to work in close coordination with the NTA’s city coordinators to finalise logistical arrangements and ensure the availability of all essential amenities at examination centres.

**‘AAHAAR MITRA’ APP TO BE LAUNCHED IN HARYANA TODAY**

**Chandigarh:** To promote transparency and public participation, the Haryana Labour Department will launch a mobile application named ‘Aahaar Mitra’ on May 1. This app will help users locate the nearest Atal-Shramik-Kisan Canteen and check service availability, get information about schemes, and give feedback, a statement said.

**OFFICERS ASKED TO ENFORCE A COMPLETE BAN ON "SINGLE-USE PLASTIC" IN GURUGRAM**

**Chandigarh:** Haryana Environment Minister Rao Narbir Singh on Wednesday directed the officers to enforce a complete ban on "single-use plastic" in Gurugram. He called for a special campaign in key markets, emphasizing that any unauthorized use of this plastic should be penalized in accordance with the rules. Singh was presiding over a meeting with officers from the Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HPCSB). He further said that Gurugram is regarded as the economic capital of Haryana, hosting offices of numerous prominent companies and attracting top officials, both from within the country and abroad. Given this, maintaining a pollution-free environment in Gurugram is a key priority. While "single-use plastic" is officially banned in Haryana, he noted that due to a lack of awareness, it continues to be used illegally by many shopkeepers, malls, hotels, dhabas, and other establishments.

**CHANDIGARH MC TO LAUNCH "SWACHHATA SAPTAH" CLEANLINESS WEEK FROM MAY 1 TO 7**

**Chandigarh:** Focusing on rainwater harvesting system maintenance, the Municipal Corporation Chandigarh will launch week long Cleanliness drive of rainwater harvesting systems throughout city from May 1 to 7. MC Commissioner Amit Kumar said that this dedicated week aims to spread awareness and ensure public participation in maintaining cleanliness, with a special focus this year on the cleaning and upkeep of Rainwater Harvesting Systems across the city. He said that the campaign will be launched under the theme ‘Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidaar’ under Jal Shakti Abhiyaan ‘Catch the rain’. The Commissioner emphasized the importance of sustainable water management, stating, “Maintaining rainwater harvesting systems is not just about water conservation, it’s a civic responsibility. With proper cleaning and regular maintenance, these systems can significantly reduce water wastage and support eco-friendly practices.”

**ASHIMA BRAR APPOINTED IN-CHARGE OF GURUGRAM, PC MEENA OF NUH DISTRICT**

**Chandigarh:** In a minor administrative reshuffle, the Haryana Government on Wednesday appointed Commissioner and Secretary of Cooperation Department and Managing Director of Haryana Vidyut Prasaran Nigam Limited Ashima Brar as the in-charge of Gurugram, and Rohtak Divisional Commissioner Phool Chand Meena as the in-charge of Nuh district in addition to their present responsibilities.

## Punjab Police Foils Grenade Attack Plot; Arrests 5

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/AMRITSAR

Punjab Police on Wednesday claimed to thwart a potential grenade attack on police establishments by arresting five members of a Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terror module being operated by foreign-based gangster Jiwan Fauji. The arrests were made during a swift operation carried out by the Amritsar Commissionerate Police, as part of the state’s ongoing crackdown on terror activities to ensure public safety.

Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said that the arrested individuals were part of a terror module backed by Pakistan’s

ISI and managed remotely by Jiwan Fauji from abroad. The accused have been identified as Naresh Kumar alias Babbu, Abhinav Bhagat alias Abhi, Ajay Kumar alias Aju, Sunny Kumar — residents of Haripura in Amritsar; and a 17-year-old juvenile. Police recovered a hand grenade, a .32 bore country-made pistol, and five live cartridges from their possession.

Yadav revealed that the accused were radicalized and tasked with retrieving weapon consignments from the Ajnala sector. Their primary mission was to carry out grenade attacks on police targets. The accused were also provided with motorcycles and logistical support by their handlers to execute planned strikes.

## HIMACHAL MAKES GARBAGE BINS MUST IN ALL VEHICLES, TO FINE VIOLATORS

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Installation of ‘Garbage bins’ in all types of vehicles, including taxis, buses, trucks, and government and private vehicles, has been made mandatory in Himachal Pradesh from Wednesday. Non-compliance of the order would attract a fine of Rs 10,000, a statement said.

The step has been taken to ensure that non-biodegradable and biodegradable waste is not littered and, public drains and sewerage are not blocked or choked. The concerned Regional Transport Officer (RTO), Motor Vehicle Inspector (MVI), Bus Adda in-charge and owners of Public Parkings would be held responsible for compliance, an official notification said. “Henceforth, all taxi operators and public and private transport vehicles shall install a “Garbage Bin” in their vehicles for collection of non-

biodegradable and biodegradable waste at designated places. Non-installation would attract a fine of Rs 10,000. “A fine of Rs 1500 would be imposed for littering of non-biodegradable and biodegradable materials,” it said.

Through another notification, which would be effective from June 1, 2025, the government has prohibited the use of ‘Polyethylene Terephthalate’ (PET) water bottles of sizes up to 500 ml by government organisations in their indoor meetings, conferences, including the HP Tourism Development Corporation hotels and private hotels in the state. They will adopt sustainable alternatives like the use of glass bottles, water dispensers, kiosks or steel containers and the Department of Environment, Science Technology Climate Change and State Pollution Control Board will take effective measures to improve recycling of plastic water bottles, the notification said.







**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
I, Madhvi Bansal W/o Sharad Bansal R/o H. No. A40, Atam Nagar, Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar declare that Original Sale Deed bearing no. 2522 dated 01.06.2006 in the name of Sanjeev Kumar S/o Nursing Das has been lost at Atam Nagar Bilaspur Road on dated 30.03.2025. It has not been mortgage with any Person/ Bank/ Financial Institution.

**Public Notice**  
OFFICE OF THE ESTATE MANAGER  
HOUSING BOARD HARYANA REWARI  
H.NO. 1227, H.B.C, Sec-3 Rewari Email ID: rwmehh@gmail.com.  
Phone No. 01274260866.  
It is for the information to the general public that H. No. 15 Type III Housing Board Colony, Sisoth, Mahendergarh, Haryana was allotted/transferred in the name of Sh. Amarjeet Singh S/o Sh. Krishan Singh R/o Mohal Khara, Narwana, Jind, Haryana vide letter No. 534.35 dated 03/06/2021. Now Sh. Amarjeet Singh S/o Sh. Krishan Singh has submitted an application with relatives documents for transfer of above mentioned houseflat on the basis of General transfer before conveyance deed in favor to Sh. Rajesh Kumar S/o Sh. Ram Narayan R/o #122, Jangra Street, Block 2, Palri, Charkhi Dabri, Haryana. If any person is having any objection against the transfer of above mentioned houseflat, He/She may submit his/her objection in the office of Estate Manager, Housing Board Haryana, H.No. 1227, Housing Board Colony Sec-3, Rewari along with supporting documents within 30 days of the publication of this notice. If no objection is received within 30 days the permission for transfer shall be granted in favor of Sh. Rajesh Kumar S/o Sh. Ram Narayan R/o #122, Jangra Street, Block 2, Palri, Charkhi Dabri, Haryana. After the expiry of 30 days no matter or not entertain subsequent claims, if any.  
Estate Manager  
Housing Board Haryana Rewari.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform and seek objections, if any, from general public that SMFE India Home Finance Company Limited (Formerly Fullerton India Home Finance Company Limited), SCO No. 118-119, Top Floor, Sector 8-C, Chandigarh had sanctioned loan against property to Mrs. Sangeta D/o Mr. Kumbh Das against the property i.e. Triple Storey House No. 603/00683, Shivvihar measuring 5 Marla comprised in Khewat/Khatoni No. 273/293 Khara Nos. 154/212/14, 7/114-1, Pieces (Kittel) 2, being 3001/15500 share of land measuring 7 Kanal 15 Marla = 3 Marla & Khewat/Khatoni No. 297/317 Khara Nos. 1551/1618-0, Pieces (Kittel) 1, being 2160 share of land measuring 8 Kanal 0 Marla = 2 Marla, (Jamabandi 2016-17), Karora (Hadbast No. 352), M.C. Nayagan, Sub Tehsil: Majri, Tehsil: Khara, Distt: S.A.S. Nagar, Punjab, That the Sale Deed No. 1340 Dt: 18.07.2008 & Sale Deed No. 4688 Dt: 24.01.2021 registered in the old Joint Sub Registrar, Majri were lost. That a DDR LR No. 2794646/2025 dt: 28.04.2025 had been lodged in Delhi Police Station, regarding the loss of the mentioned Documents. That in case any person having any claim, right, title or interest in the above said property in any manner whatsoever by way of sale, gift, lease, inheritance, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, trust, possession, easement, attachment or otherwise however, shall bring the same to the notice of the undersigned in writing with supporting documents/evidence within a period of 7 days from the date of this notice failing which such claim if any, shall be considered to be waived, abandoned and it shall be presumed that person has any claim of any nature in respect of the above said lands and any subsequent claim shall not bind our clients or their successors/nominee/assignees in any manner whatsoever.  
Ankur Rishi Advocates & Legal Consultants  
SCO No. 87, 1st Floor, Royale Estate, Lohgarh, Chandigarh-Ambala Highway, Zirakpur, Distt: SAS Nagar, Punjab, Ph: 99141-38484.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is for the information to all concerned that after the death of Mrs. Veena Rani wife of Mr. Nathu Ram, wherein Mr. Gagandeep Bansal son of Lt. Mrs. Veena Rani has approached our office and claimed ownership right of her 50% share in flat no 231 in TRISHLA PLUS HOMES, Adjoining Sector 20, Panchukula, Near GH-86, Peermushala, NAC Zirakpur, Distt. Mohali, Punjab. If anyone has objection for the same, he/she may contact our office within 30 days from the date of publishing this notice. TRISHLA BUILDTECH PVT. LTD., High Ground Road, Village, Nabha Zirakpur, Punjab, Mob No. 8054777555.  
Trishla Buildtech Private Limited

## CHANDIGARH HOUSING BOARD

8, Jan Marg, Sector 9-D, Chandigarh

**CORRIGENDUM**  
Public Notice published in this Newspaper on 05-04-2025 in which name of Transferee / Seller was published wrongly as Smt. Shalni Matta, may read and treat as Smt. Shalini Matta had died rest remains unchanged in R/O D.U. No.2264-3, Sector-45-C, Chd.  
Secretary,  
Chandigarh Housing Board,  
Chandigarh

## ਪੰਜਾਬ ਆਂਡਰਟੇਕਿੰਗ ਨੀ ਕੀ ਫ਼ਾਇਨਾਂਸ

# PUNJAB & SIND BANK

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

ਜੀ.ਐਸ.ਐੱਸ. ZONAL OFFICE: Panchkula, Haryana - 134109

Where service is a way of life

### PUBLIC NOTICE FOR KIND ATTENTION OF OUR VALUED CUSTOMERS/LOCKER HOLDERS

We hereby inform all our customers/locker holders, Branch SD Public School, Model Town, Yamunanagar is going to be merged and shall function at the following address tentatively w.e.f. date mentioned below. All type of banking business will be run from the respective near branch as per detail mentioned below:-

S.N.	Branch going to be Merged	Merged Place/ Branch	Date of Merger
1.	Punjab & Sind Bank, Branch: SD Public School, Model Town, Yamunanagar	Punjab & Sind Bank, Sant Nischal Singh Public School, Bye Pass Road, Yamunanagar	10.05.2025

Banking services will be available at the new location w.e.f. 12.05.2025 (Tentatively). The inconvenience to be caused, if any to our valuable customers in this regard is regretted. Due to transport and reinstallation of the locker at new premises, if you intend to remove or deposit contents to/from the lockers, please ensure removal before the shifting of the locker. However, reasonable care will be maintained while shifting of the lockers by us. We assure you our best services from new location.

For any query visit our branch at Sant Nischal Singh Public School, Bye Pass Road, Yamunanagar or get in touch with our Branch Team at: 99961-35576 (Manjeet Kaur), 94653-14100 (Bhupender Kumar) or our Zonal Office team at: 0172-5197411, 97809-43401

**ZONAL MANAGER**

Ashiana Construction Pvt. Ltd., Ashiana Complex, Bhalnasa Tibba, MDC, Sector 4, Panchukula  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Subject: Transfer of ownership in respect of Flat No. TP-1, Top Floor, Phase-2, Ashiana Complex, Mansa Devi Road, Sector 4, Bhalnasa Tibba, Tehsil & Distt. Panchukula, consequent upon the intestate death of owner Late Sh. Ramesh Chander Sethi son of Late Sh. Raj Narain Sethi.  
Late Sh. Ramesh Chander Sethi, who was the owner of the subject cited flat as per record has died on 18-Sep-2024 and has no registered or un-registered Will, leaving behind following legal heirs: 1) Rekha Sethi, 2) Saurabh Sethi, 3) Ravesh Sethi. Smt. Rekha Sethi Wife of Late Sh. Ramesh Chander Sethi, Resident of House No. 400-P, Sector 2, Panchukula, Haryana-134112, intend to apply for the transfer of the said property in her favour being the legal heir and request for re-allocation in the name of Smt. Rekha Sethi.  
If any person is having objection against the transfer of said house, he/she can submit objections in writing to the Ashiana Construction Pvt. Ltd., along with supporting documents within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Otherwise the society may accord permission to transfer/re-allocation of the said property as per Society policy and may not entertain subsequent claim if any.  
Legal heirs: Rekha Sethi, Saurabh Sethi, Ravesh Sethi.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is hereby informed that House No. 240/SF, in Sector 28, Alpha City Housing Board Colony, Karnal stands in the name of Sh. Mohan Lal S/o Sh. Nathu Ram now Sh. Mohan Lal S/o Sh. Nathu Ram wants to transfer the above said flat in favour of Sh. Mukesh Kumar S/o Sh. Suraj Mal, R/o 1008 Pocket No. 5, Alpha City Sector -28, Distt. Karnal on the basis of General Transfer before conveyance deed. Opportunity is given through this notice to file any objection regarding the transfer of ownership of house with this office with strict documentary proof within 30 days from the publication of this notice otherwise this house will be transferred in favour of Sh. Mukesh Kumar S/o Sh. Suraj Mal, R/o 1008 Pocket No. 5, Alpha City Sector-28, Distt. Karnal and no further claim whatsoever shall be entertained later on.  
Estate Manager,  
Housing Board Haryana, Karnal

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The general public is hereby informed that Mr. Parminder Singh S/o Mr. Javeer Singh (applicant & Mrs. Karamjit Kaur W/o Mr. Javeer Singh (co-applicant) hereinafter referred to as the Borrowers) have agreed to create mortgage in respect of the property i.e. House situated at Village Baraga, Tehsil, Distt. Patnagarh Sahib, Area measuring 08-4 Biswa, Comprised in Khewat No. 131, Khatoni No. 215, Khara No. 3186(S-5), Item 1, total area 68-5 Biswa out of which 08-4 Biswa in the name of PSCC, Patnagarh Sahib, Haryana and remaining 60-1 Biswa in the name of Mr. Parminder Singh S/o Javeer Singh and Mr. Javeer Singh S/o Javeer Singh vide sale deed no. 64 dated 04/04/2025 registered at the office of Sub-Registrar, Patnagarh Sahib and as per revenue and registration record for the year 2019-2020 entered in the office of the Registrar in favour of my client, SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED (SHDFCL), BRANCH PATIALA, According to the said Mortgagee Mrs. Parminder Singh S/o Javeer Singh, he/she herself/herself has lost/misplaced the Previous/old Original Sale deed is not available and lost. Now the above Mortgagee's mortgaged the said property to SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED (SHDFCL), BRANCH PATIALA, and required the previous/old sale deed for creating equitable mortgage but that sale deed bearing Vaska no. 1931 dated 12/07/2012 is not available and lost. I am informing about the same to everyone via newspaper that if anybody have any objection regarding the same then please respond within 7 days of the same is found by anyone then please inform us on following address: After expiry of stipulated period no claim would be entitled and it shall be deemed that there is no objection to anybody.  
Dated 30-04-2025  
Anmol Gupta (Advocate)  
Chamber No 222-232, Opposite Mini Secretariat, Patiala, Mo-93563-33337

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Original Previous Sale deed No. 5838 dated 25.01.2021 of the property land measuring 0 Kanal 6 marla, Situated at Village Bungal, HB No. 390, Tehsil and District Pathankot and owned by Bandna Devi W/o Sulinder Singh, Resident of Village Bungal is Missing, Anyone having any objection regarding the Mortgage of this property with Punjab and Sind Bank Branch Mamoon Cantt., May respond or raise objection with 15 days to Branch Manager Punjab and Sind Bank, Mamoon Cantt., Pathankot, Mob. No. 90569-98177.  
Branch Manager  
Punjab and Sind Bank,  
Mamoon Cantt., Pathankot

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Aakash S/o Jagat Singh R/o 1655/30, Adarsh Nagar, Rohtak-124001 have changed my name from Aakash to Aakash Kharb.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Hunny Panghal W/o Ajay Panghal R/o 1880, Sector 2-3 Part, Rohtak, Haryana - 124001 Have Changed my Name from Hunny to Hunny Panghal. In future I will be known as Hunny Panghal.

**Lost & Found**  
I, Atul Goel S/o Ram Kumar Goel R/o Basant Avenue Amritsar hereby inform that one of my Sale Deed Vaska No. 1874, Book No. 1, Dated 4-8-2017 has been lost somewhere. If anyone finds it, please deposit it at Punjab Gramin Bank, Akash Avenue, Amritsar. M.No 98154-57168

PUBLIC NOTICE				
Branch Office : ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005				
Notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 is being issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. (on the underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security concerning a Housing Loan Facility granted pursuant to a Loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the following borrower(s) who has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan Facility(ies) obtained by them from the secured creditor. The Loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them at their last known addresses; however, it has returned un-served and hence, they are hereby notified by way of this Public Notice.				
Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ & Address (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN)	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Manoj Kumar/ Meena Devi A/c No. (14100003716/ QZKNL00005012122) House No. 393/1, Ward No.24, Patel Nagar, Near Shiv Mandir, Haryana Kaithal- 136027	Property On Part Of Plot No.19, Being 1.65/1618 Part Minjuma Land 80 Kanal 18 Marla, Comprised In Khewat No.99, Muraba No.66, Killa No.7/3,8/2,9,10,11,12,13/1, 19/2,20,21,22/1, Muraba No.83, Killa No.1/1,2/1, Situated At Waka Patti Gadad, Kaithal Patel Nagar, Inside Municipal Corporation Kaithal, Tehsil & District- Kaithal, Haryana- 136087	07/04/2025 Rs. 2,84,627/-	09-12-2024
2.	Somveer Son of Ranjeet Singh/ Sotish A/c No. (14100004345/ QZKNL0005003156) H No. 228 Railway Colony V.P.O. Nasirpur Bangar Rathdhana, Near Prem Patwari House, Haryana Sonapat- 131001	Plot Measuring 35 Kanal and 6 Marla Part 9/1059, Khewat No. 118,119,120, Khata No.14 To 144, Waka Rakba, Gram Naurpur, Bangar, Tehsil Sonapat Haryana- 131403	07/04/2025 Rs. 11,90,832/-	08-01-2025

The steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower(s) and/or the guarantor(s) of the Loan (as applicable) is/are advised to make the payments of the outstanding within the period of 60 days from the date of the publication of this Notice else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.  
Date: May 01, 2025, Place: Chandigarh (Haryana) Authorised Officer, Team ICICI Bank

PUBLIC NOTICE				
Branch Office : ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005				
Notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 is being issued by ICICI Bank Ltd. (on the underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security concerning a Housing Loan Facility granted pursuant to a Loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the following borrower(s) who has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan Facility(ies) obtained by them from the secured creditor. The Loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them at their last known addresses; however, it has returned un-served and hence, they are hereby notified by way of this Public Notice.				
Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ & Address (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN)	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Sukhdev, Seema Devi, Village Kaserla Kanar, Post Office Barara, Ambala, Haryana- 133205, A/c No. QZCHD00005035759 & 1350008528	House Measuring 7.90 Marla (239.30 Sq. Yards), Comprised In Khewat Khatoni No. 38 Min/52 Min, Khara No. 23/22, Being 790/1600 Share Out of 8 Kanal, Situated At Mauze Kaserla Kanar, Hadbast No. 246, Tehsil Barara, District Ambala, Haryana- 133205.	07/04/2025 Rs. 18,31,671.14/-	08/02/2025
2.	Mohammed Aaftab, Shama Parveen, House No. 60, Bank Colony, Pipli Wala Town, Manjandira, Chandigarh, Chandigarh- 160101, A/c No. QZCHD00005034860 & 19100042414	House Measuring 1 Biswa 5 Biswas Being 5/644 Share of Property Measuring 8 Bigha 1 Colony, Pipli Wala Town, Manjandira, Chandigarh, Chandigarh- 160101, A/c No. QZCHD00005034860 & 19100042414	07/04/2025 Rs. 10,17,339.92/-	08/02/2025

The steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower(s) and/or the guarantor(s) of the Loan (as applicable) is/are advised to make the payments of the outstanding within the period of 60 days from the date of the publication of this Notice else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.  
Date: May 01, 2025, Place: Chandigarh (Haryana) Authorised Officer, Team ICICI Bank

**PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE**  
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005  
The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice Amount in Demand (Rs)	Name of Branch
1.	M/s. Ashish Knitweavers/ Ashish Sharma/ Anuj Mohla/ Surbhi Sharma/ Kamlesh Sharma/ Kamlesh Sharma As Alias/ As Kamlesh Kumar/ 036305500248/ 036355000047	Property Bearing Plot No.14, Measuring 313 Sq. Yds Comprised In Khara No. 35/15/1/1, 35/14 And Khata No. 97/16 As Per Jamabandi For The Year 1986-87 (New Khata No. 148/225-178/256 Jamabandi 2006-2007) Situated At Village Sunat Hadbast No. 159, Abadi Aggar Nagar Colony, Tehsil & District Ludhiana, Punjab./ April 28, 2025	February 03, 2024 Rs. 2,68,06,622.00/-	Ludhiana

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantor(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.  
Date: May 01, 2025  
Place: Ludhiana  
Sincerely Authorised Signatory  
For ICICI Bank Ltd.

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 1st Floor, Geet Prabha Building, Near Nirmal Hospital Cross Road, Opp. Civil Hospital, Ring Road, Surat- 395002.

**PUBLIC NOTICE-TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET**  
(See proviso to Rule 9(i))  
Notice for sale of immovable asset(s)  
E-Auction Sale Notice for the sale of immovable asset(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.  
This notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited will be sold on 'As is where is', 'As is what is' and 'Whatever there is' as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known legal encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
3.	Dikshit Pathania (Borrower)/ Nikita Suresh Joshi (Co-borrower) Loan A/c No. LBSUR00005472053	Shop No. 111, 1st Floor, Agam Vivianna, Opp Florence, Old R.S. No. 409, 412, New R.S. No. 410/1 & 410/2, T.P.S. No. 2, F.P. No. 113, Vip Road, Vesu, Bhanthana, Mojura, Surat- 395003 Measuring Area: Carpet Area 134.22 Sq.ft., Ie 12.47 Sq.mtr.	Rs. 19,18, 113.14/- as on 28-04-2025	Rs. 22,40, 000/- only	May 29, 2025 12:00 Noon To 01:00 Pm	June 07, 2025 From 11:15 AM Onwards

The online auction will be conducted on the website (<https://disposalhub.com>) of our auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. The Mortgagees/ Noticees are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest by June 06, 2025 before 04:00 PM else the secured asset(s) will be sold as per schedule. The prospective bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Clause E) at ICICI Bank Limited, 1st Floor, Geet Prabha Building, Near Nirmal Hospital Cross Road, Opp. Civil Hospital, Ring Road, Surat- 395002 on or before June 06, 2025 before 04:30 PM. Thereafter, they have to submit their offer through the website mentioned above on or before June 06, 2025 before 05:00 PM along with the scanned image of the Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. In case the prospective bidder(s) is/are unable to submit his/ her/ their offer through the website, then the signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank ICICI Bank Limited, 1st Floor, Geet Prabha Building, Near Nirmal Hospital Cross Road, Opp. Civil Hospital, Ring Road, Surat- 395002 on or before June 06, 2025 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank in favour of ICICI Bank Limited payable at Surat.  
For any further clarifications in terms of inspection, Terms and Conditions of the E-Auction or submission of tenders, contact ICICI Bank Employee Phone No. 7304914237/ 7977863039.  
Please note that the Marketing agencies 1. ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited, 2. Augus Assets Management Private Limited 3. Cardekho.com, 4. Hecta Proptech Private Limited 5. ARCA E-Mart Private Ltd have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.  
The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed Terms and Conditions of the sale, please visit [www.icicibank.com/4p4s](https://www.icicibank.com/4p4s)  
Date: May 01, 2025  
Place: Himachal Pradesh  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
I, Komal W/o Rakesh is owner in respect of property i.e., Part of Khara no. 901 min, measuring 60 Sq. Yard, situated at Jagdish Nagar Colony, Harsi, Tehsil Harsi, Distt Hissar as per Sale deed no. 390 dated 28.5.2007. I have lost sale deed no. 1028 dated 5.7.2000 anywhere in Hansi. A DDR also registered at Hansi. I also declare that I have not taken any type of Loan, CC Limit or OD Limit on the said property. If anybody have objection regarding with this property, please contact Advocate Bhupander Kumar, Ph: 0169499981 & 1591. SECTION 16-37 HISSAR WITHIN 7 DAY OF THIS PUBLICATION.

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office : ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Loan Account Number/ & Address	Description of Secured Asset to be enforced	Date of Notice sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Shubham Gupta/ Geetanjali Singla, A/c No. TBPNN00006293013, 12 Ward No.23 Kaithal Haryana 136027	Plot No 113/ 18, M.C.K.No 114/18, 127/18, Unit No 48C29U38, Bazar Road, Gungahat Saree Shop Situated At Talai Bazar, Tehsil And District Kaithal Haryana 136027	06/03/2025, Rs. 28,23,687/-	03-01-2025
2.	Shubham Gupta/ Geetanjali Singla, A/c No. LSKTL0000055845, 12 Ward No.23 Kaithal Haryana 136027	Plot No 113/ 18, M.C.K.No 114/18, 127/18, Unit No 48C29U38, Bazar Road, Gungahat Saree Shop Situated At Talai Bazar, Tehsil And District Kaithal Haryana 136027	06/03/2025, Rs. 35,00,920.6/-	03-01-2025
3.	Shubham Gupta/ Geetanjali Singla, A/c No. LBPNN00006350433, 12 Ward No.23 Kaithal Haryana 136027	Plot No 113/ 18, M.C.K.No 114/18, 127/18, Unit No 48C29U38, Bazar Road, Gungahat Saree Shop Situated At Talai Bazar, Tehsil And District Kaithal Haryana 136027	06/03/2025, Rs. 36,524/-	03-01-2025
4.	Shubham Gupta/ Geetanjali Singla, A/c No. LSKTL00005860711, 12 Ward No.23 Kaithal Haryana 136027	Plot No 113/ 18, M.C.K.No 114/18, 127/18, Unit No 48C29U38, Bazar Road, Gungahat Saree Shop Situated At Talai Bazar, Tehsil And District Kaithal Haryana 136027	06/03/2025, Rs. 43,27,118/-	03-01-2025
5.	Kuldeep/ Meena/ Guddi A/c No. TBKNL000066551217 Bhagat Singh Colony Narwana Jind Haryana 126116	Plot Comprised In Khewat No 1358 Min, Khatoni No 2101, Khara No 1681/(21-3), 1688/(20-9), Situated At Abadi Bhagat Singh Colony Narwana Tehsil Narwana District Jind Within M.C. Limits As Per Jamabandi Year 2018-19, Haryana 126116	06/03/2025, Rs. 16,42,889.52/-	03-01-2025
6.	Kuldeep/ Meena/ Guddi A/c No. TBKNL000066551218 Bhagat Singh Colony Narwana Jind Haryana 126116	Plot Comprised In Khewat No 1358 Min, Khatoni No 2101, Khara No 1681/(21-3), 1688/(20-9), Situated At Abadi Bhagat Singh Colony Narwana Tehsil Narwana District Jind Within M.C. Limits As Per Jamabandi Year 2018-19, Haryana 126116	06/03/2025, Rs. 14,09,567.99/-	03-01-2025
7.	Vijay Chawla/ Archee Khurana A/c No. LBPNN00005436274 47 Nehru Nagar Teshi Camp Haryana Panipat 132103	House No 865/3 Ward No 3, Inside M.C. Limits Panipat Haryana 132103 House No 866/3 Ward No 3, Inside M.C. Limits Panipat Haryana 132103	22/03/2025, Rs. 35,55,022.82/-	08-04-2024
8.	Dheeraj Kumar/ Ruchi, A/c No. LBAMP00006560059 252 Sector 7 Urban State Ambala Haryana 134003	Part Of Plot No 234 (H No 234A), Property Id No 198C460U139P1 Situated At Khara No 33/17 (B-0), Khata No 1338/1427 Part Of 7/160, Bakolar 7 Marla Vakya Rakba Gram Jondali H.B No 113, Abadi Patel Nagar Colony Tehsil And District Ambala Haryana 134003	18/03/2025, Rs. 34,278/-	02-01-2025
9.	Dheeraj Kumar/ Ruchi, A/c No. TBAMP00006541594 252 Sector 7 Urban State Ambala Haryana 134003	Part Of Plot No 234 (H No 234A), Property Id No 198C460U139P1 Situated At Khara No 33/17 (B-0), Khata No 1338/1427 Part Of 7/160, Bakolar 7 Marla Vakya Rakba Gram Jondali H.B No 113, Abadi Patel Nagar Colony Tehsil And District Ambala Haryana 134003	18/03/2025, Rs. 28,07,977/-	02-01-2025
10.	Ashwani/ Bharat, A/c No. LBPNN00006522067 H No 281 Ward No 10 Haryana Panipat 132103	House No R 281 Situated In Ward No 10, Within The Limits Of M.C Tehsil And District Panipat Haryana 132103	18/03/2025, Rs. 40,053.36/-	03-02-2025
11.	Ashwani/ Bharat, A/c No. LBPNN00005075144 H No 281 Ward No 10 Haryana Panipat 132103	House No R 281 Situated In Ward No 10, Within The Limits Of M.C Tehsil And District Panipat Haryana 132103	18/03/2025, Rs. 13,66,618.94/-	03-02-2025
12.	Geeta Devi/ Sachin, A/c No. LBSNN00005432237 369/ 15 Gandhi Nagar Gannaur Haryana Sonapat 131101	Khewat No 204 Khatta No 288, Rect/Killa. No 58/1/(2-10) Situated In Gannaur Within The Limits Of M.C.Abadi Gandhi Nagar, Tehsil Gannur District Sonapat Haryana 131001	18/03/2025, Rs. 15,05,409.48/-	03-02-2025
13.	Geeta Devi/ Sachin, A/c No. LBSNN00005432239 369/ 15 Gandhi Nagar Gannaur Haryana Sonapat 131101	Khewat No 204 Khatta No 288, Rect/Killa. No 58/1/(2-10) Situated In Gannaur Within The Limits Of M.C.Abadi Gandhi Nagar, Tehsil Gannur District Sonapat Haryana 131001	18/03/2025, Rs. 11,12,470.53/-	03-02-2025
14.	Bal Kishan/ Durga Devi A/c No. LBLKNL0000557493 H No 01 Ward No 9 Assandh, Karnal Haryana Karnal 132039	Property Shop Comprised In Khewat No 584, Khara No 697/2 (0-14) Its 1/14 Share I.E 1 Marla Situated In Village Assandh (Karnal Road) Tehsil Assandh And District Karnal Haryana 132001	22/03/2025, Rs. 4,00,711.6/-	03-02-2025
15.	Bal Kishan/ Durga Devi A/c No. LBLKNL0000559458 H No 01 Ward No. 9, Assandh, Karnal Haryana Karnal 132039	Property Shop Comprised In Khewat No 584, Khara No 697/2 (0-14) Its 1/14 Share I.E 1 Marla Situated In Village Assandh (Karnal Road) Tehsil Assandh And District Karnal Haryana 132001	22/03/2025, Rs. 7,57,834.33/-	03-02-2025



Editor's TAKE

Deepening rifts and rising trade tensions

BRICS foreign ministers meet ends without joint statement as internal rifts surface

As the BRICS grouping of emerging powers convenes its foreign ministers in Rio de Janeiro ahead of its highly anticipated July summit, cracks within the expanded coalition are becoming increasingly visible. Despite shared concerns over global trade and geopolitical shifts, the meeting ended without a joint communiqué — an uncommon outcome that underscores growing internal disagreements. BRICS first summit was held in 2009. It originally brought together Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa to reshape global governance in a way that reflects the growing economic and political weight of the Global South.

In 2024, the group expanded significantly to include Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Iran — an enlargement aimed at amplifying its geopolitical influence. Together, BRICS nations represent over 40 per cent of the global population and a significant share of global GDP, positioning the bloc as a potential counterweight to Western-dominated institutions like the G7, the IMF, and the World Bank. Its growing economic heft and strategic alignment have made it central to discussions about a new multipolar world order. However, this recent meeting revealed that size does not always translate to cohesion.

The group was unable to issue a joint statement — a traditional diplomatic outcome — due to disagreements among members, particularly over language relating to United Nations reforms. Egypt and Ethiopia reportedly objected to proposals endorsing a stronger role for South Africa in a reformed Security Council, a priority for legacy BRICS members like India, Brazil, and South Africa. Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira acknowledged the divisions but emphasised that “there is room to resolve differences before July.” He highlighted that while consensus was reached on major issues, the diversity of the group, especially post-expansion, requires more negotiation to align positions.

Despite these diplomatic fissures, the foreign ministers rallied around a common concern: the rise of protectionist economic policies, particularly those implemented by the United States under President Donald Trump.

The Chair statement issued by Brazil expressed “serious concern at the prospect of a fragmented global economy and the weakening of multilateralism.” Without naming the US directly, the statement criticised “unjustified unilateral protectionist measures” and specifically condemned the “indiscriminate raising of reciprocal tariffs and non-tariff measures.”

These comments clearly referenced the Trump administration’s aggressive trade policies, including high tariffs on Chinese goods and escalating trade spats that risk destabilising the global economy. China, which has borne the brunt of these tariffs — facing levies as high as 145 per cent — reportedly pushed for stronger language in the statement. While Brazil and others supported a unified position, some newer members were less enthusiastic about directly antagonising the US, reflecting varied foreign policy alignments within the bloc.

The 2024 expansion of BRICS brought new energy and increased global clout to the bloc, but it also introduced conflicting interests and historical rivalries. Diplomats acknowledged that with greater power comes a need for more diplomacy. Indeed, the expansion has its costs, but it also gives BRICS more resources and a bigger platform for cooperation. Besides, so far the journey of BRICS has been rather rhetorical than real. It is yet to take on the Western world and establish itself as a formidable force in world trade and the geopolitical landscape.

Despite its growing economic clout and strategic aspirations, BRICS continues to suffer from several structural handicaps that limit its effectiveness as a unified global force. Chief among them is the vast political, economic, and ideological diversity among its members, which often results in conflicting priorities and diluted consensus. While legacy members like India, Brazil, and South Africa push for democratic reforms in global institutions such as the United Nations, newer entrants like Egypt and Ethiopia may resist initiatives that undermine regional balances or national interests.

Additionally, the bloc lacks a permanent secretariat or institutional framework to enforce decisions or coordinate policies, relying instead on rotating presidencies and ad hoc mechanisms. Geopolitical rivalries — such as the uneasy relationship between China and India — further complicate joint action. These internal frictions frequently undercut the group’s ability to present a cohesive front on major global issues, from trade and security to climate policy and governance reform.

Looking ahead to the July summit, the challenge for BRICS will be to forge a coherent strategy that accommodates its internal diversity while pushing forward its shared interests — particularly in trade, development finance, and institutional reform. As the global system edges away from US unipolarity towards a more fragmented and competitive landscape, BRICS ability to function as a unified bloc may well determine how the emerging multipolar world takes shape.

Leaderspeak



I would guess that India would be one of the first trade deals we would sign. Vice President Vance was in India last week, talked about substantial progress. I have mentioned that the negotiations with the Republic of Korea have gone very well, and I think we’ve had some very substantial negotiations with our Japanese allies.

US TREASURY SECRETARY SCOTT BESSENT

China faces the brunt of US tariffs

Madam — As tensions between India and Pakistan reach a peak, the tariff war between the United States and China has also intensified. Many factories in China have shut down after losing orders from the United States. There is growing concern that around 10 to 20 million workers in China, linked to export industries, may face unemployment.

Many factories manufacturing toys, sports goods, and cheap products have sent their workers home and have nearly stopped production. In response, several Chinese companies are now seeking new customers in Europe and Latin America instead of depending on the United States. They are also considering setting up production units in India and Southeast Asia. In the coming months, this shift could completely transform China’s export model. The situation is most erning in Yiwu and Dongguan, China’s major export hubs.

The athletic wear factory Wuiswole in Ningbo has started online sales in the domestic market. According to several Chinese company heads, the impact of Trump’s tariffs is more severe than that of COVID-19. Chinese tech companies have come forward to support domestic businesses. Hundreds of companies have been provided with free AI tools and virtual hosting services to help them resume online sales quickly amid difficulties caused by the Trump tariffs. The Chinese dragon is now deeply entangled in the web of American tariff strategies.

JANG BAHADUR SINGH | JAMSHEDPUR

Taiwan: Advancing health equity

Taiwan, with its world-leading National Health Insurance system and pioneering digital health innovations, stands as a model for equitable, accessible healthcare. Yet, it remains excluded from the WHO due to political barrier

Health is a fundamental human right and a universal value. Improved health results in greater well-being for the people and has ramifications for the survival and development of a country and even the world.

At the 77th World Health Assembly, members adopted the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Fourteenth General Programme of Work for 2025–2028. The programme includes such strategic objectives as improving health service coverage and bolstering financial protections to ensure universal health coverage.

WHO has called on all countries to take action on these issues. As concerns universal health coverage, Taiwan launched the National Health Insurance (NHI) system in 1995. The scheme, which brought together already existing occupational insurance schemes, has reached its 30th year and now covers 99.9 per cent of the population.

The NHI system provides equitable, accessible, and efficient healthcare to all people in Taiwan. It is also an important pillar and guarantor of Taiwan’s social stability as well as people’s health and safety. It has, moreover, become a global benchmark for achieving universal health coverage.

In an annual survey carried out by Numbeo, Taiwan has been ranked first in the Health Care Index category for seven consecutive years. The NHI operates on a pay-as-you-go, self-sustaining model capable of addressing the financial challenges posed by an ageing population and rising healthcare costs. By reforming premium rates and adding additional funding sources, such as the tobacco health and welfare surcharge, the system is on a sound, sustainable footing.

To promote the health of our people, President Lai Ching-te articulated a vision of a healthy Taiwan in 2024. This aims to ensure that people are healthy, the nation is strong, and the world is ready to embrace Taiwan. Remaining focused on people, families, and communities, we are expanding health promotion operations and preventive healthcare.

Moreover, we are implementing a family physician plan, offering comprehensive care to patients with chronic diseases, and utilising telemedicine to improve healthcare accessibility in rural areas. By promoting integrated long-term care, palliative care, and ageing in place, we ensure holistic, lifelong, and dignified care for all people, realising health equity. In 2021, WHO released the Global Strategy on Digital Health for 2020–2025.

Under this plan, the global health body is seeking the development and adoption of



person-centric digital health solutions to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases. It also oversees the development of infrastructure and applications to use health data to promote health and well-being. Taiwan continues to utilise its prowess in information and communication technology to build effective, high-ROI health systems and services.

The NHI cloud facilitates the more efficient exchange of medical records, while the adoption of international standards such as Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources enhances international medical data sharing. Additionally, the incorporation of AI-assisted technologies is advancing the development of smart healthcare.

The introduction of a virtual health insurance card and the My Health Bank app, which enables real-time management of personal health data, empowers people to make health-enabling choices. In 2008, Taiwan introduced the Health Technology Assessment to facilitate evidence — based policymaking. It also accelerated the inclusion of new treatments under the NHI system.

For example, in 2023, gene and cell therapies were covered for the first time, marking a new era for precision medicine and offering patients enhanced treatment options. Taiwan also continues to leverage innovative technologies to improve the working environment for the medical workforce and to bolster the overall quality of medical service.

What’s more, despite facing political challenges, Taiwan has continuously participated in international health affairs and has been dedicated to supporting the global health system. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan played a crucial role in sharing supplies, strategies, and experiences, and proved to be a reliable partner of countries worldwide. Separately, Taiwan’s success story in implementing universal health coverage offers valuable lessons for countries worldwide. As we continue to share our experiences in universal coverage, financial management, and digital health, we hope to facilitate other nations in reaching WHO’s goal of universal health coverage.

In this rapidly changing era, health challenges transcend borders, and global cooperation has become essential to addressing various health crises. However, Taiwan has been prevented from participating in WHO — the foremost global health cooperation body — due to China’s continued distortion

especially his crusade against sati, the inhumane practice that forced widows to self-immolate on their husband’s funeral pyre. Roy’s dedication to social reform extended beyond this. He promoted women’s education, property rights, and gender equity — causes later championed by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, culminating in the landmark Widow Remarriage Act of 1856. Roy’s vision laid the groundwork for a more progressive and humane society. Spiritually, Roy sought to uncover the core, universal truths of religion. He founded the Brahma Sabha, which later evolved into the Brahmo Samaj — a reformist movement that drew from both Hindu and Christian traditions. A polyglot fluent in at least ten languages, Roy studied religious texts across traditions — Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam. He even learnt Hebrew and Greek to explore the foundational texts of Christianity.

Through this comparative lens, he published *The Precepts of Jesus*, appreciating Christianity’s ethical teachings while also advocating for pure theism within Hinduism, stripped of its superstitions. An ardent proponent of modern education, Roy believed that Sanskrit-based instruction alienated the masses. Although he respected ancient scriptures, he opposed Sanskrit education for practical reasons, arguing that its esoteric nature hindered widespread learning. His progressive stance led him to advocate for English education, emphasising the need for rational and scientific knowledge. His vision helped establish prestigious institutions such as Hindu College, Presidency College, Vedanta College, and the English School in Calcutta. He even peti-

tioned the East India Company to expand English-language instruction, showcasing his commitment to national enlightenment. Roy also pioneered journalism in India, launching publications in Bengali, Persian, Hindi, and English. These journals served as powerful tools to disseminate knowledge in science, literature, and politics.

Despite oppressive press restrictions of the time, Roy fiercely defended freedom of expression, challenging censorship in courts and through official appeals. Although he did not live to witness the removal of these press controls, abolished by Charles Metcalfe in 1835 — his role as a crusader for free speech remains undeniable.

Politically astute, Roy campaigned against the Jury Act of 1827, which barred Indians from participating in trials involving fellow natives. He also opposed the renewal of the East India Company’s charter and called for key reforms, including civil and criminal law codification, greater Indian representation in the military, and the separation of judiciary and executive powers. Though an internationalist — he travelled to England in 1831 — Roy remained deeply empathetic to the plight of Indian peasants, decrying exploitative zamindars and punitive export duties. In every respect, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a man far ahead of his time. His unwavering commitment to truth, reason, justice, and unity laid the foundation for the Indian freedom movement and inspired generations.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living, views are personal.)

Raja who worked for the people

SECOND CHANDIGARH Opinion

BY RAVI VALLURI

The Bengal Renaissance marked a pivotal awakening in India’s social, cultural, and intellectual life. Bengal became the crucible of this transformation, led by men of exceptional intellect and character — figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshub Chandra Sen, and Dwarkanath Tagore.

Their relentless efforts reshaped the moral and philosophical foundation of a stagnating Indian society, breathing new life into a nation shackled by tradition, superstition, and social injustice. Foremost among these reformers was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, born on May 22, 1772 in Radhanagar to Ramakanto Roy and Tarini Devi. A visionary far ahead of his time, Roy found no solace in the rigid orthodoxy and ritualism of contemporary Hinduism. Deeply disturbed by idolatry, he even journeyed to Tibet in search of spiritual truth, hoping to find refuge in Buddhism. However, his experience there was disappointing — he found Tibetan Buddhism equally steeped in rituals and idolatrous practices. Yet this journey left a profound mark on his life. After a group of Tibetan women saved him from violent monks, he developed a deep reverence for women, recognising their strength and resilience. This experience became the foundation of his lifelong advocacy for women’s emancipation,

PAHALGAM MASSACRE: TARGETED KILLINGS, NATIONAL OUTRAGE

The terrorists who massacred 26 people in Pahalgam also fired an extremely destructive weapon. Inadvertently or by design, they asked the tourists their religion, and asked to identify themselves by reading the Kalma or other means. After confirming them to be Hindus, killed them mercilessly in front of their wives and children! The mass murder of 26 unsuspecting tourists is an gory inhuman act, but after sometime, like Pulwama or 26/11 Mumbai attack will become an statistic. But the pointed killing of Hindus by openly identifying them will surely result in violent retribution continuously.

They and their masters knew very well that enmity between the Indians can be very easily created. Since they have absolutely no love lost for muslims in india, they are hardly bothered of their fate as long as they are able to inflict a million cuts; and that too without any nefarious efforts by them!

Already, there are calls of boycotting muslims and their business, attacks on

them accusing them of cow-slaughter. Kashmiri students studying in other states are threatened and are made to feel insecure, prompting the Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister to request respective governments to ensure their safety.

Amidst call of unity the BJP is blaming the opposition and the opposition calling out the criminal lapses of the ruling party! Not one person has asked for finding how could the terrorists just walk in and create bloody mayhem. Nobody is talking of the lapses, intelligence failure or what precautions are to be taken to prevent such tragedies in future! The PM down to the ministers and ordinary member are roaring and warning of strong action; all this after the killings! We still are unaware how the Pulwama carnage took place!

The terrorists both here and in Pakistan will be celebrating this schism in the country! These attacks give our upstart politicians opportunity to blame each other and shameless upmanship!

ANIL BAGARKA | MUMBAI

Letters to the Editor

Liberals call the shots in Canada

Madam — The recent Canadian midterm election results brought unexpected reactions from global leaders, reminiscent of the classic 1960s Bollywood song *Na Na Karte Pyar Tumhi Se Kar Baithe*. Many appeared to hope for a loss for Canada’s Liberal Party, but despite falling three seats short of the majority mark of 172, the party is poised to form the Government.

Notably, Donald Trump, who once quipped about making Canada the 51st US state, congratulated Liberal leader Mark Carney — not via social media, but with a personal phone call. Ironically, Trump’s antagonism may have helped Carney. As a vocal critic of Trump, Carney’s opposition struck a chord with voters, boosting the Liberals’ vote share by 11 per cent and securing 15 more seats than in the last election.

Meanwhile, the Indian Government was seen favouring Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, possibly due to past tensions with Justin Trudeau. Indian media widely predicted a Liberal defeat — but reality defied those expectations. Reluctantly, Prime Minister Modi congratulated Carney. Encouragingly, Carney has called for renewed India–Canada relations, emphasising their importance and expressing his intent to restore full diplomatic engagement. It is time both nations move past their differences and rebuild a strong, respectful partnership.

JANG BAHADUR SINGH | JAMSHEDPUR

A tipping point in the global trade

Madam — The article on Mr Trump’s tariff moves (dated 30-4-25) sheds light on a deep-rooted global economic struggle. After the two World Wars, colonial powers lost access to cheap raw materials and captive markets. In response, they established mechanisms like the World Bank, IMF, and Asian Development Bank — to maintain economic dominance. However, these institutions often left newly liberated nations trapped in debt rather than fostering growth.

The global economic system, driven by profit, has increasingly benefited a tiny elite while depriving the majority. Without sufficient purchasing power among the masses, markets dried up — a crisis that surfaced in the 1930s. Economist Keynes proposed state-led welfare spending to revive demand, a strategy that helped restore economic activity. Yet, the relentless pursuit of profit led to a repeat collapse in 2008, exposing the fragility of the system.

Globalisation, once hailed as a panacea, soon turned the United States into a dumping ground, diminishing its dominance. Trump’s reaction — tariffs and trade barriers — reflects a shift towards protectionism.

While most nations resist his unilateralism, bilateral trade pacts are rising. China stands firm, signalling the end of American economic hegemony. Trump’s recent pause on tariffs and softer stance suggest a reluctant recognition of this new multipolar trade reality.

DATTAPRASAD SHIRODKAR | MUMBAI

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR



# Reimagining migration: It's time for an overhaul

As global labour shortages intensify, a policy reset could transform this demographic strength into a global competitive edge, if India can shift from fragmented migration to a structured, ethical, and strategic talent export framework

FIRST  
Column

## Negotiate Migration Agreements

India must expand its Bilateral Labour Mobility Agreements (BLMAs) portfolio like those already signed with Japan, the UAE, and Germany, ensuring wages, insurance, housing, and grievance redressal mechanisms are part of the contract.

## National Mobility Industry Council

Bringing together ethical recruitment agencies, training institutes, employers, and regulators under a national industry body will professionalise migration practices, reduce fraud, and ensure quality assurance.

## Harness the Power of Returning Migrants

Returning migrants bring global exposure, savings, and skills. A repatriate reintegration programme can turn them into local entrepreneurs and job creators, including re-skilling, credit access, and start-up incubators.

## The Way Forward

For India, migration is not just an economic tool, it's a geopolitical asset. A well-supported diaspora can influence foreign policy, trade ties, cultural diplomacy, and technology transfer. Countries like the Philippines, Mexico, and Vietnam have already built national strategies around their overseas workforce. It is time for India to do the same, not out of compulsion but with a vision to lead. With the proper safeguards, strategic investments, and bold policy thinking, India can become the world's largest remittance — receiving nation and the most respected exporter of skilled talent. The global workforce crisis is India's demographic opportunity but only if we act with urgency, coordination, and compassion.

From gaon (village) to global capitals, Indian migrants are already shaping the world. Now it's time for India to shape the future of migration — legally, ethically, strategically and geopolitically. India's migration story is at a critical crossroads — rich in promise yet fraught with challenges. With remittances at record highs and global demand for skilled workers surging, the moment calls for bold, coordinated action.

By embracing a structured, rights-based migration policy, India can not only safeguard its migrants but also elevate them as strategic assets in global diplomacy, trade, and development. Legal, affordable, and skill-aligned migration must become the new norm. If done right, India can transition from being the world's top remittance recipient to a global leader in talent export — transforming migration into a national strength and a tool for inclusive progress.

(The writer is Vice-Chairman (Cabinet Minister rank) of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board and Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views are personal)



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radic migration to structured, state-supported, legal migration is crucial. The Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024, currently under consideration, promises a long-overdue update to the Emigration Act of 1983.

It seeks to build a modern, transparent, and welfare, oriented migration system. But legislative reform alone won't suffice. We need a federalised, mission-mode approach involving Central Ministries, State Governments, skilling agencies, and private sector partners. To catalyse this shift, India must embrace a "Talent Export Policy" — similar in ambition to the "Invest India" initiative. Here's a seven-pronged roadmap to do so:

## Establish a National Overseas Employment Authority

Set up a dedicated body under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) that works with State Governments to identify destination country

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ACCORDING TO THE WORLD BANK, REMITTANCES EXCEED FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI) IN MANY DEVELOPING NATIONS, AND INDIA IS NO EXCEPTION. DESPITE THESE ACHIEVEMENTS, INDIA'S MIGRATION LANDSCAPE IS MARKED BY A STARK DUALITY

demands, facilitate skill-matching, and negotiate bilateral migration corridors. District-level Migration Resource Centres and Indian embassy helpdesks should be institutionalised worldwide.

## Integrate Global Skill Standards

India must reimagine its skilling architecture to align with global job market standards, including foreign languages, cross-cultural communication, and sector-specific certifications. NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation) can partner with countries for mutual qualification recognition.

## Make Migration Affordable

Migration costs to Europe can reach up to ₹10 lakh, deterring legal movement and incentivising illegal channels. Low-interest loans, Government subsidies, and employer — funded training models, inspired by the Philippines' ESA-Pay system, must be adopted to reduce the financial burden.

## Strengthen Migrant Welfare Systems Abroad

Enforce ILO (International Labour Organisation)-compliant employment standards and fund legal aid cells, health insurance, and cultural orientation programmes in collaboration with Indian missions abroad. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) can be scaled up to provide real-time support.

# The Unseen hands that build our world

On May 1, Workers' Day, we do more than mark a date — we remember a revolution born from blisters, built on dignity, and carried forward by the unbreakable spirit of those whose work shapes our lives, yet whose names we rarely know

She wakes not to an alarm but to the first strike of a hammer. There is no day, no night — just an endless chain of work that begins before sunrise and continues after dark. The hands that bear blisters are the ones that strengthen the nation's foundation. The sweat that falls to the ground raises towering buildings. Yet, these hands have been given more space on floors than in the pages of history.

They haven't been counted — they've been brought down, bent low. But May 1 is the day when the worker straightened their back and told the world: No more.

This day is not just a date on the calendar but a symbol of the consciousness that unites voices crushed for centuries. It is the echo of the strength hidden in the sweat of labourers — a strength that can redirect rivers, split mountains, and, most importantly, transform society's mindset.

A worker is not just a person but an idea. An idea that says labour is the foundation of creation. No uniform, no title, no rank — yet these are the most real people in the world. They may not have degrees to show, but every perfectly aligned brick is proof of their skill.

They are the ones who build cities but often get lost on their edges. They are denied entry to malls, yet they are the ones who build them. Labour is not just working; it is an unwritten poem, composed in lines of blisters, sweat, and unseen exhaustion.

It is a battle — a battle for existence, dignity, and identity that is repeatedly crushed by being called 'unskilled'. But the truth is, the most vital skills belong to those without whom the world would become a stalled machine.

Imagine for a moment: if workers stopped working for a day, what would happen? Cities would halt, streets would empty, and the framework of our so — called modernity would crumble. Yet, how often do we salute their labour?

Today's era is one of technology and innovation. We talk of Digital India, start-ups, and artificial intelligence, but do we forget that the engine of all this still runs on human effort? The delivery boy pedalling through scorching afternoons to bring your package — do we see the exhaustion hidden in his smile?

The welder whose eyes, sparked by more than just metal, forge the future — do we honour their art? Labour is no longer confined to factories; it is the story of every person who lives not for a 'job' but for a passion, even if that passion is to feed their family. It is the story of the rickshaw puller who carries the weight of his family with the strength of his legs. It is the story of the domestic worker who



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weaves dreams for her children, even if she never attended school. These people are the backbone of our society, yet how often do we dismiss them as mere 'workers'?

The workers' fight is not just for wages or working hours but for the respect their labour deserves. They often fight alone — sometimes with their voices, sometimes with tears, and sometimes in silence.

But when they stand together, they change history. That day in 1886, when workers in Chicago demanded an eight-hour workday, was not just an event — it was a spark that ignited labour movements worldwide.

Even today, when workers take to the streets, their voice represents not just themselves but every person who stands against injustice. No law, no

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WE MUST ASK: IS OUR DEVELOPMENT TRULY INCLUSIVE IF WORKERS' CONTRIBUTION IS LIMITED TO THEIR LABOUR? IS OUR PROGRESS GENUINE IF ITS FRUITS DON'T REACH THOSE WHO WATER ITS ROOTS? NO REVOLUTION, NO DEVELOPMENT, NO CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE WITHOUT THE WORKER'S SMILE AT ITS CORE.

Government, and no policy is greater than their collective consciousness. Workers' Day is not just a red mark on the calendar — it is a warning to systems that believe labourers only follow orders. They also ask questions, and when they do, the world must answer.

We need a society where labour is seen not as a class but as a value. Where honest work is not looked down upon. Where a child who says, "I want to be a worker like my father," is met with respect, not pity. This will only be possible when we view labour not just as a means of survival but as an art — a matter of pride.

We must understand that workers don't just work — they shape dreams. They don't just build structures — they lay the foundation of society. May 1 will truly be a festival when, instead of spending the holiday in malls, we take a step for workers' rights. When we listen to their stories and give their voices a platform.

This day also reminds us that workers are not just a tale of the past but the architects of the future. As we speak of the environment, sustain-

able development, and social justice, workers are at the heart of that change. Those who grow crops in fields, operate machines in factories, or clean our streets — they are the axis keeping our planet and society alive. Yet, our policies, priorities, and thinking often push them to the margins.

We must ask: Is our development truly inclusive if workers' contribution is limited to their labour? Is our progress genuine if its fruits don't reach those who water its roots?

No revolution, no development, no construction is complete without the worker's smile at its core. As long as their share is only sweat and not the rewards, our achievements remain incomplete. This day is not an empty slogan — it is the sound that rose from the strike of a hammer and can still shake our souls — if we are willing to listen.

It gives us a chance not only to remember workers' struggles but to ask what we can do for them. Perhaps it's time we see their labour not just as work but as a force that can change the world. Perhaps it's time we make Workers' Day not just a holiday but a day of resolve — a resolve to build a society where every worker stands tall, and their voice is heard. Because until the worker's smile becomes part of our progress, no achievement of ours will ever be complete.

On May 1, we do not just honour workers, we awaken to the truth they represent. Their hands, though blistered and unseen, shape the world we live in. They are the silent force behind our cities, our comforts, and our dreams.

Yet, they remain invisible — underpaid, undervalued, and often unheard. Workers' Day is a call not just to remember their struggles but to reimagine a society where labour is not just a necessity but a value of pride.

True progress lies in dignity for all not just in technology or wealth, but in the recognition of every hand that builds, cleans, grows, and delivers. Until we ensure their voices are heard and their efforts rewarded, our achievements remain hollow.

Let this day be a pledge — not just of gratitude but of action — to build an inclusive, just, and respectful world, where every worker stands tall and every drop of sweat is met with the respect it deserves.

On May 1, we honour not just the worker's toil but their truth. Their sweat shapes our world, yet their worth goes unseen. Let this day remind us: without dignity for labour, progress is hollow. Real development begins when every worker's voice is heard and their efforts valued equally.

(The author is a professor and a columnist. Views are personal)



# Bangladesh High Court orders Hindu leader’s release on bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dhaka

A bench of Bangladesh High Court on Wednesday ordered release of Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das on bail, five months after he was arrested on a charge of defaming the country’s national flag, court officials said.

“The two-judge bench declared absolute its earlier rule asking authorities why he should not be granted bail,” an official of the High Court said.

The bench comprising Justice Atoar Rahman and Justice Ali Reza granted the bail after the final hearing on their previous rule.

On October 31, a case with Kotwali police station in Chattogram was filed accusing Das and 18 others of disrespecting the Bangladesh national flag.

A former ISKCON leader, Das was arrested at Dhaka’s Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on November 25 last year.

A spokesperson for the Sammilito Sanatani Jagaran Jote, a Hindu organisation, Das was taken to the court at the southeastern port city of Chattogram, which sent him to jail rejecting his bail petition the next day.

Das’ arrest sparked widespread protests with his followers demonstrating in Dhaka and other places. In the port city, the protest turned violent when assistant gov-



Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das

FILE PHOTO

ernment prosecutor Saiful Islam Alif was hacked to death, hours after Das was sent to jail. The development - less than three months after a mass student-led protest ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5 - also emerged as an issue between Bangladesh and India with New Delhi expressing its concern over his detention. After Hasina fled to India, Muhammad Yunus took over as Chief Adviser of the Interim government on August 8.

“This incident follows the multiple attacks on Hindus and other minorities by extremist elements in Bangladesh. There are several documented cases of arson and looting of minorities’ homes and business establishments, as well as theft and vandalism and desecration of deities and temples,” the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in New Delhi on November 26. “It is unfortunate that while the perpetrators of these incidents remain at large, charges should be pressed against a reli-

gious leader presenting legitimate demands through peaceful gatherings,” MEA said and urged Bangladesh authorities to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all minorities. Earlier, the lawyers of the Hindu community leader had failed to secure bail for him as the lower court in Chattogram denied their petitions.

“The allegation of disrespecting the national flag is baseless, as it was not a national flag. We informed the court that this case cannot proceed,” top defence counsel Apurba Kumar Bhattacharya told journalists emerging from the court room last time in January.

Bhattacharya, a former deputy attorney general, was leading a team of 11 Supreme Court lawyers to represent Das.

Earlier on December 11, the court rejected a plea seeking advanced hearing of his bail petition by lawyer Rabindra Ghose ruling that it would be heard on the previously fixed date on January 2, 2025.

An associate of Das in his Sammilita Sanatani Jagaran Jote, Sawtantra Gauranga Das, earlier said no lawyer stood for the Hindu leader fearing threats and pressure from a “politically motivated lawyers’ group”. The government prosecutor’s death sparked a counter campaign demanding a ban of ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which distanced itself from Das saying he was expelled from the organisation more than six months ago.

# Parents await Pakistan man’s body from Chennai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Karachi

The parents of a 23-year-old Pakistani man who died during treatment at a Chennai hospital were still waiting Wednesday for the body as the airline which was scheduled to carry it landed without it.

It was reported on Tuesday that the body of Syed Aryan Shah has been brought to Karachi after his mother appealed to the government for help after the Pahalgam attack.

The airline was supposed to bring the body on Tuesday.

“They (airlines) were supposed to bring his body on Tuesday evening to Karachi. The flight arrived without the body because of some operational and logistical issues,” Saima Shah, Aryan’s mother, said. Aryan was suffering from heart and severe lung ailments and was on life support for respiratory failure at the MGM Healthcare hospital in Chennai. He died on April 25.

Aryan’s mother said that after she had appealed to the Pakistan government to help her clear the hospital bills and also arrange for transportation of the body to Karachi, the Balochistan government had come to her rescue by coordinating with the foreign ministry and arranging to transport the body from Chennai to Colombo. His mother had flown with Aryan to Chennai and got him admitted there on February 12 for his urgent treatment. The situation became difficult for the Pakistani family after India directed all Pakistani nationals holding visitor

medical visas to leave the country by April 29 in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 in which 26 people were killed.

“Since the family belongs to Quetta, the Balochistan government contacted the foreign office, and we cleared all the medical bills to get the body release. We have also made all travel arrangements to fly the body back to Karachi,” Shahid Rind, a spokesperson for the government, said.

Rind said the plan was to bring the body by road from Karachi to Quetta by Wednesday for burial.

The airlines have assured the body will be brought to Karachi as soon as possible, but have given no schedule.

According to media reports, Aryan Shah had been suffering from interstitial lung disease and was put on ECMO support for the last 70 days.

After all existing Indian visas issued to Pakistani nationals were revoked, some families from Pakistan who were in Chennai or New Delhi for the treatment of their children had to cancel their plans and return home.

This week, two families from Karachi returned home from New Delhi without the treatment of their sons being completed. In one case, two boys aged 9 and 7 had to return home without undergoing a procedure for their heart defect since birth.

Chennai and New Delhi have been destinations for Pakistanis who are looking for advanced tertiary medical care at affordable costs.

# Ten terrorists killed by Pakistan security forces

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Karachi

Pakistan’s security forces have killed 10 terrorists in two separate incidents in the country’s restive Balochistan province, authorities said.

The terrorists were killed in the Kech and Ziarat districts during a fresh crack-down against militant elements in the province.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the terrorists were killed during separate intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in the districts. The operation was launched based on intelligence about the presence of militants in the area.

As per details, three terrorists were killed during an operation near Turbat in Kech district. The operation was launched based on intelligence about the presence of militants in the area.

The ISPR said in a sta-tement that a heavy exc-h-ange of fire took place between sec-urity forces and armed terrorists.

Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the slain terrorists, who the ISPR said were involved in numerous

**According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the terrorists were killed during separate intelligence-based operations. The operation was launched based on intelligence about the presence of militants in the area**

attacks against security forces and the killing of civilians.

In a separate incident, security forces killed seven terrorists during an operation conducted on intelligence reports in the Choteer area of Ziarat district.

Officials said the targeted operation took place between the Chot-eer and Sanjavi areas. Armed militants hiding in the area opened fire on the security forces, who retaliated after taking positions.

Ziarat Deputy Commissioner Zakaullah Durrani confirmed the deaths and said that seven bodies were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Ziarat, by security personnel.

# North Korea’s Kim Jong watches missile test-firings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Seoul

North Korea said Wednesday leader Kim Jong Un observed the first test-firings of missiles from a recently launched destroyer - the first such warship for the North - and called for accelerating efforts to boost his navy’s nuclear attack capabilities.

North Korea last week unveiled the 5,000-tonne destroyer equipped with what it called the most powerful weapons built in its warship industry. During Friday’s launching ceremony at the western port of Nampo, Kim called the ship’s construction “a breakthrough” in modernising North Korea’s naval forces.

Outsider experts say it’s North Korea’s first destroyer and that it was likely built with Russian assistance. They say North Korea’s naval forces lag behind South Korea’s but still view the destroyer as a serious security threat as it could bolster North Korea’s attack and defence capabilities.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Wednesday that Kim watched the tests of the destroyer’s supersonic and strategic cruise missiles, anti-aircraft missile, automatic guns and electronic jamming guns earlier this week.

He appreciated the ship’s combination of powerful strike weapons and conventional defenses and set tasks to speed the nuclear-arming of his navy, the report said.

During the ship’s launching ceremony,



Test-firings conducted in North Korea

PTI

Kim said the destroyer will be deployed early next year. He said the acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine would be his next big step in strengthening his navy. He underscored the need to beef up North Korea’s deterrence capability to cope with what he called escalating US-led hostilities targeting the North.

An analysis of photos of the warship shows that its anti-air radar system is likely from Russia, said Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea. He said the warship’s engine system and some of its anti-air weapons systems also likely came from Russia.

North Korea and Russia have been

sharply expanding military and other cooperation in recent years, with the North supplying troops and conventional weapons to support Russia’s war efforts against Ukraine.

The US, South Korea and their partners worry Russia will likely in return provide North Korea with high-tech weapons technologies that can enhance its nuclear programme as well as shipping other military and economic assistance.

Lee said the deployment of a warship with an advanced radar system off North Korea’s west coast could sharply bolster its air defence capabilities for Pyongyang, the capital.

Lee said South Korea, which has 12 destroyers, still vastly outpaces North Korea’s naval forces.

But he said the North Korean destroyer, which can carry about 80 missiles, can still pose a serious threat, as South Korea’s navy hasn’t likely braced for such an enemy warship.

Animosities on the Korean Peninsula are running high as North Korea continues its weapons testing activities meant to enlarge its nuclear and missile arsenals.

On Monday, North Korea confirmed for the first time that it has sent combat troops to Russia to support its war efforts against Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked North Korea and promised not to forget the sacrifices of North Korean soldiers for Russia.

# Vietnam celebrates 50 years since war’s end with focus on peace, unity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

Vietnam on Wednesday celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of the war with the United States and the formation of its modern nation with a military parade and a focus on a peaceful future.

The fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975 marked the end of a Vietnam divided into the communist North and US-allied South, and the country’s top official told crowds the past decades had led to ever increasing unity.

“All the Vietnamese are the descendants of Vietnam. They have the rights to live and work, to have freedom to pursue happiness and love in this country,” said To Lam, the Vietnam Communist Party’s general secretary.

“In a spirit of closing the past, respecting differences, aiming for the future, the whole party, the people and the army vow to make Vietnam become a country of peace, unity, prosperity and development,” he added.

Thousands camped overnight on the streets of the former South Vietnamese capital, which was renamed Ho Chi Minh City after it fell to North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops, to get the best vantage point for the parade.

Many lingered on the streets later in the afternoon and ate picnics while waiting for drone and fireworks shows scheduled for the evening.

“Now it’s time for peace,” said spectator Nguyen Thi Hue, a city resident. “Peace is the dream that everyone in the world wants.”

One float carried the Lac bird, Vietnam’s emblem, another a portrait of Ho Chi Minh.

Chinese, Laotian and Cambodian troops marched behind Vietnamese army formations, including some wearing uniforms similar to what was worn by northern Vietnamese troops during the war.



Helicopters carrying the national flag and jets flew over the parade near Independence Palace, where a North Vietnamese tank smashed through the gates on the final day of the war.

Sitting next to Vietnam’s leader were Cambodia’s former leader Hun Sen and Laotian Communist Party General Secretary Thongloun Sisolouth.

To Lam said beyond a victory over the US and South Vietnam, the fall of Saigon was a “glorious landmark” that ended a 30-year fight for independence that began with the fight to oust French colonial troops.

He said Vietnam owes its position in the world today to support from the Soviet Union, China and solidarity from Laos and Cambodia, as well as “progressive” people all over the world including the US.

The emphasis on reconciliation and not, like previous years, on military victory reflected how Vietnam was approaching the changing tides of the global economy and geopolitics today, said Nguyen Khac Giang, an analyst at Singapore’s ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

He added that the Vietnam War remains central to how the Communist Party framed its legitimacy, not just as a military triumph but also as a symbol of national unity. But To Lam’s comments underlined that the reconciliation remains unfinished.

“The war still defines Vietnam’s unity, and its unresolved divides,” Giang said.

For Pham Ngoc Son, a veteran who fought for the communists, today there is “only space for peace and friendship” between the US and Vietnam.

“The war is over a long time ago,” said the 69-year-old who, during the war, served as an army truck driver bringing troops and supplies from the north to the south along the Ho Chi Minh trail - the secret supply route used by North Vietnam.

This year also marks the 30-year anniversary of diplomatic ties between Vietnam and the US.

In 2023, Vietnam upgraded its relations with the US to that of a comprehensive strategic partner, the highest diplomatic status it gives to any country and the same level of relations as China and Russia.

# Sudanese return to their homeland, hoping for stability

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Cairo

Ahmed Abdalla sat on a sidewalk in downtown Cairo, waiting for a bus that will start him on his journey back to Sudan. He doesn’t know what he will find in his homeland, wrecked and still embroiled in a 2-year-old war.

His wife and son, who weren’t going with him, sat next to him to bid him goodbye. Abdalla plans to go back for a year, then decide whether it’s safe to bring his family.

“There is no clear vision. Until when do we have to wait?” Abdalla said, holding two bags of clothes. “These moments I’m separating from my family are really hard,” he said, as his wife broke down in tears.

Abdullah is among tens of thousands of Sudanese who were driven from their homes and are now going back. They are hoping for some stability after the military in recent months recaptured the capital, Khartoum, and other areas from its rival, the Rapid Support Forces.

But the war still rages in some parts of the country. In areas recaptured by the military, people are returning to find their neighbourhoods shattered, often with no electricity and scarce food, water and services. The battle for power between the military and the RSF has caused one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Famine is spreading. At least 20,000 people have been killed, according to the UN, though the figure is likely higher.

Nearly 13 million people fled their homes, some 4 million of whom streamed into neighbouring countries while the rest sought shelter elsewhere in Sudan.

A relatively small portion of the displaced are returning so far, but the numbers are accelerating. Some 400,000 internally displaced Sudanese have gone back to homes in the Khartoum area, neighbouring Gezira province and south-east Sennar province, the International Organisation for Migration estimates.

Since Jan. 1, about 123,000 Sudanese returned from Egypt, including nearly 50,000 so far in April, double the month before, the IOM said. Some 1.5 million Sudanese fled to Egypt during the war, according to UNHCR.

Nfa Dre, who had fled to northern Sudan, moved back with his family to Khartoum North, a sister city of the capital, right after the military retook it in March.

They found decomposing bodies and unexploded ordnance in the streets. Their home had been looted.

“Thank God, we had no loss of lives, just material losses, which matter nothing compared to lives,” Dre said. Three days of work made their home inhabitable. But conditions are hard. Not all markets have reopened and few medical services are available. Dre said residents rely on charity kitchens operated by a community activist group called the Emergency Response Rooms, or ERR. They haul water from the Nile River for cooking and drinking. His home has no electricity, so he charges his phone at a mosque with solar panels.

“We asked the authorities for generators, but they replied that they don’t have the budget to provide them,” Dre said. “There was nothing we could say.”

Salah Semsaya, an ERR volunteer, said he knew of displaced people who tried returning to Wad Madani, the capital of Gezira province, but found the basics of life so lacking that they went back to their displacement shelters.

Others are too wary to try. “They’re worried about services for their children. They’re worrying about their livelihoods,” said Sheldon Yett, UNICEF Representative to Sudan.

Throughout the war, there has been no functional government. A military-backed transitional administration was based in Port Sudan, on the Red Sea coast, but had little reach or resources. After retaking Khartoum, the military said it will establish a new interim government.

# “Erosion of multilateralism threatens global stability”

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Johannesburg

South African Deputy President Paul Mashatile has called on G20 nations to strongly discourage the erosion of multilateralism, warning that it is a potential threat to global growth and stability.

Addressing a gathering of African thought leaders at the Think 20 (T20) Africa High-Level Dialogue in Pretoria on Tuesday, Mashatile said multilateralism was facing serious challenges that were reshaping global dynamics and relationships. “Therefore, we should take a dim view and strongly discourage the erosion of multilateralism, as it poses a potential threat to global growth and stability,” he said.

The dialogue, themed ‘Strengthening African Agency in the G20 Within the Global Order’, served as a preparatory meeting for the G20 Summit later this year. South Africa holds the G20 Presidency for 2025. Mashatile said a fair, transparent, equitable, and inclusive international order was essential for economic stability and sustained growth.

He warned of the hardships caused by global megatrends such as geopolitical instability, climate change, rising nationalism, and trade wars. “Global economic growth is subdued, with many economies, particularly in Africa, burdened by unsustainable debt levels, while billions are affected by underdevelopment, inequality, poverty, and unemployment,” he noted.

Mashatile listed the challenges which he said were “testing our global humanity and solidarity among nations.”

The Deputy President stressed that South Africa would use its G20 Presidency to prioritise employment generation, gender-responsive policies, equitable access to opportunity, and reforms to the global financial system - including fair credit rating systems, accessible climate financing, and debt relief for low-income countries.



There has never been a pope from the US. Politico quoted Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, who appeared to throw his weight behind Trump's long-shot bid for the papacy.



# Delhi: Wedding businesses to surpass ₹5,000 crore on Akshaya Tritiya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Wedding-related businesses in Delhi are expected to surpass Rs 5,000 crore in one day as the national capital is witnessing around 21,000 marriages to coincide with Akshaya Tritiya — an auspicious day in the Hindu calendar. It’s not just the couples who are feeling the joy — the wedding business is also seeing a boom, across a wide range of sectors including apparel, jewellery, food and catering, decoration, photography, transport, hotel bookings, event management, beauty salons, DJ services and floral services. Today, nearly all banquet halls, hotels and wedding venues in Delhi are fully booked. Meanwhile, hotel and banquet hall prices have surged by 10-15 per cent and most venues across the city are already fully booked, reflecting the massive wedding wave sweeping Delhi on Wednesday.

Notably, despite record prices, gold and silver trade across India touched a new high on Wednesday, on Akshaya Tritiya, a day considered auspicious in the country. According to the estimates of jewellery traders, gold sales alone were worth ₹12,000 crore on Wednesday. Akshaya Tritiya, celebrated annually on the third day of the bright half of Hindu calendar month Vaisakha, falls on Wednesday this year.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), has estimated Wedding-related businesses in Delhi are expected to surpass ₹5,000 crore in one day.



The Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) estimated that the overall wedding-related business in the Delhi on Wednesday could exceed ₹1,000 crore. “Rates of banquet halls and hotels have seen a 10-15 per cent increase due to high demand,” CTI Chairman Brijesh Goyal said. CTI General Secretary and gold trader Gurmeet Arora said that the gold and silver trade alone is expected to see a turnover of around ₹200 crore. However, with gold prices at record highs, buyers are showing more interest in light-weight jewellery.

“The price of gold has risen significantly. Ten grams of gold is currently priced at around ₹97,000, compared to ₹73,500 on Akshaya Tritiya last year. As a result, traders are focusing on smaller, lighter gold and diamond jewellery pieces to meet customer demand,” Arora said.

Families are estimated to spend around 10 per cent of their wedding budget on clothing, 15 per cent on jewellery, and five per cent each on electronics, sweets and dry fruits. Gift items account for around four per cent of spending, according to Deepak Garg,

Senior Vice-President of CTI. In the services category, five per cent of the budget typically goes to banquet halls and hotels, three per cent to management, 10 per cent to tent and decoration services, and another 10 per cent on other services such as catering, he said.

Flower decoration makes up four per cent of total expenses, while transportation, photography, and music-related services together account for about 15 per cent, he added.

According to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), the prices of gold and silver have surged significantly this year. Currently, the price of 10 grams of gold has reached around ₹1,00,000, compared to ₹73,500 on Akshaya Tritiya last year. Similarly, silver prices have touched ₹1,00,000 per kilogram, up from ₹86,000 per kilogram in 2023. In 2023, Akshaya Tritiya witnessed jewellery sales worth approximately ₹14,500 crore across the country, but the 2024 Lok Sabha elections have led to a noticeable dip in trade activity this year.

According to the latest data released by the World Gold Council, India’s gold demand in the first three months of the year (January-March 2025) stood at 118.1 tonnes, a 15 per cent drop from 139 tonnes in the same period last year.

According to mythological beliefs, on this day, Lord Shiva blessed Kubera with immense wealth and Goddess Lakshmi with the title of the goddess of fortune — making it one of the most auspicious days for buying precious metals.

# Centre hiked sugarcane price by 4.41 per cent for 2025-26

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday decided to increase the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane by 4.41 per cent to ₹355 per quintal for the upcoming 2025-26 season beginning October, keeping in mind the interest of sugarcane farmers.

For the current 2024-25 season, the sugarcane FRP has been fixed at ₹340 per quintal. FRP is the minimum price mandated by the Government of India that sugar mills are legally obligated to pay sugarcane farmers for their produce.

Briefing media after the meeting, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the FRP of ₹355 per quintal has been approved for a basic recovery rate of 10.25 per cent.

“The Fair and Remunerative Price for sugar season 2025-26 is 4.41 per cent higher than current sugar season 2024-25,” the statement said.

A premium of ₹3.46 per quintal for each 0.1 per cent increase in sugar recovery over and above 10.25 per cent will be provided to farmers. A reduction in Fair and Remunerative Price by ₹3.46 per quintal will be for every 0.1 per cent decrease in recovery rate.

The government has also decided that there will not be any deduction in case of sugar mills where recovery is below 9.5 per cent. Such farmers will get ₹329.05 per cent for sugarcane in

the ensuing 2025-26 season.

According to the statement, the cost of production of sugarcane for the sugar season 2025-26 is ₹173 per quintal. The FRP of Rs 355 per quintal fixed for 2025-26 at a recovery rate of 10.25 per cent is higher by 105.2 per cent over production cost.

The sugar sector is an important agro-based sector that impacts the livelihood of about 5 crore sugarcane farmers and their dependents and around 5 lakh workers directly employed in sugar mills, apart from those employed in various ancillary activities including farm labour and transportation.

**Briefing media after the meeting, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the FRP of ₹355 per quintal has been approved for a basic recovery rate of 10.25 per cent**

The FRP has been determined on the basis of recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and after consultation with state governments and other stakeholders.

As of April 28, about 87 per cent of total cane dues of ₹97,270 crore have been paid to farmers in the 2024-25 season, while 99.92 per cent of total cane dues of ₹1,11,782 crores were paid to farmers for 2024-25.

# Rupee jumps 38 paise to close at 84.58 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ MUMBAI

The rupee surged 38 paise to 84.58 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday as trade-deal hopes and foreign fund inflows boosted investor sentiments. US President Donald Trump’s statement that tariff talks with India are in a positive direction enthused investors, forex dealers said. However, geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan and a muted sentiment in domestic equities weighed on investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.15 and moved between the intra-day high of 84.47 and the low of 85.15 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 84.58 (provisional), registering a gain of 38 paise over its previous closing level.

On Tuesday, the rupee gained 27 paise to settle at 84.96 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, Trump said negotiations with India over a bilateral trade deal are “coming along great”, and he thinks Washington will “have a deal” with New Delhi.

Trump made the remarks on Tuesday while speaking to reporters before departing the White House for a rally in Michigan, marking the first 100 days of his second administration.

**Trump said negotiations with India over a bilateral trade deal are “coming along great”, and he thinks Washington will “have a deal” with New Delhi**

“India is coming along great. I think we’ll have a deal with India,” said the president. “Prime Minister (Narendra Modi), as you know, was here three weeks ago, and they want to make a deal. We’ll see what happens,” he added.

Prime Minister Modi visited the White House in late February.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.20 per cent at 99.44.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.81 per cent to \$63.73 per barrel in futures trade.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 46.14 points, or 0.06 per cent, to close at 80,242.24, while the Nifty fell 1.75 points or 0.01 per cent to settle at 24,334.20.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹2,385.61 crore on a net basis on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by the Prime Minister, is understood to have deliberated on the overall security situation in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday amid speculations about India’s possible retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack in view of its cross border linkages.

The CCS meeting was held at the prime minister’s Lok Kalyan Marg residence, a day after he held a meeting with the top military brass and accorded operational freedom to the armed forces on the “mode, targets and timing” of India’s response to the April 22 attack that killed 26 people.

It was attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, people familiar with the matter said.

# Airspace restrictions increase costs for Indian airlines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai/ New Delhi

Indian airlines are likely to face additional weekly expenses of ₹77 crore for international flights operated from north Indian cities as the airspace curbs result in increased fuel consumption and longer flight durations.

An analysis of the number of overseas flights and back-of-the-envelope calculations based on increased flight time as well as approximate expenses by media showed that the additional monthly operational costs could be over ₹306 crore. Amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan due to the Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistan on Thursday said it will bar Indian airlines from using its airspace. Alternative flight path is resulting in additional flying time of up to 1.5 hours for international flights from Delhi and north Indian cities.

A senior airline industry official, who has extensive experience in the commercial side, told to media that the additional time for a 16-hour flight to North America will be around 1.5 hours.

For 1.5 additional hours, the cost will be around ₹29 lakh, including landing and parking charges on account of a technical halt in an airport enroute, the official said. Similarly, the additional flight time for a 9-hour flight to Europe will be about 1.5 hours, and the extra cost will be around ₹22.5 lakh.

In the case of Middle East flights, the additional time will be around 45 minutes, and the resultant cost will be about ₹5 lakh, the official said.

Indian carriers are scheduled to operate more than 6,000 flights one way to various international destinations in April, data from aviation analytics firm

Cirium showed. Over 800 weekly flights are operated by Indian airlines to and from north Indian cities to overseas destinations, including North America, the UK, Europe and the Middle East, as per an analysis of the Cirium data.

There are little over 3,100 flights both ways in a month, and on a weekly basis, the count comes to nearly 800 flights.

Out of the total monthly flights, nearly 1,900 are operated with narrow-body planes and some wide-body aircraft to the Middle East. Considering the additional cost of ₹5 lakh per flight for the extra 45 minutes, the overall expenses will be about ₹90 crore.

With respect to Europe and North America, the total two-way flights are nearly 1,200. On the basis of additional flying time of 1.5 hours costing around ₹29 lakh for North America services and ₹22 lakh for Europe flights, the total amount will be about ₹306 crore per month. As per the analysis, the total additional monthly expenses will be about Rs 307 crore and ₹77 crore on a weekly basis. These figures are based on rough estimates. Apart from higher fuel consumption, longer flying hours also pose payload and aircraft availability issues, as well as crew flying duty time limitation challenges for airlines. On April 25, IndiGo said that around 50 international routes operated by it will require longer sectors and hence may be subject to some slight schedule adjustments.

“With the same restrictions and limited rerouting options, unfortunately, Almaty and Tashkent are outside the operational range of IndiGo’s current fleet,” it had said in a statement.

Flights to Almaty stand cancelled from April 27 until at least May 7 and to Tashkent from April 28 until May 7.

# IKEA to set up compact stores in smaller cities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ NEW DELHI

Swedish home furnishings retailer IKEA is taking a “huge shift” in its India growth strategy by deciding to set up compact stores in smaller cities with a view to become more accessible to customers, said a company official.

IKEA, currently in the second phase of its growth in India, plans to expand through a network of small-format stores tailored to specific locations and catchment areas.

These stores could be as compact as 10,000 square feet, making them suitable for neighbourhood shopping malls, IKEA India Country Expansion Manager Pooja Grover told to media.

Further, she said these small-format stores will help IKEA to expand more quickly, remain agile, and establish a presence in malls and on high streets. She added that IKEA is also exploring partnerships with real estate developers to support this new concept.

Although these stores will have a limited physical display of IKEA’s products, they will be equipped with a digital catalogue that allows customers to explore the brand’s range of around 7,000 products and place orders. Multiple delivery options will be available, including home delivery, pickup at a collection point, or pickup by a third party, she added.

“We are trying to integrate various aspects and offer different kinds of experiences across different formats... From a size point of view, this is a huge benefit for us in India as well, where we will be more accessible to many people,” said Grover, adding that “this size option opens up a lot of accessibility” for IKEA.

When asked whether IKEA plans to enter smaller tier II and III cities with its smaller-format stores, she said the company is currently focused on six priority cities: Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Chennai, and Pune.

“So, we are focusing on these cities, we are also looking at smaller cities, tier II cities, and we will be finalising our plan shortly, but yes, we will be looking at physical CMPs (Customer Meeting Point) at some point in these cities as well,” she added.



Regarding the number of upcoming stores, Grover said, “We are working on the overall numbers and plans for the next four to five years. We have recently received direction from the board, along with the necessary approvals.”

In February, IKEA started online sales in Delhi-NCR and nine other markets ahead of its coming physical stores in Gurugram and Noida. It plans to open physical stores in Chennai and Pune in

# Gold prices decline by ₹900 to ₹98,550/10 gm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined by ₹900 to ₹98,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid a weak trend in international markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹99,450 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined ₹900 to ₹98,100 per 10 grams from the previous close of ₹99,000 per 10 grams. However, increased buying by consumers on Akshaya Tritiya, which is considered an auspicious day for buying gold, jewellery and other valuables, capped the decline in gold prices.

Jewellers expect around 35 per cent increase in sales in value terms this year, mainly due to high prices, on the Akshaya Tritiya festival compared to last year. Gold prices ruled at ₹72,300 per 10 grams on Akshaya Tritiya in 2024 which fell on May



10. In volume terms gold sales are expected to remain flat at 20 tonnes, say jewellers. Silver prices slumped ₹4,000 to ₹98,000 per kg against the previous close of ₹1,02,000 per kg on Tuesday.

In the overseas market, spot gold dipped \$43.35 or 1.31 per cent to \$3,273.90 per ounce. Spot silver was quot-

ed 1.83 per cent lower at \$32.33 per ounce. “Gold extended its decline after US President Donald Trump signed an executive order aimed at softening the impact of his auto tariffs and cited progress in trade negotiations with several countries,” Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

# Trump offers automakers some relief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

President Donald Trump signed executive orders Tuesday to relax some of his 25 per cent tariffs on automobiles and auto parts, a significant reversal as the import taxes threatened to hurt domestic manufacturers.

Automakers and independent analyses have indicated that the tariffs could raise prices, reduce sales and make US production less competitive worldwide. Trump portrayed the changes as a bridge toward automakers moving more production into the United States.

“We just wanted to help them during this little transition, short term,” Trump

told reporters. “We didn’t want to penalise them.” Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who spoke earlier at a White House briefing on Tuesday, said the goal was to enable automakers to create more domestic manufacturing jobs.

“President Trump has had meetings with both domestic and foreign auto producers, and he’s committed to bringing back auto production to the US,” Bessent said. “So we want to give the automakers a path to do that, quickly, efficiently and create as many jobs as possible.”

Trump signed one order on Tuesday that amended his previous 25 per cent auto tariffs, making it easier for vehicles that are assembled in the US with foreign

parts to not face prohibitively high import taxes.

The amended order provides a rebate for one year of 3.75 per cent relative to the sales prices of a domestically assembled vehicles. That figure was reached by putting the 25 per cent import tax on parts that make up 15 per cent of a vehicle’s sales price.

For the second year, the rebate would equal 2.5 per cent of a vehicle’s sales price, as it would apply to a smaller share of the vehicle’s parts.

The official said automakers would over the next month announce additional shifts for workers, new hires and plans for new facilities.

## INBRIEF

### AUTISM AWARENESS DAY CELEBRATED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY



The Department of Education organised a meaningful and impactful Autism Awareness Month celebration in the month of April 2025, in alignment with the vision of Professor (Dr) Karamjeet Singh, Vice Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, to promote inclusion and support individuals with different abilities. By organising such initiatives, the university demonstrates its commitment to fostering an inclusive environment, empowering students with autism, and raising awareness about neurodiversity. The program was graced by the presence of Professor (Dr) Harwinder Singh Saini, Dean Student Welfare, who attended as the chief guest.

### NATIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL CONFERENCE CONCLUDES AT GNDU

The 24th National Conference of the North-West Indian Sociological Association (NWISA) concluded at the Guru Nanak Dev University, after two days of rigorous academic engagement and rich intellectual exchange. Organised under the patronage of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Karamjeet Singh, the conference was a collaborative effort of the School of Social Sciences and the Department of Sociology, and was supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi.



### ACADEMIC LECTURE ON ‘AI IN HEALTH CARE’ AT GNDU

Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Guru Nanak Dev University, under the patronage of Vice Chancellor Professor Karamjeet Singh, organised a lecture on “AI in Health Care”. Professor Harish Dureja, Dean Research & Development; Dean Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, an eminent scientist with more than 300 research publications and editor of more than 10 books delivered the expert talk. The online talk was attended by more than 100 students and faculty members. Professor Dureja stated that AI is based on machine learning and comprises highly involved advanced neural networking. He emphasised that artificial intelligence is defining the future of pharmaceutical industry as well as medicine. Especially, post Covid, there has been a boom in AI based interventions.







# Attention on him avoidable: Dravid on Suryavanshi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Rahul Dravid doesn't want microscopic attention on 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi following his path-breaking hundred in the IPL but having said that, the Rajasthan Royals head coach knows it is something that he can't control.

Having received a barrage of questions on Suryavanshi in the Star Sports Press Room on Wednesday, Dravid realised that the cricketing world will not be leaving the talented teenager alone from now onwards. The Bihar teen will have to find a way to handle this overnight stardom, he said.

In the interaction, the former India head coach also touched upon Suryavanshi's special skills that make him a formidable T20 batter at such a young age before adding that he remains very much a work in progress.

"I think it won't be possible to completely sort of avoid him from the experience that

is around him. I can't control what people are talking about him. I have come to this interaction and all I have heard is questions about Vaibhav," said Dravid when asked about protecting the youngster from the hysteria around him.

"It is going to be challenging for him but it is exciting at the same time. I would love to say that we should not shower him with that much attention. Maybe I am being naive as that it is not going to happen.

"Recognising that it happens and putting a certain level of support around that and navigate that attention and allow him space to be a youngster. It is part of being a cricketer in this country, it is impossible to distance yourself from and (you tend to get) sucked into it."

As the India U-19 coach, Dravid nurtured the likes of Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill, Prithvi Shaw, Yashasvi Jaiswal and many more exciting talents.

Asked about Suryavanshi, Dravid



explained what makes him special.

"For me it is really the ability to have that level of fearlessness and not get fazed by the occasion. You don't get to see that with people that young. The range of shots he showed.

"He is only going to get better. Nobody is saying that he is a finished article. No one should rush to call him somebody he is not. Teams will be smarter against him. T20 format is such where he will have games where it will not work out," he cautioned.

Suryavanshi's six-hitting ability also stands out. He cleared the ropes 11 times in his 35-ball hundred against a potent Gujarat Titans attack.

"What gives him power is a good bat speed, high backlift, hand-eye coordination. His judgment of length is something that has amazed me, whether it is fractionally short or full, he can capitalise on that. His natural strength is helpful in this situation," said the Indian great.

A video clip of Suryavanshi was shown during the interaction where he was seen praising Dravid for making him a better cricketer over the past three months.

The moment the footage ended, Dravid played down the role played by him in his rise.

"The biggest credit goes to him. It would be wrong of me to take credit for him. He has come through a system (having played first class and India U19).

"His father has been supportive. Here in Rajasthan Royals, so many people have been involved...He will be asked Dravid questions and he has to give a diplomatic answer," the former India captain said with a smile.

"We try to keep it simple with him. For us, it is important that he plays the kind of cricket he enjoys playing...It is pretty obvious he likes to play attacking brand of cricket. We picked him not keeping his age in mind, we were convinced of his talent," he added.

## Gujarat Titans looking at Gill as long-term captain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Ahmedabad

Gujarat Titans have systems and processes in place to help Shubman Gill "grow as a captain" as the franchise has appointed the India batter with a long-term view, says COO Colonel Arvinder Singh.

A vital cog in their title-winning campaign in Gujarat Titans' maiden season in IPL 2022, Gill was appointed captain of the franchise when Hardik Pandya moved back to Mumbai Indians ahead of the 2024 edition.

While the first year as a full-time skipper didn't bring Gill much success as GT finished eighth, his side has been one to beat in this IPL, currently ranked third with an impressive six wins and three losses in nine matches so far.

"At Gujarat Titans, whatever we do, we don't do it for a season or two; we think long-term. When Hardik moved on, many were of the opinion that we had players who can just walk in and take on the role of a captain; but we chose to invest in Shubman," Singh said in a statement. "This decision clearly indicated that we were investing in Shubman for a long-term, not just for a single season. The results of that investment are now evident," he added.

Singh said GT have put in a system in place for Gill, who was appointed India's vice-captain during their victorious Champions Trophy campaign, to devel-

**Singh said GT have put in a system in place for Gill, who was appointed India's vice-captain during their victorious Champions Trophy campaign, to develop as a leader. Gill was appointed captain of the franchise when Hardik Pandya moved back to MI**

op as a leader.

"What is more important for us as an ecosystem is to understand that you cannot just make someone a captain and expect him to do everything," Singh said.

"There is a full-fledged system and process in place that has helped him grow as a captain. This is in addition to what he has gained at the international level over the years, representing India as a vice-captain on many occasions."

"Of course, we've had several senior players in the team, including Jos Buttler, Rashid Khan, and Kane Williamson. Shubman is someone who is very open to learning from others," he added.

Singh said Gill, who is nearing the 400-run mark for GT once again in the IPL, is stepping up as a leader on the field.

"The transformation in his leadership from last year to this year is remarkable; he is truly stepping up as the leader on the field. It's inspiring to witness," he said.

## Cricket retained for 2026 Asian Games in Japan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) has confirmed that cricket will be a part of the 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games to be held in Japan from September 19 to October 4.

The call to retain cricket was taken during the meeting between the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the organising committee (AINAGOC) earlier this week.

"The latest development in the compilation of the sports programm came at the 41st meeting of the AINAGOC Board of Directors at Nagoya City Hall on Monday, April 28, when cricket and Mixed Martial Arts were both formally approved," the OCA said.

Cricket matches will be played in the T20 format and hosted in Aichi prefecture, although the exact venues are yet to be finalised.

"The venue for cricket will be in Aichi prefecture but the exact location has not been decided. Interest will be high, not only because of cricket's popularity in South Asia in particular but also because the T20 (20 overs per side) format will be included in the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028," the OCA said.

"This will be cricket's first appearance in the Olympics since 1900 in Paris, where Great Britain beat France by 158 runs in the final of the two-team tournament."

Cricket will be among 41 sports featured at the Games, which are expected to see participation from 15,000 athletes and officials representing the OCA's 45 National Olympic Committees.

This will be the fourth time cricket features in the Asian Games, following its inclusion in Guangzhou (2010), Incheon (2014), and Hangzhou (2023). The Indian men's and women's teams are the defending champions.

Cricket will also feature in 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. It will be cricket's first appearance in the Olympics since 1900 in Paris, where Great Britain beat France by 158 runs in the final of the two-team tournament.

The OCA also confirmed that a "floating Athletes' Village" — a cruise ship docked in Nagoya Port — will accommodate 4,600 athletes and officials. It will house athletes from several disciplines including archery, basketball 3x3, canoe/kayak (sprint), cycling mountain bike, cycling BMX racing, football (men), gymnastics, handball, judo, kabaddi, kurash, mixed martial arts, rowing, rugby, sepaktakraw, sport climbing, squash, tennis, weightlifting, wrestling and wushu.

However, that cricketers will be accommodated in hotels, alongside athletes from badminton and football.

## Dhawan lauds Suryavanshi, terms his ton "phenomenal"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Former India opener Shikhar Dhawan on Wednesday lauded teenage sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi for his fearless IPL hundred, saying the 14-year-old's confidence belies his age and his performance will inspire aspiring cricketers across the country. Rajasthan Royal's Suryavanshi set the IPL ablaze by becoming the youngest player to score a century in the tournament. His 35-ball hundred against table-toppers Gujarat Titans was also the second-fastest in league history.

"It's a great performance indeed, the way he batted was just phenomenal. The big thing is not that he is just 14, the greater thing in that is his self-confidence at such a tender age," said Dhawan on the sidelines of the Intercontinental Legends Championship (ILC) launch.

The baby-faced big-hitter from Bihar's Samastipur hammered 11 towering sixes and seven fours, accumulating 94 of his 101 runs in boundaries. His innings was the fastest by any RR batter, breaking Yusuf Pathan's 15-year-old record of a 37-ball hundred against Mumbai Indians.

"The way he dominated the bowlers that night who have a name in international cricket is a great achievement indeed...the country should be proud and it will inspire other youngsters in the country," Dhawan said.

Dhawan, the first player to hit back-to-back centuries in the IPL, was also impressed with other youngsters, includ-

ing Ayush Mhatre, who have made a mark this season.

"It is great to see these players—some-one is 14, another is 17—playing in the Indian Premier League. To see these boys achieve success at such a young age is great to see," said Dhawan.

The 39-year-old also condemned the recent terrorist attack in Kashmir's Pahalgam region, expressing heartfelt condolences to the victims' families and backing the government's response.

"I have no words for what happened in Pahalgam... I have full faith in our government that they'll be planning something to counter this. I have my full condolences with the families of the victims. It was heart-wrenching indeed," said Dhawan.

Dhawan was the guest of honour at the launch of the Intercontinental Legends Championship (ILC), which has been co-founded by U-19 Cricket World Cup winner and former Delhi Ranji player Pardeep Sangwan. I had envisioned this league since the day I retired... Shikhar (Dhawan) bhai, Praveen (Kumar) bhai, Parvinder Awana and Pawan Negi—thank you for extending your warm support, along with the sponsors who believed in us," said Sangwan.

Congratulating Sangwan on the initiative, Dhawan said: "I want to extend my heartiest congratulations to Pardeep (Sangwan) and his team for organising ILC. In such leagues, the pressure is relatively high because we play for respect. The competition will be tough."

## Took the retirement call in Gabba, did not want to repeat the circle: Ashwin



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Former India off-spinner R Ashwin thought about retiring after his 100th Test but finally took the call midway into the tour of Australia to ensure the "whole circle" related to his spot in the playing eleven doesn't repeat itself.

Speaking on a newly-launched podcast by Chennai Super Kings, Ashwin told fellow CSK member Mike Hussey that he made up his mind on retirement after not starting the Australia series in Perth where Washington Sundar played ahead of the veteran off-spinner.

Ashwin did play the second Test at Adelaide before being left out of the eleven for the third Test at Gabba where he eventually brought the curtains down to a glorious career.

"To be very honest, I wanted to do it after my 100th Test (in Dharamsala, March 2024). And then I thought, Ok, let me give it a go in the home season. Because, I mean, you're playing well, and you're getting wickets, you're making runs," Ashwin said.

"I thought I'd probably close off with the Chennai Test here (against Bangladesh). I ended up getting a six-wicket haul and a hundred. So it's very tough to quit when you're doing very well.

"So, I went on with the series, and we lost against New Zealand. So, one after the other, it was just building up. And then I thought, okay, let me go to Australia. Let me see how this goes. Because the last time I was in Australia, I had a great, great tour," said India's second highest wicket-taker in Tests with 537 scalps to his name.

Having said that, time away from

home was beginning to affect him.

"I thought it does make sense to play a bit. I was having a lot of fun, but the whole hard yards that I had to put through to put myself in the park again, physically and mentally, one of the most important things that was pulling me down was the family time," he said.

The 38-year-old, who is back at CSK this season, eventually made the announcement at the Gabba.

"And when I didn't start in Perth, it was like, okay, this whole circle keeps going again. People add very little value to what you're going through emotionally," he said.

"They don't really consider that because your emotions are yours, and it doesn't matter to anybody else. So I had been contemplating that, and then I thought, okay, maybe it is time," added Ashwin.

## Azhar Mahmood shows interest in becoming Pakistan head coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lahore

Former Pakistan all-rounder Azhar Mahmood on Wednesday expressed his interest in becoming the next head coach of the national team, saying he will soon apply for the high-pressure post.

The PCB was forced to begin a fresh search to find a new head coach and Director of the National Cricket Academy after foreign coaches Gary Kirsten and Jason Gillespie resigned last year, less than eight months into their two-year contracts.

The PCB had named one of their selectors, Aaqib Javed as their interim head coach until the T20 series in New Zealand.

Azhar reckons that he has "gained a lot of experience while working as assistant and bowling coach of the Pakistan team in recent years". He has worked with Mickey Arthur, Kirsten and Gillespie.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has set May 5 as the deadline for interested candidates to apply for the head coach position.

The PCB has not confirmed as yet whether it will appoint separate coaches for the red and white ball teams or one coach for both formats.

Pakistan's former test spinner Saqlain Mushtaq, who has also worked as interim head coach and bowling coach in the past with the national team, is said to be another strong candidate in the running for future assignments.

According to PCB sources, New Zealand's Mike Hesson is the front runner to take over as head coach if he agrees to take up the assignment.

Two years back, PCB had approached Hesson but he had turned down the offer due to his prior commitments in leagues.

Hesson is coaching the undefeated Islamabad United in the Pakistan Super League (PSL).


Pakistan's first commitment of its new international season will be a five-match T20 series at home against Bangladesh in late May and early June.

Pakistan has had several foreigners as team director, head coach, high performance coach and even bowling, fielding and batting coaches since 2023 but most of them left on not-so-very-amicable terms with the PCB.

The list includes Mickey Arthur, Grant Bradburn, Andrew Puttick, Morne Morkel, Tim Nielsen, Simon Helmot, Yasir Arafat, Kirsten and Gillespie.

The PCB has also experimented with

local coaches including Saqlain Mushtaq, Muhammad Hafeez, Aaqib Javed not to forget the long list of local batting, bowling and fielding coaches.



**TATA MEMORIAL CENTRE**  
AN AUTONOMOUS BODY UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENEEGRY,  
GOVT. OF INDIA  
Adv/LNo. TMC/AD-50/2025

23.04.2025

Invites applications for the post of  
**DIRECTOR**  
(for HBCH & RC, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh)  
Last date for online application is 14.05.2025 upto  
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**USP**



**Liberty announces opening of a new showroom in Mohali**  
Mohali: Liberty on Wednesday announced the opening of a new showroom in Mohali under the leadership of Ashok Garg, owner of Snehar Enterprises. The new showroom was formally inaugurated by Ram Nath Verma, Head of Retail. This marks Garg's second Liberty showroom. In a statement, he said that Liberty is rapidly expanding its presence across Punjab and plans to open more such outlets in the state, tapping into its promising market potential. Liberty, an Indian brand, is a leader in the country's footwear industry. Established nearly 73 years ago in Karnal, Haryana, Liberty has grown into one of the largest footwear manufacturers in the world, with a dominant market share in India and a strong presence in international exports. To provide quality products to customers, Liberty operates a dynamic and robust nationwide network, including 435 exclusive showrooms, 125 distributors across various states, and over 10,000 multi-brand outlets. The company also plans to set up hundreds of five-star showrooms and "Shoe Stations" across India and abroad, in line with its motto: "We are about people." Liberty actively supports the Prime Minister's "Vocal for Local" mission. Turning intent into action, the brand has now initiated a new era with the "Mera Joota Hindustani" campaign. Liberty continues to be the preferred brand for all age groups, with a strong focus on comfort and quality.

## Assam lifts the first North East Little Masters Trophy (U-14)

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

Assam defeated Tripura by 47 runs in the final of the inaugural NE Little Masters Trophy 2025 at the ACA Cricket Academy Ground, Fulung, Guwahati.

Player of the Match (Final): Ayush Pandey (Assam) Best Batter of the Tournament: Shresthangshu Deb (Tripura) Best Bowler of the Tournament: Abhinav Khanal (Meghalaya) Player of the Tournament: Pastha Pratim Kashyap (Assam) The closing ceremony was attended by BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia, BCCI Apex Council Member Mamon Majumdar, ACA Secretary Tridib Konwar, Tournament Director Romen Dutta, Treasurer Chiranjit Langthasa and representatives of all the cricket associations of the Northeast states.

BCCI Secretary Shri Devajit Saikia appreciated the efforts of ACA in hosting this grassroots-level tournament and expressed confidence that such initiatives will help young cricketers from the Northeast dream big and reach higher levels.