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Health authority skips ayurveda in Ayushman Bharat

J GOPIKRISHNAN ■ New Delhi

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n a classic case of how the system works, ayurveda is yet to be included Modi Government's flagship project Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). Ironically, AB-PMJAY focuses on traditional medicinal practise.

The project, launched in September 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was meant to give a health insurance cover of ₹5 lakh to individuals below the poverty line. The scheme covers 40 percent of the Indian population. Now everyone

above 70 years of age, irrespective of income limits, is also covered under the scheme, making it the world's biggest health insurance scheme.

Sources in the Government said the basic reason for the inordinate delay is formulation and finalisation of health insurance protocols for ayurveda treatment. Almost a year ago, Ayush Ministry submitted a health insurance package protocol in mid 2024 to National Health Authority (NHA), the controlling organisation of AB-

NHA is an expert-cum-bureaucratic body, works under the Union Health



PM Modi announcing the scheme in 2018

Ministry, which finalises the inclusion of health insurance protocols of Ayushman Bharat scheme. According to Ayush Ministry officials and members of Ayurveda Hospitals' Association, till date NHA has not even convened a meeting with the Ministry officials on the submitted health insurance protocols.

Health Ministry and Ayush Ministry officials are tight lipped on the inertia or snail pace of NHA to approve insurance protocols to implement and inclusion ayurveda in Ayushman Bharat scheme.

Why has the NHA not yet convened a meeting to discuss and implement the

health insurance protocols of ayurveda? "You may simply call allopathy mafia is behind the snail pace of NHA which has not even initiated discussion with Ayush Ministry officials for the past one year. In 2010, 2016, 2020, and now in 2023 — Ayush Department which became a full-fledged Ministry under the Modi-led first regime in 2014 is working on ayurveda Insurance protocols. There are some big players in ayurveda who also want to limit the insurance cover to themselves and not include all ayurveda hospitals," said Members of Ayurveda Hospitals' Association.

Fire kills 17 in Hyderabad, PM Modi condoles deaths

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Hyderabad

blaze triggered by a suspected short circuit in a building near the iconic Charminar here on Sunday killed 17 people, including eight children, belonging to an extended family. The fire broke out at a building in Gulzar House here, police said. "All 17 who were shifted to hospitals were brought dead," a senior police said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the loss of lives and announced ex-gratia. A narrow staircase was the only escape route for the inmates of the building, but they could not rush out, a Fire Department official said. The building housed jewellery shops on the ground floor and people were residing in a flat above, police said adding smoke spread and people suffocated. AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi told reporters that the family has been residing there for 125 years, indicating that generations from the particular family have been living there for over a century.

The family is said to be running a jewellery shop in the city. "Now only two members of the family are left. I want to offer my condolences. I was informed by

DG Fire Services that most of the deaths happened due to asphyxiation and fumes...Let the report come, it is very painful," he said. Telangana State Disaster Response and Fire Services Director General Y Nagi Reddy, who inspected the spot, told reporters that the fire was reported between 6.00am and 6.15 am.

The building housed jewellery shops on the ground floor and people were residing in a flat above, police said adding smoke spread and people suffocated

During the rescue operation, one Fire official was also injured and admitted to hospital. There was a call to the fire department at 6.16 am and the fire engine was turned out at 6.17 AM, he said.

There were shops on the ground floor while the first and second floors were residential spaces, he said. "Prima-facie cause of the fire is short circuit in the mains in the shopping area," Reddy said, adding the victims were sleeping when the

IMF imposes 50 conditions on Pakistan bailout

LET MILITANT KILLED IN PAKISTAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Islamabad

the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slapped 11 new conditions on Pakistan for the release of the next tranche of its bailout programme and warned that tensions with India could heighten risks to the scheme's fiscal, external, and reform goals, according to a media report on Sunday. The new conditions imposed on Pakistan include the parliamentary approval of a new ₹17.6 trillion budget, an increase in the debt servicing surcharge on electricity bills and lifting restrictions on import of more than threeyear-old used cars. The Express Tribune newspaper said the Staff Level report, which the IMF released on Saturday, also said that "rising tensions between India and Pakistan, if sustained or deteriorate further, could heighten risks to the fiscal, external and reform goals of the programme".

The report further stated that tensions between Pakistan and India have risen significantly over the past two weeks, but so far, the market reaction has been modest, with the stock market retaining most of its recent gains and spreads widening moderately. The IMF report has shown the defence budget for the next fiscal year at ₹2.414 trillion, which is higher by ₹252 billion or 12 per cent.

New Delhi: Top Lashkar-e-Taiba(LeT)terrorist Razaullah Nizamani Khalid alias Abu Saifullah Khalid, who was the brain behind the 2006 attack on the RSS headquarters, was killed by three unidentified gunmen in Sindh province of Pakistan on Sunday, officials here said.

Khalid used to head the terror operations of LeT from Nepal in early 2000 and had many aliases including Vinode Kumar, Mohammed Salim and Razaullah. He was involved in multiple terror strikes in India, they said.

He left his residence at Matli this afternoon and was gunned down by assailants near a crossing at Badni in Sindh province, the officials said. A close associate of Abu Anas of Lashkar, Khalid was the mastermind of the attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) headquarters at Nagpur in which all three terrorists were shot dead. Besides the RSS attack, the Lashkar operative was involved in the Indian Institute of Science terror attack of 2005 in Bengaluru, in which IIT professor Munish Chandra Puri was killed and four others injured. The terrorists had escaped from the

Compared to the IMF's projection, the Government has indicated allocating over ₹2.5 trillion or an 18 per cent higher budget, after confrontation with India early this month. India carried out precision strikes under Operation Sindoor on terror infraKhalid was also the mastermind of the 2008

scene. Later, police investigated the case and

chargesheeted Abu Anas, who is still at large.

attack on a Central Reserve Police Force(CRPF)camp at Rampur in Uttar Pradesh in which seven personnel and a civilian were killed. The two terrorists escaped under the cover of darkness. From mid-2000, Khalid was the in-charge of the Nepal module of LeT. responsible for the recruitment of cadres, providing financial and logistic support and facilitating the movement of LeT operatives across the Indo-Nepal border.

Khalid was working closely with LeT's socalled "launching commanders" — Azam Cheema alias Babaji and Yaqoob (LeT's chief accountant). Khalid left Nepal and returned to Pakistan after Indian security agencies exposed the module. He later worked closely with several leaders of LeT and Jamaat-ud-Dawah, including Yusuf Muzammil, LeT commander for Jammu and Kashmir, Muzammil Iqbal Hashmi and Muhammad Yusuf Taibi.

structure early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people. Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10.

India and Pakistan reached an under-

standing on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes. The Express Tribune report said that the IMF slapped 11 more conditions on Pakistan, taking the total conditions to 50. It has imposed the new condition of securing "parliamentary approval of the fiscal year 2026 budget in line with the IMF staff agreement to meet programme targets by end-June 2025". The IMF report has shown the total size of the federal budget at ₹17.6 trillion, including ₹1.07 trillion for development spending.

A new condition has also been imposed on the provinces where the four federating units will implement the new Agriculture Income Tax laws through a comprehensive plan, including the establishment of an operational platform for processing returns, taxpayer identification and registration, a communication campaign, and a compliance improvement plan. The deadline for the provinces is June this year. According to the third new condition, the Government will publish a governance action plan based on the recommendations of the Governance Diagnostic Assessment by the IMF. The purpose of the report is to publicly identify reform measures to address critical governance vul-

The ByStander

Government critic, spies arrested in Haryana

MANOJ KUMAR Chandigarh

new days after the Haryana State Commission for Women issued a showcause notice to Sonepat — based Ashoka University Associate Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad over his remarks allegedly disparaging women officers in the Indian Armed Forces and promoting communal disharmony, a team of 15 Haryana Police on Sunday morning entered his Delhi residence and took him into custody Rai police had on Saturday night regis

tered the case based on a complaint filed by Yogesh Jatheri, a BJP Youth Morcha leader and the sarpanch of Jatheri village. Later, Mahmudabad, who, an Associate Professor in the Political Science Department at Ashoka University, was taken into custody on Sunday morning. Talking to Reporters, Rai's Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ajeet Singh said: "Ali Khan Mahmudabad has been arrested from Delhi."

Moreover, in a statement, the Ashoka University official spokesperson, said: "We have been made aware that Assistant Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad has been taken into police custody earlier today. We are in the process of ascertain-



Arrested vlogger Jyoti Malhotra

ing details of the case." "The University will continue to cooperate with the police and local authorities in the investigation, fully," it said. Notably, Haryana State Commission for Women (HSCW) chairperson Renu Bhatia took suo motu cognizance of Mahmudabad's remarks on 'Operation Sindoor' and press briefings by Col Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh. The Commission had summoned the Assistant Professor to appear on May 14; however, he failed to do so.

The Associate Professor had later said that the Commission has "misread" his

comment. Mahmudabad referred to the media briefing on 'Operation Sindoor' conducted by women officers as "optics" and "just hypocrisy".

"I am surprised that the Women's Commission, while overreaching its jurisdiction, has misread and misunderstood my posts to such an extent that they have inverted their meaning," he said further on a different post. Simultaneously in just a week, the security agencies in Haryana have uncovered a sprawling espionage network by arresting three persons — 26-year-old Nuh-resident Armaan, Hisar-based YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra and Panipat-based private security guard 24-year-old Nauman Elahi — for their alleged involvement in spying for terror outfits and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

In the matter related to espionage arrests, police sources said that all three individuals were allegedly in frequent contact with the ISI and actively passed sensitive information to their Pakistani handlers. The evolving nature of threats has made realtime intelligence and public vigilance even more crucial.

Continued on >> P2 Related report on >> P2

India, Bangladesh trade hits low with reciprocal terms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ndia's decision to curb Bangladeshi exports of ready-made garments and Leveral other consumer goods through land ports is aimed at ensuring fairness and equality in bilateral trade, Government sources said on Sunday.

India's trade relationship with Bangladesh will be based on "reciprocal terms" and the decision on restricting exports of ready-made garments from the neighbouring country is in response to Dhaka imposing similar trade barriers on Indian yarn and rice as well as increasing inspection of all Indian goods, they said. New Delhi on Saturday decided to allow entry of ready-made garments from Bangladesh only through Kolkata and Nhava Sheva sea ports and barred imports of a range of consumer items through land transit posts in the

Besides ready-made garments (RMG), plastics, wooden furniture, carbonated drinks, processed food items, fruit flavoured drinks, cotton and cotton yarn waste will not be allowed to

enter India through land customs stations and check posts in Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and Mizoram, and Phulbari and Changrabandha in West Bengal, according to a Government notification.

The new restrictions for Bangladeshi consumer goods were imposed five weeks after New Delhi ended a nearly five-year-old arrangement for transshipment of Bangladeshi export cargo to third countries via Indian airports and ports. Land port restrictions imposed by India on select exports from Bangladesh to the Northeast region are expected to restore equality in the relationship, the sources said.

While India had hitherto allowed all exports from Bangladesh without restrictions, the transit and market access to the Northeast had been restricted by Bangladesh, they said. This measure by India restores equal market access for both countries, the sources added. New Delhi's position is that the relationship with Bangladesh will be on reciprocal

terms, the sources said.

SHORT

Swesh

Central forces secure Amarnath Yatra route

PIONEER IN

Following the Pahalgam massacre, ensuring a safe Amarnath Yatra is a major focus for Jammu and Kashmir's administration. The 38-day pilgrimage, beginning July 3 from both Pahalgam and Baltal routes concludes on August 9. Security forces have ramped up anti-terror operations in South Kashmir to secure the region. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah emphasised the Government's commitment to an incidentfree yatra amid declining tourist inflows. Over 3.5 lakh devotees have registered. Officials, including DC Ganderbal and Director Tourism Jammu, have inspected camps and directed timely completion of preparations. Central paramilitary forces will provide route security, and facilities are being arranged from Lakhanpur to the

FULL REPORT ON P2

PSLV fails to place satellite into orbit after anomaly

ISRO's PSLV-C61 rocket failed to place the EOS-09 earth observation satellite into orbit after an anomaly occurred during the third stage, minutes after its successful lift-off on Sunday. The rocket, launched from Sriharikota, experienced a fall in chamber pressure during the third stage, causing the mission to fail. This marks the third failure of the PSLV rocket, which has had 63 successful launches. EOS-09, designed for all-weather imaging, aimed to support applications in agriculture, forestry, and national security. Former ISRO Chairman S. Somanath expressed confidence that the team would quickly identify the issue's root cause and take corrective action to ensure future mission success

Schrodinger's DGP in Ranchi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi/Ranchi

Ven God becomes helpless in Jharkhand," once said a former Governor of Jharkhand.

The air in Jharkhand, already thick with the aroma of Mutton-Dhuska and political intrigue, has recently acquired an extra layer of perplexity. The state's Director General of Police (DGP), Anurag Gupta, it appears, is in a unique career situation. He has, depending on who you ask, both retired and not

The Central Government, in its infinite wisdom and adherence to rules, says that Gupta has hung up his uniform and has retired on 30 April, 2025 after attaining the age of 60 years. Their logic is simple: he's reached that age where most mortals start contemplating their pension plans and the best place to get dentures.

The Jharkhand Government, however, seems to be operating under a different set of rules, possibly written in disappearing ink on a very old scroll. It has amended rules and these new, improved (and slightly confusing), rules allow Gupta to continue his reign as DGP even after retirement without getting a service extension from the Centre. The State Government cites a Supreme Court directive about a minimum tenure of two years for DGPs once appointed to the post. The whole situation has become a bureaucratic version of a tug-of-war,



Jharkhand DGP Anurag Gupta

with Gupta seemingly in the middle, possibly wondering if he should be taking notes for his memoirs or ordering new stationery. Leader of Opposition in Jharkhand Assembly, Babulal Marandi, not one to let a good controversy go to waste, has waded into the fray, armed with legal arguments and a healthy dose of political outrage. He's taken the matter to court, perhaps hoping that a judge, in their infinite wisdom, can make sense of a situation that has baffled everyone else. Meanwhile, the people of Jharkhand are

watching this drama unfold with a mixture of amusement and bewilderment. Some are placing bets on how long Gupta will remain in office, while others are simply shrugging and saying, "This is Jharkhand, yaar. What else is new?"

The saga continues, with no clear end in sight. Will Gupta continue to defy the laws of retirement? Will the courts intervene and restore some semblance of order? Or will this become another legendary tale in the history of Jharkhand? Only time will tell.

Yoga stretches in Mumbai local trains

very morning, Mumbai's local trains are packed with people heading to work. In the middle of all the hustle, however, something special has been happening. Some passengers close their eyes, sit straight, and engage in light breathing and stretching exercises. This is Mumbai's most unusual yoga class, which happens inside moving trains.

This idea came from Ruchita Shah, the founder of Heal-Station, a group that promotes wellness. She started this on International Yoga Day in 2017 as a small experiment. Today, it has become a large movement with over 100 volunteer yoga teachers and thousands of commuters joining in. "People are surprised when we say we do yoga în crowded trains," Shah said. "But we show them that it is possible. It's not about doing difficult poses. It is about simple things like hand movements, breathing, and small stretches that you can do even while sitting."

Especially for working women, juggling household duties, long commutes and jobs, this becomes a moment of recharge, she said. "We have demonstrated that yoga does not need a yoga mat but a mindset," Shah said. As part of Heal-Station's 100-day countdown to International Yoga Day 2025, two trained instructors each daily board different suburban trains across the city, guiding passengers through a 15-minute routine that include stretches, breathing tech-



Passengers performing yoga in a train in Mumbai

niques and posture corrections. These exercises are carefully designed to suit the train environment, requiring no mats or space beyond what a commuter normally occupies.

'We began this countdown on March 13 right inside Mumbai locals," said senior yoga teacher and campaign coordinator Varsha Ahuja, who leads the 100day Travel Yoga initiative by Heal-Station. "Every day, two teachers board from their

nearest station during non-peak hours and provide guidance on simple, seated yoga practices in reasonably filled trains. From Panvel to CST, Virar to Churchgate, Mulund, Ghatkopar, Dadar and Bandra, we have covered the city coach by coach, station by station," Ahuja said. At Heal-Station, the majority of yoga teachers volunteering for this demanding campaign are senior citizens.



Administration gearing up for incident-free Amarnath yatra

MOHIT KANDHARI Jammu

n the aftermath of the Pahalgam massacre, holding an incident-free Amarnath yatra this year will be one of the challenging tasks for the Union Territory administration in Jammu and

The 38-day-long yatra will commence on July 3, simultaneously from both the routes, the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal district, and it will culminate on August 9 on Raksha Bandhan.

On ground zero, the security forces have already intensified anti-terror operations in the South Kashmir districts of Kashmir to flush out the terrorists hiding in the area to create a conducive atmosphere of peace. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has already said that the Government is focusing on ensuring an incident-free

On Saturday, Omar told reporters in ongoing preparations for the yatra. Srinagar that tourism has been hit quite badly, and we have had very few tourists visiting Kashmir this summer. Right now, our focus is on the Amarnath Yatra — we want it to pass incident-free, and for all the yatris to return safe and sound. After that, we will look into ways to promote tourism," he said.

Since April 22, the tourist footfall has hit rock bottom across various tourist destinations in Jammu and Kashmir, Compared to the Kashmir valley, the Katra base camp of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine is gradually witnessing a marginal increase in the pilgrim traffic.

According to official sources, more than three and a half lakh devotees have registered themselves to undertake the vatra this year. To supervise the yatra arrangements, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, visited Baltal Base Camp to inspect and take a firsthand appraisal of ley and the yatra trek.

During the visit, the DC inspected the Yatri Niwas Baltal, fencing work, upgradation of frisking points, and other essential arrangements.

On-spot instructions were issued to the concerned departments and executing agencies to expedite the completion of these works within a fixed timeline. Official sources said devotees will get all facilities from the entry gate at Lakhanpur up to the holy cave of Shri Amarnath to facilitate their journey.

Director Tourism, Jammu, Vikas Gupta also conducted a comprehensive inspection of Yatri Niwas and assessed the preparedness and infrastructural arrangements for the smooth facilitation of pilgrims.

During the vatra period, the central paramilitary forces dominate the yatra route from the gateway of Jammu and Kashmir up to the base camps in the val-

India's youth lured into espionage web

MONIKA MALIK ■ Chandigarh

 ndia's youth are fast becoming pawns in a dangerous geopolitical game -Lensnared in a web of deception spun across borders. In the shadow of rising Indo-Pak tensions and the strategic aftershocks of Operation Sindoor, a disturbing trend has emerged — young men and women from ordinary homes in Punjab and Haryana, lured by money, manipulation, and in some cases, romantic entrapment, are being recruited as spies by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The nation's adversary is no longer infiltrating solely through borders — it's now slipping through digital backdoors, visa offices, and emotional vulnerabilities.

In just 11 days since India launched its retaliatory strike under Operation Sindoor, security agencies have arrested seven suspected Pakistani spies — all aged between 20 and 35 — from across Punjab and Haryana. Among the arrested, six individuals had direct contact with officials at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. Several had also travelled to Pakistan, under the garb of religious pilgrimages or personal visits, only to return as conduits for espionage. From Panipat to Jalandhar, Malerkotla to Nuh, the coordinated crackdown by central intelligence and state police has exposed how young Indians from middle-class backgrounds are being systematically radicalised, seduced and even weaponised against their own country.

The 'New Face' of Espionage: **Ordinary, Young, Vulnerable**

What makes these arrests particularly alarming is not just the number, but the profile of the accused. None fit the stereotype of a hardened spy. Students, YouTubers, tech-savvy app developers, unemployed youth, widows, and social media influencers all reportedly pulled into the ISI's dragnet using a combination of financial incentives, visa facilitation, emotional exploitation and even honey traps.

Nooman Elahi (Panipat, Haryana): **Passport Agent Turned Spy**

Arrested on May 13 from Panipat, 30year-old Nooman Elahi was allegedly working for ISI handler Iqbal alias Kana, collecting and transmitting sensitive information about military movement and train logistics through electronic means. Elahi had visited Pakistan four times and was found in possession of eight passports. Following the death of his father, he started facilitating passport applications and eventually fell into the IŜÎ's trap, especially after one of Iqbal's aides, Kaleem, was apprehended. Elahi was tasked with building a wider espionage network in Punjab and Haryana. "With no immediate family responsibilities and relatives in Pakistan, he could travel freely. He even started assisting others in acquiring passports to establish a

broader spy ring," a senior intelligence

Ghazala and Yamin Mohammad (Malerkotla, Punjab): **Recruited at the Embassy**

Arrested on May 8, Ghazala, a young widow from Malerkotla, was introduced to the spy network during a visit to the Pakistan High Commission in February 2025. There, she came in contact with an embassy official named Danish - suspected to be an ISI handler operating under diplomatic cover — who allegedly recruited her. She is accused of passing information on Army truck movement, base locations, and sensitive installations. ₹30,000 in UPI transactions traced to her account are believed to be linked to her activities. She visited the embassy again in April with her friend Banu Nasreena, with Danish facilitating her visa. Her alleged co-conspirator, Yamin Mohammad, was also arrested.

Arman (Kaithal, Haryana): The SIM Provider and Expo Scout

Hailing from a politically-connected family, Arman is accused of supplying Indian SIM cards to Pakistani handlers and scouting the Defence Expo-2025 site on their instructions. He reportedly had ties with the same High Commission official, Danish, and had visited Pakistan twice. His father, a former village sarpanch, is currently lodged in a Chhattisgarh jail in an unrelated case. Arman, eager to rise quickly and frustrated with his circumstances, is believed to have succumbed to ISI's promise of fast money and influence.

Devender Singh (Hisar, Haryana): Caught in a Honeytrap

A student, Devender Singh's descent into espionage began during a religious visit to Pakistan, where he allegedly fell prey to a honey trap. According to sources, a young woman lured him into a romantic relationship, kept him at her place for seven days, and got him trained in espionage. Singh was later connected to five ISI agents and reportedly began sharing information related to the Indian Army. His social media activity — particularly a photo with a firearm brought him under the scanner. "She promised him more intimacy and money if he cooperated," sources said.

Murtaza (Jalandhar, Punjab): **The Tech-Savvy Informer**

Originally from Bihar, Murtaza had moved to Jalandhar to make a living. His tech skills, however, landed him in the ISI's sights. During heightened India-Pakistan tensions, he developed a custom app to scrape and transmit content from Indian news channels and digital sources to Pakistan. Intelligence recovered four mobile phones, three SIM cards, and over ₹40 lakh in suspicious transactions in a sin-

gle month. He also had several videos and news links related to national security, suggesting he was part of a sophisticated pro-

paganda and surveillance module. Jyoti Malhotra (Hisar, Haryana):

Influencer with Foreign Ties Perhaps the most intriguing case is that of Jyoti Malhotra, a YouTuber and social media influencer from Hisar. She had travelled to Pakistan thrice, twice with Sikh pilgrimage groups. During one of these visits, she allegedly developed close ties with embassy official Danish, with whom she later went on a trip to Bali, Indonesia. Jyoti is accused of portraying a positive image of Pakistan on social media while simultaneously transmitting sensitive information to handlers across the border. Her high online following made her a particularly valuable asset. Her rise as a social media influencer came after she lost her job during the COVID-19 pandemic. She used her platform to gain popularity, making her an ideal candidate for ISI, which exploited both her reach and her financial vulnerability.

A Larger Intelligence Victory

According to the sources in the Intelligence Bureau, the arrests are the result of months of digital surveillance, intercepted communications, and crossborder intelligence-sharing initiated in the wake of Operation Sindoor. "Their calls, chats, and bank transactions were being monitored. Once patterns emerged, local police units were alerted," said an intelligence official involved in the operation.

The government, while remaining tightlipped officially, viewed these arrests as part of a broader counter-intelligence sweep aimed at neutralizing sleeper cells and digital espionage networks, especially in border states. Investigations are also focusing on how Pakistan's diplomatic missions in India are allegedly serving as recruitment hubs, leveraging legitimate visa processes for covert intelligence operations.

The arrests are a grim reminder of the growing sophistication of modern espionage — where the battlefield is no longer just physical but also emotional, digital, and economic. Young Indians, grappling with job loss, social isolation, digital exposure, and economic aspiration, are being turned into soft targets. The use of social media, romantic manipulation, and religious travel as recruitment tools points to a more evolved and insidious strategy by hostile agencies.

While all the accused are currently in custodial interrogation and are likely to face prosecution under the Official Secrets Act and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), the larger concern remains — How many more such recruits remain invisible? And what steps are being taken to inoculate India's youth against the psychological and financial warfare now waged from across

Constitution of India supreme, all its pillars must work together, says CJI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Mumbai

hief Justice of India BR Gavai on Sunday stressed that neither the ✓ judiciary nor the executive, but the country's Constitution was supreme and its pillars must work together. Even though Parliament has the power

to amend the Constitution, it cannot touch the "basic doctrine" structure, he said, underscoring the supremacy of the Constitution. The right to shelter is also supreme, he said, referring to "bulldozer justice". Justice Gavai, who took oath as the 52nd CJI earlier this week, spoke at his felicitation ceremony and state lawyers' conference organised by the Bar Council Maharashtra and Goa here. The CJI said he was glad that the country has not just strengthened but has also developed on the social and economic fronts and continues to do so.

"Neither the judiciary, nor the executive, nor Parliament is supreme, but it is the Constitution of India which is supreme, and all the three wings have to work as per the Constitution," he said. The Parliament has the power to amend the Constitution, but it cannot touch the basic doctrine structure, CJI Gavai said.

The basic structure doctrine holds that certain fundamental features of the Constitution, such as its supremacy, the rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary, cannot be amended or abrogat-

Government critic. spies arrested in

in the State are on high alert and a secret

order has been issued for its officers to

watch out for spies in their jurisdiction-

al limit after these arrests, they added.

three arrests across Haryana in just a

week. Hisar-based YouTuber Jyoti

Malhotra was held for allegedly spying

According to the FIR, Malhotra

came into contact with Ehsan-ur-

Rahim alias Danish, a staffer at the

Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. She visited Pakistan twice in

2023, and Danish allegedly acted as her

handler, introducing her to ISI opera-

tives and maintaining regular contact

via encrypted platforms. Another

accused, Armaan, a resident of Nuh,

was arrested by Haryana Police based

on secret inputs for allegedly spying for

Pakistan. It was alleged that Armaan

had been sharing sensitive information

related to the Indian Army and other

military activities with an employee at

the Pakistan High Commission in New

Delhi through WhatsApp and other

Earlier, in a separate case, a 24-year-

old youth, Nauman Ilahi from Kairana

in Uttar Pradesh, who worked as a fac-

tory security guard, was arrested in Panipat for allegedly supplying sensitive

information to ISI operatives. He was

staying with his sister Zeenat and

brother-in-law Irfan in Hali Colony,

social media platforms.

A widening espionage net has led to

The Police forces

Haryana

for Pakistan's ISI.



ed by Parliament through a constitutional amendment. The CJI said the country's basic framework was strong, and all three pillars of the Constitution - legislative, executive and judiciary — were equal.

"And all the organs of the Constitution must reciprocate and give due respect to each other," he said. Gavai, who belongs to Maharashtra, said he was happy to become the CJI when the Constitution is completing 75 years and marching towards its centenary. "There is no question that our country is 'mazboot' due to the basic structure doctrine laid down in the Kesavananda Bharati case judgment, and all three pillars of the Constitution are trying to work within

the spheres prescribed to them," he said. Judiciary and legislature came up with several laws due to which the concept of social and economic justice will be fulfilled, he added. A book chronicling 50 landmark judgments pronounced by Justice Gavai was also released at the event. In his speech, the CJI cited a few of his judgments.

The right to shelter is a fundamental right. Whether a person is accused of any crime or convicted, the family's house, if legally occupied, cannot be removed or demolished. The rule of law has to be followed," the CJI said. He spoke about his various tasks and visits to different areas in Maharashtra and across the country.

Gogoi visited Pakistan on ISI invitation: Himanta

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

Sarma on Sunday alleged that Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi visited Pakistan on an invitation from its spy agency ISI, and that he worked closely with the establishment of the neighbouring nation. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an official function here, Sarma asserted that the government has documentary evidence to support this claim, and "every proof will be presented before the

public by September 10" after proper ver- is only to impart training. "An invitation ssam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa an invitation of the ISI. For the first time, I any university is altogether a different am saving this. We have documents of the same. He did not go for tourism purposes. He went there definitely for taking training," the CM claimed. The Deputy Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha went there on a direct invitation of the Pakistan government and "it was dangerous", Sarma said.

. He was (working) closely with the Pakistan establishment. When does the Home Department send an invitation? It

ification. "Gaurav Gogoi visited Pakistan on from the foreign affairs (department) or thing. This was not from the toreign affairs or cultural departments. He went there on a direct invitation from the home department of Pakistan," Sarma asserted

> The Chief Minister stressed that the government here has proof of Gogoi's actions and there is no way to escape from it. "All his paths are closed. We have seen the evidence. Only we need time till September to get the papers," he added.

LeT militant killed in Pakistan

>> PI Khalid was tasked by the LeT and JuD leadership in Pakistan to undertake the recruitment of fresh cadres from the areas of Badin and Hyderabad districts of Sindh and collect funds for the organisation.

According to media reports from Sindh, Khalid was declared brought dead at hospital after being shot. These reports also termed it a case of personal enmity.

Last week, three more Lashkar terrorists, including 'Operations Commander' Shahid Kuttay, were killed in an encounter with security forces in south Kashmir's Shopian district.

Kuttay, and the other two, Adnan Shafi, a resident of the Vanduna Melhura area of Shopian, and Ahsan ul Haq Sheikh, a resident of Murran area of the neighbouring Pulwama district, were killed in the Shukroo Keller area. Two AK series rifles, a large quantity of ammunition, grenades, and other war-like stores were found in their possession.

Kuttay, who was the operations commander of LeT in south Kashmir, promoted terrorist recruitment in Kashmir, also misled many young men and killed many innocent people, it was learnt.— Mohit Khandari

Yoga stretches in Mumbai suburban...

lack strength or stamina? With dedication and grace, they are not just teaching yoga. They are becoming wellness ambassadors for Mumbai's local trains, adding true value to society every single day," Shah said.

All the teachers do this service voluntarily, Ahuja said. They buy their own tickets, dedicate two to three hours daily, and lead with pure intention.

Instructors lead groups in seated parvatasana (mountain pose), shoulder rolls and deep breathing techniques — simple practices aimed at countering stress and improving spinal alignment, Ahuja

With the campaign crossing its 75-day mark, excitement is building for the grand finale on June 21 — the International Day of Yoga. Celebrity wrestler Sangram Singh is set to join the celebrations, when the trains would turn into moving yoga grounds with synchronised sessions across Central, Harbour and Western lines.

Fire kills 17 in Hyderabad, PM Modi condoles deaths

were in the building when the fire erupted, and of them 17 were shifted to hospitals by the fire department in an unconscious state.

There was only one escape route, the staircase, which was very narrow and the inmates could not run to safety, he said. Telangana Fire Department in a statement said the fire broke out on the Ground floor (G+2 building) and spread to the floors above. In a post on X, PM Modi expressed condoled the deaths. He announced ₹ 2 lakh for the kin of those who died and ₹ 50,000 to the injured.

"Deeply anguished by the loss of lives due to a fire tragedy in Hyderabad, Telangana. Condolences to those who

ed from >> P1 A total of 21 people have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon," the post said. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy expressed shock over the incident and directed senior officials to take all necessary measures to rescue those trapped in the building.

Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka told reporters said the state Government has announced ₹5 lakh ex-gratia each to the kin of the deceased.

Governor Jishnu Dev Varma conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the incident.

Addressing reporters after visiting the oot, Transport and Hyderabad District incharge Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said a short circuit caused the fire. "We will order an inquiry into the fire accident. There is

Four families related to one another were residing in the building and many of them came to spend their vacation, he added.

Shortly after the fire broke out, Zahid, who is into bangles business in Gulzar House area and an eyewitness to the fire incident told reporters that at around 6.10 AM when he along with friends were passing by, a woman told them about the fire that erupted in the building and there were family members with children inside.

"As the main door of the building was engulfed in flames, we broke the shutter and also a wall and entered inside. As the blaze was high we went to the first floor. We found seven people in one room and six others in another room. We were not

able to save them due to the fire. Had we saved them it would have been good," he

He further said he saw a dead woman hugging some lifeless children. The Osmania Hospital mortuary, where

bodies from different hospitals were sent for autopsy, wore a grim look as relatives burst into tears in shock. PTI GDK VVK Union Minister G Kishan Reddy also vis-

ited the spot. He alleged that he was informed that fire tenders arrived late. The allegation was dismissed by Nagi

Reddy. An official release from the CMO said directions were issued to immediately shift the injured to hospitals and ensure proper medical treatment.

Health authority skips ayurveda in **Ayushman Bharat**

Continued from >> P1 According to the Ayurveda Hospitals Association, urging Association, certain big ayurveda hospi- for inclusion of all ayurvedic hospitals. tals and big corporate hospitals with ayurveda treatment facilities do not want to extend insurance coverage to all ayurveda hospitals. "If ayurveda is implemented in Ayushman Bharat scheme, all will be included. Political leadership must intervene and order to NHA to consider and implement ayurveda treatment in Ayush Bharat scheme," said a member of

With NBA not initiating inclusion of ayurveda in Ayushman Bharat scheme, for the past one year, the Ayush Ministry's answer in Parliament to a series of questions on status of inclusion of Ayurveda, ends in only one line -"The Ayush packages are not included in Ayushman Bharat — Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana".

dition states that the Government will prepare and publish a plan outlining the Government's post-2027 financial sector strategy, outlining the institutional and regulatory environment from 2028 onwards.

In the energy sector, four new conditions have been introduced. The Government will issue notifications of the annual electricity tariff rebasing by July 1st of this year to maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels. It will also issue a notification of the semi-annual gas tariff adjustment to maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels by February 15, 2026, according to the report. Parliament will also adopt legislation to make the captive power levy ordinance permanent by the end of this month, according to the IMF. The Government has increased the cost for the industries to force them to shift to the national electricity grid.

Parliament will also adopt legislation to remove the maximum ₹3.21 per unit cap on the debt service surcharge, which is

tantamount to punishing honest electricity consumers to pay for the inefficiency of the power sector. The IMF and the World Bank dictated that wrong energy policies are causing the accumulation of the circular debt in addition to the Government's bad governance. The deadline to remove the cap is the end of June, according to the report. The IMF has also imposed a condition that Pakistan will prepare a plan based on the assessment conducted to fully phase out all incentives in relation to Special Technology Zones and other industrial parks and zones by 2035. The report has to be prepared by the end of this year.

Finally, in a consumer-friendly condition, the IMF has asked Pakistan to submit to the Parliament all required legislation for lifting all quantitative restrictions on the commercial importation of used motor vehicles (initially only for vehicles less than five years old by the end of July. Currently, only cars up to three years old can be imported.

India, Bangladesh trade hits low with reciprocal terms

from >> P1 "Restricting denying it market access and transit," said imports of ready-made garments from Bangladesh through only two seaports is a reciprocal measure to Bangladesh imposing similar trade restrictions on Indian yarn and rice as well as selectively enhancing inspection on all Indian goods exported to Bangladesh," said one of the sources.

New Delhi is also opposed to Bangladesh considering the Northeast region as being its captive market. "Bangladesh needs to realise that it cannot cherry pick terms of bilateral trade solely for its benefit or assume Northeast is a captive market for its exports, while another source. As underlined by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, the Northeast is integral to BIMSTEC regional grouping. "The equal market space now available

in the resource-rich Northeast is expected to give a fillip to manufacturing and entrepreneurship in the region under the Atmanirbhar Bharat schemes and policies," the second source said. Besides India and Thailand, the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) comprises Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan.

Government rolls out SOP to manage bomb threats in schools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

omplying with a High Court order, the Delhi Government has rolled out a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for managing bomb threats in schools that includes a raft of measures like installing CCTV cameras, making evacuation plans and holding regular safety audits and mock drills.

Designed by the Directorate of Education (DoE), the protocol has a fourtier strategy focusing on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

It aims to instill a culture of preparedness and vigilance while ensuring a swift and coordinated response during emergencies, the DoE said.

To maintain transparency and accountability, schools are now required to submit a monthly safety checklist to their respective district authorities, it said.

The SOP also includes strict warnings against hoax threats and mentions that legal action will be taken against those responsible for false alarms. This applies to students, parents and the staff.

The step is significant as more than 200 schools in Delhi received bomb threats in 2024-25 that turned out to be hoax.

According to a statement from DoE, the SOP was drafted following directions from the Delhi High Court and is aligned with national safety guidelines. It takes

in the capital including Government, Government-aided, minority-run, and recognised unaided private institutions.

"Each school must create its own threat management plan tailored to its layout and resources," it stated.

The SOP also emphasised the need for regular safety audits, structured staff training, and awareness campaigns to prepare students and parents for possible emergency situations.

The SOP has mentioned the seamless coordination with emergency services like Delhi Police, fire service and the traffic police

The department in its SOP has instructed the principals and schools to form School Safety Committees, overseeing routine mock drills, ensuring emergency kits are maintained and coordinating evacuation routes.

The SOP has mentioned the seamless coordination with emergency services like Delhi Police, fire service and the traffic police.

"Schools are required to maintain updated building layouts, install CCTV cameras, and secure their perimeters to assist police and fire personnel during threat assessments and evacuation," the statement

immediate effect and applies to all schools stated. The collaboration extends to identifying emergency holding areas in advance and conducting drills simulating real-life threat scenarios in partnership with Delhi Police and the Fire Department, it read.

> Recognising the unique vulnerabilities of some students, the SOP includes clear directives for the evacuation of Children with Special Needs (CWSN).

> "Schools must prepare a separate evacuation plan that ensures no child is left behind during an emergency," it stated.

This includes assigning trained staff members to support CWSN and conducting specific mock drills to test the plan's effectiveness, it added.

To maintain transparency and accountability, schools are now required to submit a monthly safety checklist to their respective district authorities, it stated.

The checklist will include the status of drills, safety equipment and updates to emergency contact lists, it said.

Parents are urged to keep their contact information updated, remain aware of the school's safety plans, and refrain from spreading rumours during emergencies,

Delhi Police and Fire Services have been assigned defined responsibilities under the SOP. While the police will take the lead in evaluating threats, securing the premises, and coordinating searches, the fire department will assist with fire control and evacuation protocols, it stated.

Fuel ban for overage vehicles in from July 1

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

◄he Delhi Government on Sunday said overage vehicles will be denied fuel from July 1, with officials saying the work to install cameras at petrol pumps to identify such vehicles is almost complete.

In April, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) directed authorities in Delhi to deny fuel to all end-of-life (EoL) vehicles — diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles aged more than 15 years — from July 1. According to the order, all fuel stations in Delhi must install automated number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras by June 30. These systems will detect vehicles older than 10 years (diesel) or 15

In a public notice, the transport department of Delhi Government said violating vehicles identified through ANPR cameras installed at fuel stations across Delhi or through any other monitoring mechanism, shall be denied fuel, besides other legal actions under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1989.

"Get a No Objection Certificate from the transport department to take EoL vehicles outside NCR or scrap such vehicles at any RVSF," it said.

According to an official from transport department, the work to install ANPR cameras has almost been completed.

"Only 10-15 pumps are left where cameras have to be installed. We are installing cameras at all petrol pumps and CNG stations," he said. There are around 400 petrol pumps in Delhi and

around 160 CNG pumps. A representative from Delhi Petrol Dealers' Association said the government is installing ANPR cameras but there are some logistical issues.

"The cameras have been installed and there is a speaker machine which reads out the number plate of the overage vehicles. But by the time the number is read out, the vehicle has already been provided fuel. We will have a meeting with transport department this week to discuss these issues," he added.

The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) had earlier directed authorities in the national capital not to allow "end of life" or overage vehicles to refuel in Delhi from July 1.

It also asked officials in five districts of the National Capital Region (NCR) -Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Sonipat to impose similar restrictions from November 1.

All other NCR districts have been

given time until March 31, 2026 to implement the order. The order exempted BS-VI, CNG, LNG and EVs, as well as vehicles transporting essential commodities, from the curbs.

A 2018 Supreme Court ruling had banned diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than . 15 years in Delhi.

Á 2014 National Green Tribunal order also prohibits parking of vehicles aged over 15 years in public areas.

BJP organises Tiranga Yatras across Capital to celebrate Operation Sindoor victory



Tiranga Yatra organised by BJP in New Delhi on Sunday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

¶he BJP on Sunday organised a series of Tiranga Yatras across various constituencies in Delhi, commemorating the resounding success of Operation Sindoor against Pakistan. These rallies, led by senior BJP leaders and supported by thousands of workers and citizens, aimed to honour the bravery of Indian soldiers and strengthen

Delhi Minister of Art, Culture and Tourism and Karawal Nagar MLA Kapil Mishra led a "Vishal Tiranga Yatra" (Grand Tricolor Rally) in his constituency from Khajuri Chowk to Signature Bridge. The rally saw hundreds of citizens raising the tricolor and chanting patriotic slogans such as "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," "Vande Mataram," and "Jai Hind." Delhi Minister Ashish Sood led a march in his Janakpuri Assembly constituency. For the third consecutive day, the BJP continued district-level Tiranga Yatras in Outer and North West Delhi, North West Delhi MP

and BJP General Secretary Yogendra demned Pakistan's continued harboring Chandolia, along with MPs Kamaljeet Sehrawat and Bansuri Swaraj, actively participated in these rallies across multiple assemblies including Matiala, Dwarka, New Delhi, and Karol Bagh. Former State President and MLA Satish Upadhyay, MLA Shikha Rai, and Olympian boxer Vijender Singh also led processions with thousands of BJP workers.

Speaking at the occasion, Mishra hailed Operation Sindoor as a historic achievement, marking the first time in global history that a nuclear-armed neighboring country was struck within its own territory. In a swift 90-minute operation, Indian forces destroyed 11 Pakistani airbases and eliminated over 100 terrorists, reinforcing India's security.

"This rally pays tribute to the unparalleled valor and sacrifice of our soldiers who protect the nation's borders. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India's zero-tolerance policy on terrorism has been clearly demonstrated to the world," said Mishra. He conof terrorism and warned that any threat to India would be met with a decisive

În another Tiranga Yatra, Delhi Home Minister Ashish Sood spearheaded a prominent Shaurya Samman Yatra from Dabri Police Station to Kadimi Market in the Janakpuri Assembly Constituency. The event saw turnout from Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs), temple and gurdwara committees, market bodies, and social organisations, all united under the banner of Citizens for National

Carrying the national flag high, participants raised loud slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," echoing through Janakpuri's streets. In northwest tiranga rally, MP Yogendra Chandolia praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, stating that the Operation Sindoor demonstrated India's resolve to respond firmly to any terror threats. "The brave actions of our soldiers have sent a clear message to Pakistan that India will no

longer tolerate aggression," he said. MP Kamaljeet Sehrawat reiterated that India now treats any firing from Pakistan as a terrorist act deserving a strong

response. "The new India strives for peace

but is fully prepared to eliminate terrorism at any cost," she asserted. In New Delhi rally, MP Bansuri Swaraj described Operation Sindoor as not just retaliation but a historic demonstration of New India's strength. "This mission symbolises self-defence, justice and the restoration of national pride," she said, praising the Prime Minister's vision that

vering resolve and courage. In Malviya Nagar, former BJP State President Satish Upadhyay remarked that the Tiranga Yatras reflect national solidarity with the victims of terrorism and a collective commitment to intensi-

India's responses will be backed by unwa-

fy the fight against terror. MLA Shikha Rai called the vatra an expression of gratitude towards soldiers who exhibited extraordinary courage

CAQM lifts stage-I GRAP restrictions in NCR as air quality improves

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has revoked Stage-I of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) across the National Capital Region (NCR) on Sunday, following a noticeable improvement in Delhi's air quality. The decision was taken after the Air Quality Index (AQI) for the city was recorded at 179 on Saturday - placing it in the 'Moderate' category.

The CAQM Sub-Committee for GRAP met to review the situation and cited improved weather conditions, including strong surface winds and light rain, as the key contributors to the recent drop in pollution levels. Forecasts by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) also predict the AQI will remain in the 'Moderate' category over the coming days.

Stage-I of GRAP had been in effect since May 16 to curb rising pollution levels. With the air quality showing consistent signs of improvement, the committee decided to withdraw the restrictions with immediate effect. However, the Commission has cautioned all agencies under the Delhi Government and adjoining NCR states to continue strict implementation of existing rules, guidelines, and directives to sustain the current air quality levels. Agencies have also been directed to focus on dust mitigation and adhere to targeted actions outlined in CAQM's comprehensive pollution control policy.

The Commission emphasised that while Stage-I actions are being lifted, efforts must continue to prevent a slide back into the 'Poor' category. The situation will be monitored closely, and further measures will be taken if necessary, based on air

quality trends and meteorological forecasts. This decision offers temporary relief but also reinforces the importance of sustained efforts in combating air pollution across Delhi-NCR. Stage-1 of GRAP focuses on cutting pollution at its source, especially from dust, vehicles, and industrial emissions. Under this stage, 27 preventive actions are strictly implemented by all relevant agencies. These include use of antismog guns, water sprinkling, dust suppression measures in road construction, repair projects and maintenance activities

BJP holds National Social Harmony Conference to mark 100 years of RSS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

he BJP Delhi office held The National Social Harmony Conference on Sunday.

The conference was organised by the Social Chetna Manch under the support of the Bhagwan Parshuram Seva Sansthan to mark the centenary year of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The event was chaired by former Governor of Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan Kalraj Mishra and the chief patron of Social Chetna Manch.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta attended as the chief guest.

Representatives from various community organisations presented symbolic mementos to the dignitaries.

Prominent attendees included UP Cabinet Minister Baby Rani Maurya and former Minister Rajveer Singh (Raju



Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said BJP's sunvae', they say that they are happy to victory in Delhi has brought a wave of see a government in the national capioiness across the country and vowed that her government would always uphold the honour, pride and prestige of the nation.

CM Gupta said, "For us our Tiranga is everything and whenever our country needs us, we, all Indians, will unite."

'I promise you all that this Delhi government will always work for the honour, pride and prestige of the Tiranga and the country. We will always keep working for the people of Delhi,"

Reflecting on the BJP's return to power in the city after a long gap, Gupta said, "The drought of 27 years has converted into heavy rain this time."

"The victory of BJP in Delhi has brought a wave of happiness across the

Bhaiya), among others. In her address, country. Whenever I meet people at 'jan tal which is dedicated to the nation and will keep it united," she said.

> Following this, the National President of the organisation and the convener of the conference spoke about the functioning and objectives of the organisation.

> He said, "Social Chetna Manch operates at the district level in 28 states and includes 36 caste-based community organisations. Additionally, many other social bodies and unions are affiliated with us. Through this platform, I have established a vast united family across the nation that promotes interfaith coordination and social harmony, where people from all religions, sects, and castes are strung together like pearls in a single thread.

Delhi traffic police clears illegal encroachment at Aurobindo Marg

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

¬he Delhi Traffic Police, on Sunday, conducted a drive against illegal encroachments and improper parking on Aurobindo Marg on Friday, in an effort to decongest one of South Delhi's key arterial roads. The operation was led by the Southern Range Traffic Unit under Hauz Khas Circle.

Aurobindo Marg had increasingly become a hotspot of congestion due to widespread encroachments by vendors, hawkers, and illegally parked vehicles, including private cars, auto-rickshaws and taxis

Aurobindo Marg, a vital north-south stretch connecting Delhi to Gurugram, had increasingly become a hotspot of congestion due to widespread encroachments by vendors, hawkers and illegally parked vehicles, including private cars, auto-rickshaws and taxis. In some stretches, even shopkeepers had extended their commercial areas onto the road, significantly narrowing the carriageway and obstructing pedestrian access, officials said. The special enforcement operation was conducted under the overall super-

vision of Shri Kushal Pal Singh, DCP Traffic Southern Range, along with Shri Rajender Kumar, ACP Traffic South, and Shri Basant Kumar, Traffic Inspector, Hauz Khas Circle. According to official data, the crackdown led to the issuance of 761 challans for improper parking, the towing of 10 vehicles and the removal or seizure of 85 items encroaching on public space. Civic agencies including the MCD, NDMC and local police authorities coordinated closely to ensure the operation's success.

'The initiative was undertaken to restore the road's intended capacity and ensure the safety of commuters and pedestrians," said an official statement. Encroachments had reduced the usable road width to such an extent that even walking was becoming difficult for citizens." Officials confirmed that photographic documentation was collected for all removed encroachments and that traffic movement showed marked improvement following the drive. The move also received support from local residents, many of whom had long expressed concern over deteriorating traffic conditions on the stretch. The Delhi Traffic Police stated that similar drives will continue across the Southern Range as part of a sustained campaign to remove unauthorised structures and ensure unimpeded access to public roads.

NDMC conducts late-night anti-encroachment drive clears 200 stalls in Sarojini Nagar market

VAISHNAVI MISHRA New Delhi

→he New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has removed around 150 to 200 unauthorised shops and stalls from footpaths and market areas in Sarojini Nagar on Saturday, according to a local trader, The operation began late on Saturday night, around 11 pm and aimed to clear illegal structures that had taken over public spaces in the busy

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Traders Association, said that while many unauthorised shops were removed, some authorised shops also suffered damage during the drive.

"When we came to the market, we saw that hoardings and parts of some legal shops had been broken," he said, expressing concern over the impact on legitimate traders.

Randhawa questioned the timing and approach of the demolition.

He said that the NDMC removed shops with legal permits instead of targeting the unauthorised ones.

"We raised this issue in court and got a stay order. But instead of removing illegal shops, the authorities removed shops that are authorised and protected by the court. We stand united and, if necessary, will shut down the market tomorrow to protest," he added.



One affected trader, Ramesh, who

runs a garment shop, lamented the lack of prior notice. "They should have

informed us before the drive. We had no

idea this was happening," he said. He

described the demolition scene, saying

police were present and the authorities

tore down sheds and hoardings, labeling

Another jewellery shopkeeper ques-

"If the demolition is for illegal

tioned why his shop was damaged dur-

encroachments, why are authorised shops

them as illegal structures.

like mine being harmed? I have all the proper documents for my shop, " he asked. Despite the damage, the market was operating as usual, with many visitors unaware of the recent demolitions. However, shopkeepers affected by the operation expressed anger, saying the

avoid such chaos. Ashok Kalra, Market President, appealed to Chief Minister Rekha Gupta for intervention and demanded action against those who conducted the demo-

NDMC should have given prior notice to

lition without warning.

Congress calls diplomatic outreach insincere, cheap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

he Congress on Sunday said it was not stopping anyone from being part of diplomatic delegations to be sent to various countries following Operation Sindoor and that its leaders who have been named at the instance of the Government must listen to their conscience and contribute to the exercise

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh accused the Government of politicising the exercise of choosing leaders for the delegations and having "malicious intent" with only one out of four Congress leaders nominated by the party making

On Saturday, the Congress said it was asked by the Government to submit the names of four leaders for the all-party delegations to be sent abroad to explain India's stance on Pakistan-backed

It nominated Anand Sharma, Gaurav Gogoi, Syed Naseer Hussain and

Amrinder Singh Raja Warring.
Of the four, only Sharma has been included in the seven delegations that will be visiting various countries.

Four Congress leaders - Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari, Amar Singh and Salman Khurshid — who were not part of the list forwarded by the Congress have been included in the delegations by the government.

They included only one leader out of the four names we sent. Four other names were added by the government, who are senior MPs and leaders of our party, they should listen to their conscience and contribute in the delegations," Ramesh said.

"For the Congress, national interest is paramount. This matter should not be stretched and more politicisation is not appropriate in this regard," he said.

The Congress has not stopped anyone and all our MPs named in the delegations will go and contribute, he said.

The selection of Tharoor to head one of the delegations was frowned upon by the Congress, which accused the "mischievous" mindset.

Referring to Congress leader Salman Khurshid, Ramesh said the four names added by the Government include a former foreign minister who is experienced in foreign policy.

Congress general secretary incharge communications Jairam Ramesh accused the **Government of politicising the** exercise of choosing leaders for the delegations and having "malicious intent"

leaders being accommodated in the diplomatic outreach delegations, the Congress has said it proves the "complete insincerity" of the Narendra Modi Government and shows the "cheap political games" it plays on serious national

With just one of its four nominated

the four eminent Congress MPs and leaders who have been included at the instance of the Modi Government will go with the delegations.

Fifty-one political leaders, parliamentarians and former ministers cutting across party lines will be part of the seven delegations travelling to world capitals to put across India's resolve to tackle terrorism against the backdrop of Operation Sindoor.

In a statement last night, Ramesh said, "On May 16th morning, the Modi Government asked for four names of Congress MPs/leaders to represent the Congress in the delegations being sent abroad to explain India's stance on terrorism from Pakistan." These four names were conveyed in writing by the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju by 12 noon on May 16, he said in the statement.

"Very late tonight (May 17th), the full list of members of all delegations has been officially released. Most regrettably, only one of the four names suggested by the INC leadership has been included,"

"This proves the complete insincerity of the Modi Government and shows the cheap political games it always plays on serious national issues," Ramesh said. The four eminent Congress MPs and leaders who have been included at the instance of the Modi Government will, of course, go with the delegations and make their contributions, he said. 'The Congress will not stoop to the pathetic level of the PM and the BJP. It will always uphold the finest traditions of Parliamentary democracy and not play partisan politics on national security

The Congress wishes the delegations all the very best, he added.

ssues, like the BJP does," Ramesh said.

Ramesh said these delegations should not, however, divert attention from the Congress' demands to have All-Party meetings chaired by PM Modi and for a special session of Parliament to reiterate the resolution adopted on February 22, 1994, while also taking note of developments thereafter

The seven delegations led by Baijayant Panda, Ravi Shankar Prasad (both BJP), Sanjay Kumar Jha (JDU), Shrikant Shinde (Shiv Sena), Shashi Tharoor (Congress), Kanimozhi (DMK) and Supriya Sule (NCP-SP) will visit a total of 32 countries and the EU headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

Each delegation comprises seven or eight political leaders and is assisted by former diplomats. Of the 51 political leaders, 31 are part of the ruling NDA, while the remaining 20 are from the non-NDA parties. "One mission. One message. One Bharat. Seven All-Party Delegations will soon engage key nations under #OperationSindoor, reflecting our collective resolve against terrorism," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said in a post on X on Saturday.

The delegations include former Union ministers Ghulam Nabi Azad, M J Akbar, Anand Sharma, Muraleedharan, Salman Khurshid, S S Ahluwalia, who are not members of parliament at present.

President, PM extend greetings to Dhankhar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

resident Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday greeted Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on his birthday. Prime Minister Modi also greeted former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda on his

Born on May 18, 1951 in Kithana village of Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district, Dhankhar was sworn in as the country's 14th Vice President on August 11, 2022.

"Hearty greetings and best wishes to @VPIndia Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji on his birthday! I wish him good health and very many years in the service of the nation," President Murmu said in a social media post.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on his birthday and said he has made commendable efforts to boost the productivity of the

Greetings to our Vice President, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji on his birthdav. He is blessed with tremendous knowledge of our Constitution, reflecting from his years of work as a leading lawyer," Modi said in a social media post.

"He has made commendable efforts to boost the productivity of the Rajya Sabha. His interest towards serving society is also immense. May he lead a long and healthy life," the prime minister said

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called on Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar. His meeting with the vice president comes days after Chief of Defence Staff(CDS)General Anil Chauhan called on Dhankhar.

The meeting comes against the backdrop of the India-Pakistan military conflict in the aftermath of the terror attack in Pahalgam. It is also the vice president's birthday. The vice president secretariat shared pictures of the meeting between Dhankhar and the defence minister.

Prime Minister Modi greeted former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) president H D Deve Gowda on his birthday on Sunday. Deve Gowda, who served as prime minister between June 1996 and April 1997, turned 92 on Sunday.

In a social media post, Modi said Gowda is widely respected for his statesman-like approach and passion towards public service.

"Birthday wishes to our former Prime Minister, Shri HD Deve Gowda Ji. He is widely respected for his statesman-like approach and passion towards public service," Modi wrote.

"His wisdom and insights on several issues are a source of great strength. May he be blessed with a long and healthy life,"



Raiya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh headed India's official delegation to the Solemn Ceremony of the Inauguration of the Pontificate of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV in Vatican City today. Deputy Chief Minister of Nagaland Yanthungo Patton, accompanied.

NCC expedition team summits Mt Everest



An expedition team of NCC after summiting the Mt Everest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

n expedition team of the National Cadet Corps on A Sunday summitted Mt Everest the world's highest peak, the NCC said. "Historic moment Mt Everest Expedition Team of NCC summited Mt Everest today at 0445 hours. Summit photos awaited," the NCC posted on X.

On January 3, the director general of the NCC, during an annual press conference here, announced an NCC expedition to Mt Everest in 2025 and that a team was preparing for it at the Siachen Battle School.

Mt Everest was first conquered by New Zealand's Edmund Hillary and his sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay in 1953 and has ever since fascinated climbers and mountaineers to scale the famed peak in the mighty Himalayas.

During the press briefing in January on the NCC Republic Day Camp 2025, the DG spoke about other mountaineering expeditions undertaken by the NCC cadets in the past, including to Mt Kang Yatse II (6,250m)

Would prefer hell over Pakistan: Javed Akhtar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

oted lyricist and screenwriter Javed Akhtar, who is often targeted for his views on patriotism and religion, says that if there comes a time he has to choose between Pakistan and hell, he would prefer to go to hell. Akhtar, 80, was speaking at Shiv Sena

(UBT) leader Sanjay Raut's book launch on Saturday night in Mumbai. At the event, the lyricist — who identifies himself as an atheist — said extremists from both India and Pakistan shower abuses on him on a daily basis. "Some day, I'll show you my Twitter

(now X) and WhatsApp. I am abused by both sides. I'm not thankless so I'll say there are also people who appreciate what I say, encourage me. But it's true that extremists from both here and there abuse me. This is right. If one of them stops abusing me, it'll be a matter of concern for me.

"One side says 'You are a kaafir (nonbeliever) and will go to hell. The other side says, 'Jihadi, go to Pakistan'. If the choice is between Pakistan and hell, I would prefer to go to hell," Akhtar said amid a round of applause from the audience. The award-winning writer further said it's important to have citizens not subscribing to the ideology of any political party. "That way they can say what they feel is right and what is wrong. There should be no party loyalty. All parties are ours and yet no party is ours. I'm also one of those citizens. If you speak from one side, you'll make the other side unhappy. But if you speak out from different points of view, you make many more people unhappy,"

Jaishankar to visit Netherlands for three-days officially

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

🛪 xternal Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will embark on a six-day visit of the →Netherlands, Denmark and Germany beginning Monday during which he is expected to highlight Pakistan's relentless support to cross-border

It will be Jaishankar's first foreign visit after the four-day-long military confrontation between Indian and Pakistani armed forces

"External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will pay an official visit to the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany from May 19 to 24," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Sunday.

It said Jaishankar will meet the leader ship of the three countries and hold dis-



cussions with his counterparts on the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional and global matters of mutual interest. It is expected that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will also apprise his

counterparts in the three nations about

India's decision to launch Operation Sindoor following the Pahalgam terror attack. Under Operation Sindoor, India on early May 7 destroyed nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied

Kashmir (PoK). Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases

on May 8, 9 and 10. The two sides reached an understandon cessation of hostilities on May 10

after four days of confrontations. and Mt Abi Gamin (7,335m). Prevent terror strikes to

affected," he said. "Let us come together to ing fire tragedy in the Charminar area of

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ongress president Mallikariun Kharge on Sunday spoke with Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy after the horrific blaze in Hyderabad that claimed 17 lives and said he is assured that the Government is taking all necessary relief measures, including providing speedy and adequate compensation to those affected.

Kharge also urged Congress workers to rally around the affected families and offer any assistance they can.

The blaze triggered by a suspected short circuit in a building in Gulzar House near the iconic Charminar here on Sunday left 17 people dead, with a majority of them being children.
"I am deeply saddened by the devastat-

Hyderabad, which has claimed several precious lives. My heartfelt condolences go out to the families of the victims during this difficult time," Kharge said.

Kharge talks to Reddy about Hyderabad blaze

Kharge urged Congress workers to rally around the affected families and offer any assistance they can. The blaze was triggered by a suspected short circuit in a building

"After speaking with the chief minister of Telangana, I am assured that the Government is taking all necessary relief measures, including providing speedy and adequate compensation to those support those in need and help them through this challenging period," he said. In a Facebook post in Hindi, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said the news of several people being killed and injured in a massive fire in Hyderabad is extremely saddening.

"I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families in this difficult time and hope for the speedy recovery of the injured," he said.

A lone, narrow staircase was the only escape route for the inmates of the build-

ing, but they could not rush out, police said The building housed jewellery shops on

the ground floor and people were residing in a flat above, they said, adding that smoke spread, suffocating the people in the

ensure governance: Mayawati

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

ahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati on Sunday urged the Government to ensure that terror strikes do not happen again in the country so that the administration can focus on alleviating the plight of people facing unemployment and inflation.

Speaking at an all-India meeting of BSP coordinators here, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister also supported the government's stand that India will not tolerate nuclear blackmail from Pakistan.

Besides preventing future terror strikes, there is a need to rein in criminal, casteist and communal elements who seek to pollute the peaceful atmosphere in the coun-

try with their narrow-minded, hateful andvenomous language and actions, Mayawati said. Terrorist incidents are a hindrance to development. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the central Government to ensure appropriate measures to prevent terror attacks, she said.

According to a BSP statement, Mayawati said the unity displayed by the people after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives, helped the armed forces give it back to Pakistan in the language it understands.

She said the uniformed Bahujan Volunteer Force (BVF) of the BSP should be organised afresh and used as before to maintain order and discipline in party programmes across the country.

A journey of stillness, strength and spiritual awakening through yoga

ANTARA MOHAN

arbani Roy is an educator and a longtime practitioner of Kriya Yoga based in Kolkata. For the last 25 years, she has followed the path of self-realisation, gracefully weaving together her worldly responsibilities and inner journey. In this interview for The Pioneer, she speaks about her journey. Edited excerpts follow:

What first led you on the path of Kriya Yoga and the teachings of Swami Yogananda? Could you take us back to the beginning?

Thank you. That is such a thoughtful question. I have been walking this path since 1998. I was a mathematics teacher in some of Kolkata's reputed schools and genuinely enjoyed my profession. But despite all the external comfort, I often felt a deep inner emptiness — a yearning for something I could not quite name. My search led me to experiences like Vipassana and Art of Living, which were beautiful in their own way, but my heart still did not feel fulfilled. As the scriptures say, when the disciple is ready, the guru appears. One day, my father took me to

the YSS Ashram in Dakshineswar, right after Gurudeva's birthday celebration on January 6th. The moment I stepped in, I was overcome with emotion — I started weeping. I felt love, joy and immense gratitude all at once. I knew then, with complete certainty, that I had come home. From that day on, there was no looking

☐ How have the teachings of your guru shaped how you see life?

I believe our body and mind are deeply connected — any shift in one affects the other. Our minds, as Gurudeva beautifully puts it, can sometimes be like a drunken monkey stung by a scorpion! So calming both the mind and body is a sacred science. One simple way is through breathing. By using effective breathing techniques, we can clear the lungs. When our lungs are free and fully oxygenated, the heart relaxes. And when the heart rests, so does the body — and eventually, the mind. Over time, the mind naturally shifts from a conscious state to a superconscious one — where no thoughts disturb us. This state brings deep rest and as peace, calm, joy, love — all qualities inner silence. This wisdom has come slow-



ly, with years of practice and perseverance. I have stumbled, I have fallen, but I have always returned. God is not something we experience through the five senses — only when we quiet those senses, in deep stillness, does the sixth sense — our intuition — awaken. That

is when we begin to experience the divine

of the soul and of God.

☐ How has this journey shaped you emotionally, mentally and spiritually over the years?

Kriya Yoga, as taught by Paramhansa Yogananda, has transformed me at every level — physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. But beyond all that, the most precious gift is the presence of a Sadguru someone who is always with you, guiding, protecting, forgiving like a mother, father,

true Guru is unconditional. It is divine, like the love between a mother and her child. I often reflect on how I used to be even five years ago and I truly feel I have become a better version of myself. But I still have a long way to go. My only prayer has always been: God, change no circumstances of my life — just change me. When we learn to master our body and mind, the Kurukshetra — the great inner battle — can be won. And when that happens, we may no longer need to return to this earth school to repeat the same lessons.

☐ You mention that your son, in the US, too has also embraced this path. As both a mother and a seeker, what does it mean to you to see him walking the same inner

It fills me with deep gratitude. Walking this path myself has helped me cultivate qualities like patience, faith, resilience and empathy. And seeing my son take up the same path, especially while living in a fast-paced, often isolating environment like the USA, is such a blessing. This path has given him strength, inner clarity and the quiet guidance of Gurudeva. I see him face

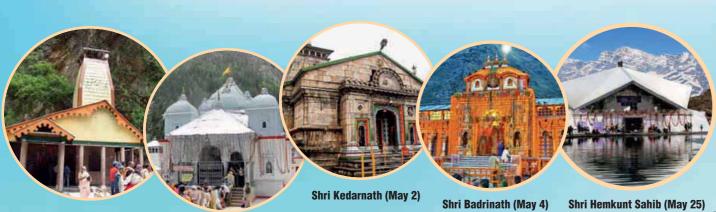
friend, beloved — all in one. The love of a life with more confidence and calm. It is one of the greatest gifts I could ever hope for as a mother.

☐ For those who are new, what's the most loving and sincere way to start walking the path of Kriya Yoga?

I am so glad to hear that — it is a joy to share what has touched my own heart. Here are a few suggestions for those just beginning: Start by reading the spiritual classic Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramhansa Yogananda. It's a life-changing book that

introduces both his teachings and his spirit. Visit a YSS (Yogoda Satsanga Society) centre — they are spread across India and offer a beautiful spiritual community. And most importantly, never give up, even when the path gets difficult. I would like to leave ou with a few guiding thoughts that have helped me deeply. The true purpose of life is God-realisation. Keep your eyes fixed on the goal, no matter what. The events in your life — whether joyful or painful — do not define you. What matters is who you become through them. Each day, accept both the good and the bad as coming from God. And finally, before you sleep, offer everything back into His hands.

Destination Uttarakhand CHAR DHAM YATRA 2025



Shri Yamunotri (April 30)

Shri Gangotri (April 30)

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision for the holistic development of Uttarakhand is deeply inspiring. As we welcome devotees to the sacred 'Chardham Yatra', our government remains fully committed to ensuring their safety for a spiritually fulfilling experience. We urge all visitors to come

experience the soul of Devbhoomi, Uttarakhand. -Pushkar Singh Dhami, Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

River Rafting

Skiing

There are two main pillars for the creation of a developed India in the 21st century—pride in our heritage and making every possible effort for development. Today, Uttarakhand is strengthening both these pillars. This decade will be the decade of Uttarakhand.

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Easy & safe Char Dham journey

set to commence from April 30, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, as the portals of Yamunotri and Gangotri reopen. This revered pilgrimage spans four sacred sites-Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath—located in Uttarakhand. Each year, lakhs of devotees set out on this spiritual journey in pursuit of divine

blessings and inner peace. For easy access, the Uttarakhand government has

established both online and offline registration procedures for pilgrims to provide a seamless and well-organised

- experience. · Prior to journey registration is
- Please enter the correct mobile number during registration
- Make sure to obtain 'Darshan' token at the dhams
- · Always carry sufficient woolen clothes, umbrella and raincoat with you
- information during the registration process Senior citizens are advised to
- get a health check-up done prior to journey If you take any medicine, keep
- sufficient stock with you If you are not feeling well then
- don't travel Take rest breaks at various stops during the journey route so that the climate su
- ride on helivatra.irctc.co.in Beware of unauthorised
- Book the ticket for helicopte

persons assuring to provide helicopter tickets

- Beware of unauthorised persons who assure you to do darshan at the dhams
- Please extend help to keep the journey routes neat and clean by not littering the
- Please keep control on the speed of your vehic and park the vehic

Paragliding



This initiative will improve the quality of food served on the route and ensure healthy and safe food for millions of pilgrims who visit every year.

'AAJ SE THODA KAM' CAMPAIGN

PM Narendra Modi, during his last visit to Uttarakhand, emphasised on reducing the usage of salt and sugar by 10%, which is being promoted by the Uttarakhand government in the Char Dham Yatra. The main objective of this initiative is to control the quantity of excess salt, sugar and fat in food, so that diseases like heart disease and high blood pressure can be prevented. Restaurants and hotels are being encouraged to prepare healthy dishes with the help of chefs and food experts and keep nutritional balance in mind.

'RUCO' INITIATIVE

To further strengthen health security, the department has launched the Re-purpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO) initiative. Under this, strict monitoring is being done to reduce the harmful effects of re-used oil and prevent it from entering into the food chain again

Decisions taken by the U'khand government to make Char Dham Yatra 2025 'Sugam, Sukhad aur Surakshit'

or the past few years, the number of devotees coming to Char Dham Yatra has been continuously increasing. The state administration is constantly making efforts to provide proper facilities for the devotees. In this sequence, to provide better facilities for the devotees in the upcoming Char Dham Yatra, U'khand government is committed to ensure a 'Sugam, Sukhad aur Surakshit' journey for pilgrims, for which several

steps have been taken for their convenience:

- Aadhar-based registration is compulsory for the pilgrims
- For those who have not registered online, on spot registration facilities are available at Rishikesh, Haridwar and Vikasnagar (Herbertpur, Nayagaon)
- Darshan will be allowed on the date for which registration
- On spot registration will be done based on the number of pilgrims present at the dham, considering the security/ safety of pilgrims
- Chief Secretary, Uttarakhand, has requested all the dignitaries, state officials and members of judiciary to avoid visiting the dhams during the period from May 2 to 31, 2025, for the sake of the convenience of the pilgrims

Uttarakhand is the ultimate adventure destination—the perfect answer to every thrill-seeker's dream. Bestowed with snow-carpeted slopes ideal for high-altitude skiing; the Himalayan ranges for trekking, mountaineering and rock climbing; gurgling rivers for white water rafting, pristine lakes for canoeing and kayaking, and mountain paths best suited for biking challenges there is no dearth of adventure sports here.

UTTARAKHAND

Wild life

During the Char Dham Yatra, you can also visit the following nearby places

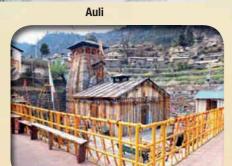
- Triyugi Narain Temple
 Gartang Gali
 Valley of Flowers
- Harshil Valley
 Devprayag
 Auli



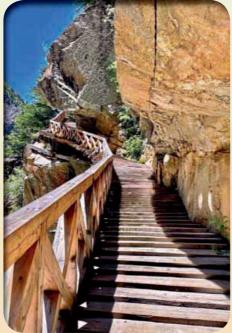
Kedar Gufa



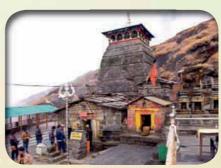
Valley of Fower



Triyugi Narain Temple



Gartang Gali



Tungnath Temple



Jungle Safari

Omkareshwar Temple



Kartik Swami Temple



For registration: please visit on registrationandtouristcare.uk.gov.in or download the App touristcareuttarakhand from App stores For any type of support please contact our 24x7 toll free number: 0135-1364 For more details please contact: 0135-2559898, 0135-2552627 E-mail: touristcare.uttarakhand@gmail.com



For Chardham Heli booking please log on heliyatra.irctc.co.in or scan the QR code

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE









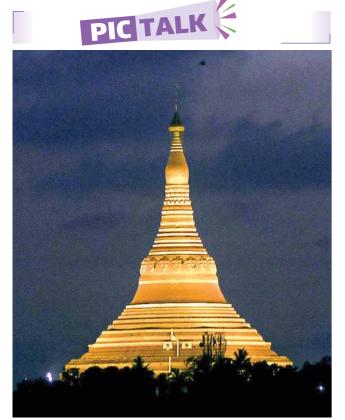
India reaches out to the world

The Govt dispatches seven delegations to various countries to present its perspective on the Indo-Pak conflict

n the wake of heightened tensions with Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack and India's swift military response under "Operation Sindoor," the Modi government has embarked on a bold and strategic diplomatic campaign - dispatching seven all-party delegations to key international capitals. These delegations, which include voices from across the political spectrum, aim to assert India's uncompromising stance against terrorism and unify international opinion in support of New Delhi's position. This outreach isn't just a routine diplomatic exercise - it's a calibrated move with far-reaching implications for India's global standing, security narrative, and internal democratic ethos. India's relations with Pakistan have always been delicate, often swinging between dialogue and confrontation. However, after the recent terror attack in Pahalgam and subsequent military operations, there's an urgent need for India to take charge of the international narrative. By sending high-level delegations to countries that are members of the United Nations Security Council and other strategic partners, India seeks to disseminate a unified national message: Terrorism, particularly crossborder terrorism, is an assult on India and thus has a right to retaliate and strike back. India's outreach emphasises zero tolerance for terrorism and seeks to convey to the global community that the entire Indian political class stands united against such threats. With Pakistan expected to launch its own international counter-narrative, India's proactive engagement is essential to highlight ground realities and reinforce its moral and strategic

The inclusion of opposition leaders demonstrates that India can rise above partisan divides when national interest is at stake—a trait that strengthens India's global image as a mature democracy.

The Modi government's invitation to senior Congress leader and former UN diplomat Shashi Tharoor to lead one of the delegations has been largely praised, but it hasn't come without controversy. Tharoor, despite being a vocal critic of the Modi regime on several fronts, accepted the role unhesitatingly. Besides, the consideration of Mani Shankar Aiyar—a figure often mired in controversy and known for his candid and sometimes polarising remarks- to lead delegation to Gulf countries sparked some internal criticism within Congress circles. While some party members frowned upon the decision, the Congress leadership has wisely chosen not to express any formal dissent. Its silence can be seen as tacit endorsement of the idea that in matters of national importance all have to cooperate regardless of political animosities. Critics who see this move as unusual or driven by political motives should remember that this isn't unprecedented. India has a long-standing tradition of cross-party cooperation in international diplomacy. One of the most notable examples dates back to Jawaharlal Nehru, who sent Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then a rising star in the opposition, to the United Nations to advocate India's position during a critical period. The message is loud and clear: when it comes to India's sovereignty, security, and global standing, all Indians speak in one voice!



Global Vipassana Pagoda is Illuminated after sunset, in Mumbai PTI

Time to recalibrate ties with Turkey

Under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey has aligned itself militarily and ideologically with India's adversaries. What was once a partnership is now a cautionary tale of misplaced trust — and India is waking up to the betrayal

ndia has always extended a hand of friendship across continents, faiths, and ideologies. From standing by the Ottoman Empire during the Khilafat Movement to cooperating with modern Turkey in trade, technology, education and cultural exchanges, India believed in long-term goodwill. But today, it is betrayed by a country it once supported during its most critical moment in history.

Turkey, under the authoritarian leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has chosen to side with Pakistan not just diplomatically, but militarily, feeding New Delhi's enemies with deadly drones and rhetoric, revealing Ankara's dangerous ambitions to become the ideological capital of a pan-Islamist world order - even at the cost of peace in South Asia.

The most recent Indo-Pak tensions, especially after Pakistan's proxy aggression in Kashmir and elsewhere, have seen Turkey abandon any pretence of neutrality. Turkishmade drones, notably the Bayraktar TB2 manufactured by Baykar Technologies, whose CEO Selçuk Bayraktar is none other than Erdogan's son-in-law - are now in Pakistan's hands. These drones are not for humanitarian use or border surveillance.

They are war machines, tested in Libya, Syria, and Armenia, and now weaponized against Indian interests. It is no coincidence that the Pakistani military, flush with Chinese and now Turkish support, is emboldened in its provocative acts across the LoC. India is no longer watching silently. Turkish firms operating in India are now facing a quiet but firm rollback. The government is reportedly targeting those firms that have indirect connections with the Turkish ruling family. One such firm, closely linked to the Baykar CEO, had ongoing collaborations with Indian industries. But post the revelations about Ankara's defence dealings with Islamabad, New Delhi is beginning to sever ties. This is not just about foreign policy; this is about national securi-

The diplomatic frost has started touching academia as well. Several Indian universities, including Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University, have now either cancelled or stalled their memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with Turkish educational institutions. What began as cultural and academic exchanges have now turned into cautionary tales of misplaced trust. It is becoming increasingly clear that Turkish academia, like many other arms of the state, is influenced if not controlled - by the ideological machinery of Erdogan's administration. India cannot afford to keep its windows open to propaganda disguised as intellectual cooperation. This betrayal stings more because of the historical goodwill India extended to Turkey. During the



1920s, when the Ottoman Caliphate was being be the caliph of the Islamic world. dismantled by Western colonial powers, Indian Muslims - and Indian leaders - came forward in solidarity. The Khilafat Movement was supported not just by Indian Muslims, but also by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress.

Indian freedom fighters, fighting their war against the British Raj, paused to lend moral and political support to a foreign empire, simply based on civilizational and religious empathy. And yet, a cen-

tury later, the Turkish state pays back with hostility, aligning itself not with the world's largest democracy, but with a failed terrorsponsoring regime in Islamabad. The hypocrisy is

complete when one looks at Erdo?an's domestic policies. Once hailed as a reformer, Erdogan has

now dismantled Turkish secularism, jailing dissidents, muzzling the media, and openly promoting an Islamist agenda.

SANTHOSH

MATHEW

The conversion of the Hagia Sophia, a UNESCO World Heritage site, from a museum back into a mosque was not merely a religious act - it was a political message to the world. It marked the triumph of a neo-Ottoman, pan-Islamist narrative over Turkey's secular past. Erdogan is no longer content being the president of Turkey; he aspires to

And for that, he sees India - a pluralistic, ecular, majority Hindu nation - as an ideological rival. Turkey has repeatedly raised the Kashmir issue in the United Nations and other global forums, parroting Pakistan's false nar-It has criticized India's internal matters,

including the abrogation of Article 370 and the Citizenship Amendment Act, conveniently ignoring its suppression of Kurdish identity, Armenian history, and democratic freedoms. Turkey's silence on China's atrocities against Uighur Muslims further exposes the selective outrage of its leadership. It has become clear that Erdogan's Turkey is not defending Muslims; it is defending authoritarian alliances and petrodollar loyalties.

The Indian business community is also waking up. Traders in several states have begun quietly boycotting Turkish goods - from dry fruits and confectionery to Turkish apples and marble. India does not need Turkish imports when it has friendlier and more reliable partners elsewhere.

When Indian soldiers face Turkish drones in Kashmir, how can Indian citizens in good conscience buy Turkish dates for Ramadan? This is not a call for jingoism but for economic nationalism. A sovereign nation must ensure that its economy does not empower those who want to destabilize it. India is neither against Islam nor against Muslims. It remains home to the second-largest Muslim population in the world. But India cannot and will not tolerate foreign governments using religion as a tool of geopolitics against it.

Turkey's ambitions to become the new head of the Islamic Ummah come with the price tag f instability and ideological confrontation. Erdogan has found common cause with Pakistan, Qatar, and certain radical outfits, hoping to revive a caliphate that the modern world has long buried.

Turkey's betrayal is not just strategic, it is civilizational. It is a deliberate choice to side with India's enemies and undermine a centu-

India must now recalibrate its foreign policy with clarity and strength. We have friends in West Asia - the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt who have shown greater pragmatism and respect. India must deepen ties with them while sending a clear message to Ankara: betrayal has consequences. In the years to come, Indian policymakers, industrialists, students, and common citizens must remember that partnerships must be rooted in mutual respect and shared values. Turkey under Erdogan has lost both. And until it regains them, India must look elsewhere - not back at a friendship that has been stabbed from

The road from Khilafat to today's crisis is a painful reminder that not all historic bonds endure - especially when one side uses them as tools of manipulation. For now, the sun sets on India-Turkey ties. Whether it rises again will depend on when, or if, Turkey chooses principles over politics.

(The writer is Professor Centre For South Asian Studies, School of International Studies and Social Science, Pondicherry Central University. Views are personal)

Finding purpose when recognition falls short

n the world of civil services, rejection can sting in deeply personal ways. A missed dream posting doesn't just feel like a professional hiccup-it can feel like a public verdict on your worth. And ironically, landing a coveted assignment doesn't always bring celebration. It often invites envy, cold shoulders, and whispered judgments from peers. The very structure of this prestigious career can feel like a paradox: being overlooked feels like failure, while succeeding sometimes means being quietly resented.

Consider the young officer who dreams of a highprofile metropolitan post, only to be sent to a rural subdivision after months of anticipation. The disappointment is layered-not just personal, but echoed by family and friends who had their hopes tethered to the officer's trajectory. For another officer, finally securing a prestigious posting can spark a new challenge: peer envy disguised as distant professionalism, veiled jabs, or even quiet exclusion from group camaraderie.

This dual-edged sword of public service-where rejection cuts deep and success triggers reverse snubsis one of the profession's greatest emotional trials.

That's why learning to become "snub-proof" is not just helpful; it's essential. It means building resilience to face setbacks without crumbling, and emotional maturity to stay grounded amidst subtle hostilities.

Why do these slights hurt so much? Because rejection threatens four essential psychological needs: belonging, selfesteem, control, and meaning-identified by psychologist Kipling Williams. In civil services, where identity and purpose are so tightly intertwined with public perception and rank, these needs feel amplified. A posting isn't just a job-it's a symbol of validation

But here's the truth: many outcomes in civil services are shaped by variables outside your influence. Political considerations, timing, administrative reshuffles, or sheer luck can

dictate who lands where. Missing out isn't always about merit. It's about circumstances. Understanding this can ease the internal sting.

So, what do you do when the sting arrives? First, pause. Emotional reactions-like anger, selfdoubt, or the compulsion to prove yourself-can spiral if left unchecked. Process the moment. Ground yourself in the knowledge that one posting doesn't define your career.

Next, shift your perspective. Not every role will be high-profile, but that doesn't mean it lacks value. Some of the most transformative public service work happens in places the public doesn't see. One seasoned officer put it best: "The satis-

faction of service is in the work itself, not the For those experiencing reverse snubs, the approach must

shift from defense to empathy. Peer envy is often rooted in

insecurity. Responding with grace-acknowledging others' contributions, remaining inclusive, and steering clear of petty rivalries-demonstrates quiet strength. Maturity in such moments marks true leadership.

Building a strong support system is also crucial. Find mentors, colleagues, or family who share your values and uplift your spirit. Their perspective can help you stay anchored when public recognition falters.

Just as importantly, build self-worth that isn't tied to your posting, your designation, or peer validation. Reflect on why you entered this field in the first place. Reconnect with your deeper purpose-the ideals that first ignited your desire to serve.

And finally, see rejection as a teacher. Each snub reveals something-about systems, dynamics, or even blind spots in your own approach. Ask: What can I learn from this? How can I grow?

Also, check your own behavior. Have you ever unintentionally overlooked someone else? The cycle of exclusion can only be broken if we're all willing to foster inclusion, awareness,

In the end, the civil services is not a 100-meter dash-it's a marathon. There will be detours and hurdles. But what matters most is not the snub, not the title, and not even the applause-but how you carry yourself through it all. Because ultimately, the power of a snub lies not in the act itself-but in the meaning you choose to give it.

> (The writer is DGP and Head of Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

IMF assistance to Pakistan

A day after defence minister Rajnath Singh urged the IMF to rethink its assistance to Pakistan, the Congress Party on Saturday, 17 May, blasted the Modi government for "simply buckled under US pressure" at the IMF Executive Board meeting when the loans to that country were deliberated upon. Singh is now criticizing the IMF for approving loans to Pakistan on 9 May 2025, "but on 29 April itself - before the Modi government woke up the Congress had said that the IMF Executive Board was meeting on May 9th to consider this issue and that India should oppose it forcefully". As it turns out India only abstained on 9 May.

Later the Modi government's drum-beaters argued that this was the only option available to India. This is a lie. There is indeed a provision to vote 'No' in the Executive Board. Russia had voted 'No' on a loan proposal to Ukraine in September 2016 and India herself had voted No on 11 September 2005, on the issue of the expulsion of Zimbabwe. India pressed IMF to reconsider its USD 1 billion assistance to Pakistan, saying Islamabad could use a large part of it to fund the terrorist infrastructure. In its board meeting in Washington on 9 May, the IMF cleared a USD 1 billion tranche for Pakistan as part of its USD 7 billion funding programme for the country.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

Food scarcity in Gaza is terrifying

The 'Integrated Food Security Phase Classification' is an international authority that assesses the severity of food crises. According to their findings, around 500,000 Palestinians are on the brink of starvation, while nearly

1 million are facing an emergency situation. For the past 10 weeks, Israel has blocked the entry of food, shelter, medicine, and other essential supplies into Palestinian territories. In addition, airstrikes and military operations are ongoing. Israel's military campaign, ongoing for the past 19 months, has destroyed most of Gaza's food production capacity.

As a result, the population of 2.3 million in Gaza is entirely dependent on external aid for survival. The suply of food grains is rapidly diminishing. Community kitchens, which provide cooked meals, are the only source of food for most citizens in Gaza and they too are shutting down quickly.

Every day, thousands of Palestinians wait in lines outside these public kitchens, where scuffles are common.

If Israel does not lift the blockade or stop the military campaign, experts warn that Gaza could face a severe famine and a critical shortage of food. The suffering of civilians caused by the war is proving to be more terrifying than the war itself.

DATTAPRASAD SHIRODKAR | MUMBAI

Indians give Turkey, Azerbaijan a miss

In light of recent developments, tensions have escalated between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack. Amid this backdrop, several online travel platforms have announced the suspension of hotel and flight bookings to certain countries, including Turkey and

SINGH

Azerbaijan. This decision appears to be a response to the support these nations have extended to Pakistan during the ongoing conflict. Indian authorities have also advised tourists to reconsider travel to countries such as Turkey and Azerbaijan. Last year alone, Indian tourists contributed over Rs 4,000 crore to these economies—supporting employment, the hospitality industry, the wedding sector, and aviation. The support shown by these nations to Pakistan has been met with disappointment in India. Such actions from major global economies are unexpected and risk straining geopolitical relationships. Terrorism is a global threat, not an issue to be viewed through a narrow, national lens. Addressing it requires a unified and cooperative international approach. Travel advisories and booking suspensions reflect public sentiment. As terrorism remains a global threat, true progress demands unity, not division, urging nations to act beyond alliances and uphold shared security values.

DIMPLE WADHAWAN | KANPUR

SYCOPHANCY OVER SOVEREIGNTY?



fter the successful execution of Operation Sindoor, a series of fresh ontroversies has erupted within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Madhya Pradesh. The latest storm surrounds Deputy Chief Minister Jagdish Devda, who recently claimed that "the country's army and soldiers bow at the feet of Prime Minister Narendra Modi." The statement has drawn sharp criticism from the Congress party, which has called it an insult to the armed forces and demanded an apology.

This controversy comes close on the heels of another-BJP minister Vijay Shah allegedly linked Colonel Sofiva Oureshi to terrorism. Despite a high court-ordered FIR, upheld by the Supreme Court, Shah issued an apology but retained his position. Sources suggest the central BJP leadership is considering asking for Shah's resignation, but his standing as one of

the party's few influential tribal leaders complicates the move. Similarly, in Devda's case the BJP has come to his defense, accusing the Congress of targeting him because he is a Dalit.

There's a growing concern that identity politics-whether tribal or Dalit-are being used as shields to excuse sycophancy. Political leaders are often seen lauding their superiors to gain favor, but doing so at the cost of insulting India's brave soldiers is crossing a red line.

We can and should commend Prime Minister Modi for the successful Operation Sindoor. But does that mean the entire nation must metaphorically fall at his feet? There must be a boundary to political loyalty. When it begins to overshadow the honor of those who protect our borders, it's not just bad politics-it's a betrayal of national dignity

BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE | FARIDABAD

Misinformation: The new frontline in geopolitics

As digital content becomes ammunition, the world faces a critical challenge: to restore information. No longer confined to diplomacy or defense strategy, today's power struggles are fought in the realm of perception — through deepfakes and manipulated media.



n today's war-torn world, images and videos don't just go viral, they explode. Like digital bombs, they scatter shards of truth, half-truths, and outright falsehoods across borders, screens, and minds. We are living in an age where one deepfake can shatter diplomatic trust, one AIgenerated image can incite unrest, and one viral headline can sabotage years of negotiation. When misinformation and fake news enter this roster of weaponry, the tragedy is compounded. What could have been a moment of resilience turns into a spectacle of doubt and chaos

The recent escalations in the Indian subcontinent stand as a burning example of this. As tensions rose, misinformation surged; fabricated visuals, misattributed videos, and misleading narratives flooded social media. But what stood out was the Indian government's prompt and proactive response: deploying fact-check units, engaging official handles, and taking down false content in real-time. It wasn't just governance; it was communication warfare.

Strategic communication in today's geopolitical space has become a battlefield of contending ideas, contrasting perceptions, diverse strategies and complex narratives.

In 2025, the framework of the geopolitical landscape has been affected by the geostrategic communication architecture. The entire ecosystem has become a "Bitter Platform of pulls and pressure" a "Tug of War" and "Slanging Match" being played out on different media formats by stakeholders whose image is at stake. The moot question is whether geostrategic communication requires overriding restraints to focus on limits of misuse of content through deepfakes, AI-generated images, falsehood promotion and trigger-generated perception and

Recent events have shown that the geopolitical space is on a "24x7 Communication Alert". The buzz thereby generated has influenced the contours of the core diplomatic interface and messaging structure. It has also sent warning signals that wrap around "Communication Disorder", misinformation and hyped ecosystem content. The entire communication operation is not a messaging tool, rather it is being positioned as a strategic weapon to misguide and negatively align thereby disturbing the "Information Equilibrium and Discourse".

In the good old days, geopolitics was dominated by conventional tools and channels of dissemination, bilateral interface and personal diplomacy interference to counter negative narratives, perceptions and sentiments. Today, the conventional wisdom has been overtaken by "Communication Strikes" which thrive on utilising the space to destabilise, manipulate and churn unwanted crises, narratives and unending falsehoods in an era of instant communication. Policymakers and strategists grapple with the matrix of complex "Communication Intersections" where ground rules are not constant and thrive on fakery and "Communication Escalation" points. Any cri-



sis that impacts geopolitics today thrives on communication disorder, imbalance and asymmetry.

The lack of understanding to dissect the negative content amongst the audiences leads to being prey to biased hostile reporting. This has been one of the

biggest obstacles to transparency in communicating the right message through the appropriate medium.

Fact-checking units have become the new normal of the global order. Image depiction and messaging consistency within the diplomatic landscape have suffered pitfalls due to a lack of reciprocity in outlining events, issues and themes.

The Indian subcontinent witnessed this first-hand. As tension escalated, certain media outlets and social

platforms were flooded with images and videos purportedly from conflict zones. Many of these were from unrelated incidents or were digitally manipu-

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ination of verified updates, and coordinated efforts with social media platforms helped curb the impact. The government of India's Fact Check Unit PIB, under the aegis of the I&B Ministry, played a critical role in stalling the flow of disinformation that flooded the social media space in the recent events IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS, of neighbourhood tension. The result? Temporary restoration of the informa-GEOPOLITICS WAS DOMINATED BY tion order in a region otherwise on the brink of dig-CONVENTIONAL TOOLS AND

ital chaos. The need for a new global information order is acute and arises on account of the gaps and fissures that appear in the messaging and perception Due to the deep impact of social media, every medium and tool within the geostrategic space is suffering from "Asymmetrical Dynamics". Dynamics

lated to incite public panic. However, Indian author-

ities acted swiftly: real-time fact-checking, dissem-

related to information overload, overhype infodemics, lack of credibility and the growing role and interplay of non-state elements in the ecosystem. The need today is to use communication not as

(The writer is former civil servant writes on Cinema an adjunct to a strategy and policy, but rather utilise the platform to build trust, confidence, self-belief and transparency and "Positioning Communication

Perspective". The problem is that the institutional structures that govern the ecosystem thrive on the "Imbalances Related to Resources, Reach, Accountability and Non-Regulation" of the mediums. It is no rocket science when one notices the biased projection of the Western media on issues that create ripples in the image, perception and narratives. These structures do not facilitate a fair discourse of narratives rather they suffer from communication distortion due to their mantra of knee-jerk commu-

Globally, geostrategic practitioners have suffered the menace of fact-checking, to ensure fairness and ethics in information management. This unwanted phenomenon has also thrived due to the lack of 'Media literacy" and awareness amongst people, and the inability to critically understand and evaluate con-

This phenomenon is one of the biggest push factors ailing the current global information order and has led to distortion and lack of understanding of key issues dominating the media space.

In the current global order, geostrategic considerations are certainly playing out in the public domain, rather than in hush-hush corridors of power. Policymakers face the challenge of gestures, curated visuals, amplified images, and digital tools. Invasion that erases trust, cohesion and transparency in the information ecosystem.

Geostrategy, today requires a holistic narrative-building exercise wherein traditional and new media formats weave together a predictable and comprehensive narrative. It is a critical factor that must be to weave and check the role and responsibility of

Technology-driven communication, that does not obliterate transparency and ethics in the domain of strategic messaging. Global consensuses should not fall prey to the wonder tools and algorithms of AI as it would expose the inbuilt fragility of communication through modern tools techniques and con-

What the world needs now is a globally accepted fact-checking protocol; a cooperative network of governments, tech platforms, and neutral watchdogs committed to immediate and effective debunking of misinformation.

It must be matched with international investments in media literacy initiatives and cross-border transparency frameworks. In these volatile times, when geopolitics is dictated by optics and perception, the cost of unchecked misinformation is far too high. Strategic communication must be wielded not as a megaphone for chaos, but as a lighthouse of clarity and trust because the war for truth is no less important than the war for peace.

and Strategic Communication. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan

The Modi Doctrine: India's historic shift from restraint to retaliation

ime Minister Narendra Modi's doctrine will be etched in history as a transformative policy that decisively redefined India's approach to Pakistan's terror-driven provocations. For decades, cross-border terrorism was treated with diplomatic exchanges and measured responses. But under Modi's leadership, India has declared that terror attacks will henceforth be regarded as acts of war-meriting the severest punishment, including cross-border strikes and direct retaliation against both terrorists and their patrons.

An in-depth analysis of Modi's speech exhibits that his doctrine is not mere rhetoric-it has been enforced with unmistakable resolve. The obliteration of nine terror camps and the destruction of eleven Pakistani air bases by India stand as irrefutable evidence of this new policy. The message is unequivocal: extremists, whether sheltered by rogue regimes or operating independently, will be treated as state actors, and both will face retribution.

Modi has also used this doctrine to convey a broader global message-Pakistan's terror agenda is not just India's problem. The prime minister has highlighted that Islamabad's terror network has targeted Western powers as well. The tragic 9/11 attacks on the United States and the deadly London Tube bombings have direct links to terrorists trained in Pakistan. In Modi's view, the state and terror are intertwined in Pakistan, making the country complicit in its

India's resolute response during Operation Sindoor, a high-stakes military offensive, has further cemented this policy. The doctrine is clear-Pakistan will face identical, severe consequences if it continues to harbour terrorists or allows its territory to serve as a breeding ground for extremism.

Modi's doctrine is a multifaceted strategy with significant diplomatic, military, and strategic implications. His speech has been widely recognised as a statement of India's future policy, echoing the American operation that eliminated Osama bin Laden on Pakistani soil and Israel's retaliatory strikes against Hamas following the murder of innocent civilians. rime Minister Modi's stance has thus placed India in the league of proactive, decisive nations that prioritise their security and sovereignty without succumbing to diplomatic dithering or strategic ambiguity.

Modi's doctrine on terrorism has redefined India's strategic response to Pakistan's persistent cross-border terror, establishing a historic precedent where acts of terror are equated to acts of war. This transformative policy shift has not only fortified India's defence posture but has also

retaliate decisively against terrorism, even if it means crossing the Line of Control (LoC).

The Modi Doctrine will be remembered for ending the decades-old ambiguity over India's response to Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. By categorically treating terror attacks as acts of war, the doctrine authorises the Indian armed forces to launch punitive strikes, including cross-LoC operations, against terror camps and their patrons. This paradigm shift has brought an end to the era of 'restraint' in the face of terror provocations, ushering in a new era of active deter-

The 2016 surgical strikes following the Uri attack and the 2019 Balakot airstrikes after the Pulwama incident are vivid examples of this proactive policy. These actions shattered the myth that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal would prevent India from striking back. India's response

> their approach to state-sponsored terrorism. It has positioned India as a nation unwilling to bow before terror blackmail, marking a strategic eleva-

has forced global powers to re-evaluate

Under this doctrine, the longheld diplomatic approach of maintaining simultaneous dialogue, trade, and counter-terrorism efforts has been discarded. Modi has clearly asserted that terror, talks, and trade cannot coexist-a principle that has recalibrated India's diplomatic engagements with Pakistan and

Diplomatic isolation, suspension of bilateral dialogues, and cutting off trade relations have been part of India's calibrated response.

TOMAR

India's firm stance has also been reflected in its ability to rally international support against Pakistan's terror infrastructure, a feat that was previously difficult due to diplomatic hesitations. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF)'s greylisting of Pakistan was significantly influenced by India's persistent diplomatic efforts and now it will be renewed by providing concrete evidences of terror camps and patronage by Pakistan executive and military.

Another cornerstone of the Modi Doctrine is the obliteration of the nuclear threat myth propagated by Pakistan.

Islamabad's habitual nuclear blackmail has been rendered ineffective, as India has demonstrated its resolve to retaliate decisively without being deterred by the nuclear bogey. Surgical strikes and Balakot airstrikes are living testimony to this changed approach.

By openly rejecting the fear of nuclear escalation, India has signalled its confidence in its strategic capabilities and its willingness to call out Pakistan's nuclear bluff. This approach has

sent an unequivocal global message-India will fundamentally altered the deterrence dynamics in South Asia, reassuring Indian citizens while

CHANNELS OF DISSEMINATION,

BILATERAL INTERFACE AND

PERSONAL DIPLOMACY

INTERFERENCE TO COUNTER

NEGATIVE NARRATIVES.

PERCEPTIONS AND SENTIMENTS

India's willingness to cross the LoC to eliminate terror camps has not only safeguarded its security but has also sent a powerful global mes-

unsettling adversaries.

It has demonstrated that nations have the sovereign right to strike at the roots of terror if left with no other option, a principle resonating well with other countries like America, Israel etc. facing similar threats.

This doctrine is not merely India's security strategy-it has set a global precedent, encouraging other nations to adopt a proactive stance against cross-border terrorism. Countries like France, Israel, and the United States have echoed India's position in their counter-terror operations.

The doctrine is underpinned by the superiority of India's Indigenous and Russian S-400 integrated missile defence systems and American weapons over the Chinese weapon

and radar systems deployed by Pakistan. This technological edge has significantly enhanced India's strategic confidence in dealing with cross-border threats. India's procurement of Rafale fighter jets, induction of advanced missile systems, and modernisation of its armed forces have reinforced this doctrine, ensuring that any retaliatory strike is backed by technological superiority. These advancements serve as both a deterrent and a force multipli-

Domestically, the Modi Doctrine's success is expected to boost the BJP's prospects in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and the upcoming Bihar polls. The firm stance against terror is likely to consolidate nationalist sentiments like the 2019 surgical strikes after the Pulwama attack, a critical factor in electoral dynamics.

The Modi government's decisive actions have been used effectively in electoral campaigns, projecting Modi as a strong leader capable of safeguarding India's sovereignty. Opposition parties may struggle again to counter this narrative, often appearing defensive on national security issues.

Global Implications and Strategic Legacy The Modi Doctrine has transformed India from a reactive state to a proactive power willing to defend its sovereignty by all means nec-

It has cemented India's image as a nation that not only possesses the military capability but also the political will to protect its interests. This doctrine has been studied by global think tanks, with many nations acknowledging its relevance in their own security strategies

(The writer is strategic affairs columnist and senior political analyst. Views expressed are personal)

Moscow showcases diversity and fosters people-to-people connect

oscow is a stunning blend of history, culture, and modern energy. From the iconic Red Square and the colorful domes of St. Basil's Cathedral to the grandeur of the Kremlin, the city immerses you in centuries of rich heritage. Its vibrant arts scene, world-class ballet, and buzzing nightlife offer unforgettable experiences, while the ornate metro stations alone feel like underground palaces. Moscow is where imperial legacy meets contemporary charm. In recent years, Moscow has been making significant strides in establishing itself as a premier destination for business and cultural tourism. At the forefront of this transformation is Anastasia Popova, the Head of the Business Department at the Moscow City Tourism Committee. She was in Delhi to attend the OTOI's 6th convention.

Gyaneshwar Dayal sat down with Anastasia Popova to discuss Moscow's growing appeal as a destination for Indian business travellers. Excerpts:

What initiatives has Moscow undertaken to attract Indian MICE travellers?

Anastasia Popova: Over the last few years, we've made great efforts in India. We've organised roadshows across major cities, participated in key travel trade fairs like SATTE and BLTM, and engaged directly with Indian MICE professionals. One of our standout initiatives is the MICE Ambassadors Program-a sort of educational outreach that guides Indian event organisers on how to bring their business to Moscow. It's been warmly received, and we're seeing a growing number of Indian companies eager to explore Moscow for business events.

What's the conversion rate from business to leisure travel among Indian visitors?

AP: significant number of Indian business travellers return to Moscow later with family or friends. About 40 per cent of Indian tourists who come for business eventually come back for leisure. It's a natural transition-when someone visits for a meeting and discovers the city's charm, they want to share it with loved ones

Has the simplified visa process helped increase interest from Indian travelers?

AP: Absolutely. A new visa program launched last August has made it much easier to travel. It now takes only four days to obtain, with minimal paperwork. This has helped boost travel interest significantly, especially as Moscow works toward building a more India-friendly experience.

What is being done to make Indian tourists feel more comfortable in Moscow?

AP: We're very focused on cultural and practical comfort. Many hotels now offer Indian cuisine, vegetarian options, and are staffed with English-speaking personnel. We also support training programs to ensure that people working in hospitality understand the needs of Indian travellers. We've even begun integrating Indian chefs in restaurants and provid-



ing dedicated services for special events like weddings, which are a growing area of interest.

Are Indian weddings in Moscow becoming more

AP: We're still building toward that, but we've already hosted several weddings from India. Indian weddings are complex, so we're enhancing our infrastructure to meet those specific needs-like accommodating Indian chefs, vegetarian meals, ceremonial requirements, and family logistics. We aim to position Moscow as a premium wedding destination

within the next couple of years. What has been the trend in Indian tourist arrivals?

AP: In 2024, we welcomed around 85,800 Indian travelers. It's a modest figure, but growing steadily. We're optimistic that upcoming events-like tourism conventions hosted in Moscow-will allow Indian travel agents and organisers to experience the city firsthand. That's crucial because once they see it themselves, they can more confidently sell it to their clients.

Are you planning more cultural collaborations? AP: Yes. Just like we celebrate Chinese New Year in Moscow, we're planning more Indian cultural festivals here. These events foster people-to-people connections, celebrate diversity, and deepen bilateral understanding. Collaborating with Indian communities and embassies is part of our broader engagement strategy.

What is the best time to visit Moscow?

AP: Indians often prefer April to October for the pleasant weather, but winter has its own magic. In December, Moscow transforms into a fairy-tale landscape, with snow, lights, and festive cheer. Some visitors who came in winter told us it was like living in

Any message for Indian travellers?

AP: We want Indians to see Moscow not just as a place for meetings, but as a vibrant, welcoming, and memorable destination. Whether it's through luxury train journeys or winter festivities, Moscow has something for everyone. We're here to make that experience smooth, enriching, and unforgettable.



WORLD 08

Pope Leo XIV vows to work for unity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Vatican City

ope Leo XIV, history's first American pope, vowed on Sunday to work for unity so that the Catholic Church becomes a sign of peace in the world, offering a message of communion during an inaugural Mass in St. Peter's Square before tens of thousands of people, presidents, patriarchs and

Leo officially opened his pontificate by taking his first popemobile tour through the piazza, a rite of passage that has become synonymous with the papacy's global reach and mediatic draw.

The 69-year-old Augustinian missionary smiled and waved from the back of the truck, but didn't appear to stop to kiss babies and the crowd.

During the Mass, Leo appeared to choke up when the two potent symbols of the papacy were placed on him - the pallium woolen stole over his shoulders and the fisherman's ring on his finger - as if the weight of responsibility of leading the 1.4-billion strong church had just sunk in. He turned his hand to look at the ring and seal and then clasped his hands in

front of him in prayer. crews in neon uniforms funneled pilgrims

Hundreds of

Security was tight as civil protection into quadrants in the piazza and up and

down the boulevard that leads to it for the ceremony blending ancient ritual, evocative symbols and a dose of modern-day celebrity. US Vice President JD Vance, one of the last foreign officials to see Pope Francis before he died, led the US delegation honouring the Chicago-born Leo after paying his respects at the Argentine pope's tomb upon arriving in Rome late Saturday.

The theme of Leo's papacy

In his homily, Leo said he wanted to be a servant to the faithful through the two dimensions of the papacy, love and unity, so that the church could be a force for peace in the world.

"I would like that our first great desire be for a united church, a sign of unity and communion, which becomes a leaven for a reconciled world," he said. "In this our time, we still see too much discord, too many wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, the fear of difference, and an economic paradigm that exploits the Earth's resources and marginalises the poorest." His call for unity was significant, given the polarization in the Catholic Church in the United States and beyond.

Francis' radical 12-year pontificate, which emphasised care for the poor and marginalised and disdain for the capitalist economic system, often alienated conservatives and traditionalists. Leo's May 8 election, after a remarkably quick 24-hour conclave, has appeared at the outset to have pleased conservative Catholics who seem to appreciate his more disciplined, traditional style and Augustinian background, emphasizing core truths of Catholic doctrine. "Let us build a church founded on God's

love, a sign of unity, a missionary church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word, allows itself to be made restless by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity," he said, referencing some of the themes of Francis' pontificate

Strict diplomatic protocol dictated the seating arrangements at his inaugural Mass, with both the United States and Peru getting front-row seats thanks to Leo's dual citizenship. Vance, a Catholic convert who tangled with Francis over the Trump administration's mass migrant deportation plans, is being joined by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who arrived in Rome ahead of time to try to advance Russia-Ukraine peace talks.

Peruvian President Dina Boluarte is one of around a dozen heads of state attend-

Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Russia is being represented by the culture minister, Olga Liubimova. Diplomatic protocol also dictated the dress code: While most wore black, the handful of Catholic queens and princesses - Charlene of Monaco and Letizia of Spain among others - wore white in a special privilege allowed them.

Three dozen of the world's other Christian churches sent their own delegations, the Jewish community had a 13member delegation, half of them rabbis. Other representatives headed Buddhist, Muslim, Zoroastrian, Hindu, Sikh and Jain delegations. Security was tight, as it was for Francis' funeral on April 26, which drew an estimated 250,000 people. Rome authorities are planning for another 250,000 on Sunday. The piazza and main boulevard leading to it, and two nearby piazzas were set up with giant television screens, and dozens of portable toilets have been erected in a nearby park.

"Rome always felt like home for a Catholic, but now coming here and seeing one of our own on the throne of Peter . It almost makes Jesus himself more accessible," he said. Kalen Hill, a pilgrim from the US, got to St. Peter's soon after the gates opened at dawn Sunday morning and said he never expected an American would lead the 1.4-billion strong church.

Curtain raiser kicks off **International Day of Yoga**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Houston

curtain raiser hosted by the Consulate General of India in Houston has launched preparations for the 11th International Day of Yoga, with more than 25 events planned in cities across the United States. Community partners and yoga organizations will host events in Houston (City Hall and India House), Sugar Land, Pearland, Baytown, Fulshear, Austin, Dallas, San Antonio, Bentonville, Denver and Oklahoma City in the run-up to June 21. "This annual celebration of yoga has become a unifying force across communities," Consul General D.C. Manjunath told PTI. "We are grateful for the continued support of all our partners and attendees over the years, and we look forward to making Yoga Day 2025 a grand success," he said.

The global theme this year "Yoga for One Earth, One Health" highlights the role of yoga in promoting holistic wellbeing and environmental consciousness. As part of youth outreach, the Consulate joined a special yoga session at the University of Houston organized in collaboration with the Graduate Indian Students Organization (GISO) and Hindu Yuva. Students and faculty practiced breathing techniques and mindfulness, underscoring the growing interest in wellness on campus.

"Yoga helps us stay grounded and balanced even in demanding academic environments," said Ananya Rao, a graduate student participant. "It's meaningful to be part of a global movement with deep roots in Indian culture," she added. The International Day of Yoga, observed annually on June 21, was established by the United Nations in 2014 following an initiative by India. It is now marked in over 190 countries.

Rwandans return in UN repatriation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Goma (Congo)

undreds of Rwandan refugees who were living in eastern Congo since the 1994 genocide in Rwanda were repatriated on Saturday, the UN refugee agency said, after Rwandan-backed rebels seized key parts of the region.

Most of the refugees were women and children, and 360 of them crossed the border in buses provided by Rwandan authorities and were escorted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and aid group Save the Children, local authorities said. The goal is to repatriate 2,000 people, UNHCR said. "We are happy to welcome our compatriots. They are a valuable workforce for the country's development," said Prosper Mulindwa, the Rwandan mayor of Rubavu, during a brief ceremony at the border.

The returnees were transported to a transit centre where they will receive emergency assistance and support for reintegration. They were among the hundreds of thousands of Hutus who fled Rwanda after the state-sponsored 1994 genocide that left up to a million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus dead. Most had returned when Tutsiled Rwandan troops first invaded Congo in 1996.

But Rwandan authorities said thousands of Hutu militiamen and ex-soldiers had stayed and joined Congos army to destabilise Rwanda.

For decades, mineral-rich eastern Congo has been ripped apart by violence from government forces and different armed groups, including the Rwanda-backed M23, whose recent resurgence has escalated the conflict and worsened an already acute humanitarian crisis.

The rebels are supported by about 4,000 troops from neighbouring Rwanda, according to UN experts. Among the Rwandan returnees, personal testimonies highlighted journeys marked by exile and a deep connection to a homeland some have never known

Russia launches one of the biggest drone attacks on Ukraine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Kyiv

ussia overnight into Sunday Russia launched one of its most meand drone attacks on Ukraine since the large full-scale invasion in 2022. beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022.

Russia fired a total of 273 exploding drones and decoys overnight, Ukraine's air force said. Of those, 88 were intercepted and a further 128 lost, likely having been electronically jammed. The attacks targeted the country's Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk and

Donetsk regions. According to data from Ukraine's air force, this would be the largest drone attack Russia has launched against Ukraine since the start of the war, but Ukrainian officials have confirmed this.

The number of drones fired exceeds Russia's previous largest known single drone attack of the war, when Russia pounded Ukraine with 267 drones on the eve of the war's third anniversary.

Kyiv regional Gov. Mykola Kalashnyk

said a 28-year-old woman was killed in a drone attack on the region and three other people, including a 4-year-old child, were

Meanwhile, Russia's Defence Ministry said its air defences shot down seven Ukrainian drones overnight, and a further 14 on Sunday morning.

The attacks came after the first direct talks between Moscow and Kyiv in years on Friday failed to yield a ceasefire.

Russian President Vladimir Putin

spurned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's offer to meet face-to-face in Turkiye after he himself proposed direct negotiations - although not at the presidential level - as an alternative to a 30-day ceasefire urged by Ukraine and its Western allies, including the US.

US President Donald Trump said he plans to speak by phone Monday with Putin, followed by Zelenskyy and leaders of various NATO countries, about ending the war in Ukraine.

Romanians vote in tense presidential runoff on weekend

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Bucharest

omanians were voting on Sunday in a tense presidential runoff between Ra tense presidential and a pro-Western centrist in a high-stakes election rerun that could determine the geopolitical direction of the European Union and NATO member country.

The race pits front-runner George Simion, the 38-year-old leader of the hard-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, against incumbent Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan.

It comes months after the cancelation of the previous election plunged Romania into its worst political crisis in decades.

Polls opened at 7 am local time and were to close at 9 pm. By noon, more than 4.6 million people - or about 25 per cent of eligible voters - had cast ballots, according to official electoral data. Romanians abroad have been able to vote since Friday at specially set-up polling stations, and more than 750,000 have already voted.

Romania's political landscape was upended last year when a top court voided the previous election after far-right outsider Calin Georgescu topped first-round polls, following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow denied. Simion appeared alongside Georgescu at a Bucharest polling station on Sunday and told reporters that he voted against the "humiliations to which our sisters and brothers have been subjected."

"We voted against abuses and against poverty. We voted against those who look down on all of us," he said. "I voted for our future to be decided only by Romanians,

for Romanians and Romania. So help us

What's going on in Romania?

Years of endemic corruption and growing anger toward Romania's political establishment have fuelled a surge in support for anti-establishment and hard-right figures, reflecting a broader pattern across Europe. Both Simion and Dan have made their political careers railing against Romania's old political class.

Most recent local surveys indicate the

runoff will be tight, after earlier ones showed Simion holding a lead over Dan, a 55-year-old mathematician who rose to prominence as a civic activist fighting against illegal real estate projects. After voting in his hometown of Fagaras,

Dan told reporters that he voted for Romanians "who are quiet, honest, and hardworking, and who have not felt represented for a long time."
"I voted for a change that brings pros-

perity, not one that brings instability and discourages investment in Romania," he said. "I voted for a European direction, and for strong cooperation with our European partners, not for Romania's isolation. I voted for a society where we can have dialogue, not one where we are destined to be

Turnout is typically higher in the final round of Romanian presidential elections, and is expected to play a decisive role in the outcome on Sunday. In the first round on May 4, final turnout stood at 9.5 million, or 53 per cent of eligible voters, according to official electoral data.

Dan founded the reformist Save



Presidential candidate George Simion casts his vote next to his wife Ilinca in the second round of the country's presidential election redo in Mogosogia, Romania

Romania Union party in 2016 but later left, and is running independently on a pro-European Union ticket reaffirming Western ties, support for Ukraine and fiscal reform.

What's ahead?

The president is elected for a five-year term and has significant decision-making powers in matters of national security and foreign policy. The winner of Sunday's race will be charged with nominating a new prime minister after Marcel Ciolacu stepped down following the failure of his coalition's candidate to advance to the

After coming fourth in last year's cancelled race, Simion backed Georgescu who was banned in March from running in the election redo.

Simion then surged to front-runner in the May 4 first round after becoming the standard-bearer for the hard right.

A former activist who campaigned for reunification with neighbouring Moldova, Simion says he would focus on reforms: slashing red tape, reducing bureaucracy and

taxes. Still, he insists that restoring democracy is his priority, returning "the will of the people." His AUR party says it stands for "family, nation, faith, and freedom" and rose to prominence in a 2020 parliamentary election. It has since grown to become the second-largest party in the Romanian

A stark choice: Russia or the

His critics say Simion is a pro-Russian extremist who threatens Romania's longstanding alliances in the EU and NATO.

In an Associated Press interview, he rejected the accusations, saying Russia is his country's biggest threat and that he wants Romania to be treated as "equal partners" in Brussels.

"I don't think he is a pro-Russian candidate, I also don't think that he's an anti-Russian candidate," said Claudiu Tufis, an issociate professor of political science at the University of Bucharest.

"I think what is driving him is ... his focus on what I call identity politics." In the first-round vote, Simion won a massive 61 per cent of Romania's large diaspora vote, with his calls to patriotism resonating with Romanians who moved abroad in search of better opportunities.

Hours after voting abroad opened on Friday, Simion accused the Moldovan government of election fraud, claims that were quickly rejected by Moldovan and Romanian authorities.

"These statements are intended to sow distrust and hostility, with the aim of influencing the election process," Romania's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Morocco unveils policies for

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

t least 27 people have been killed by storms systems that swept across -part of the U.S. Midwest and South, with Kentucky Gov Andy Beshear announcing Saturday that 18 of the deaths came in his state and 10 others were hospitalized in critical condition.

A devastating tornado in Kentucky damaged homes, tossed vehicles and left many people homeless. Seventeen of the deaths were in Laurel County, located in the state's southeast, and one was in Pulaski County: Fire Department Maj. Roger Leslie Leatherman, a 39-year veteran who was fatally injured while responding to the deadly weather.

Parts of two dozen state roads were closed, and some could take days to reopen, Beshear said. He also said the death toll could still rise. "We need the whole world right now to be really good neighbors to this region," the governor said. State Emergency Management Director Eric Gibson said hundreds of homes were damaged, Kayla Patterson, her husband and their five children huddled in a tub in their basement in London, the county seat, as the tornado raged around them.

"You could literally hear just things ripping in the distance, glass shattering everywhere, just roaring like a freight train," she recalled Saturday. "It was terrible." The family eventually emerged to the sounds of sirens and panicked neighbors. While the family's own home was spared, others right behind it were demolished,



Severe weather leaves atleast 27 dead, including 18 in Kentucky

Adams as they stand next to Sexton's destroyed home after a severe storm passed through the area

Patterson said as the sound of power tools buzzed in the background. The neighborhood was dotted with piles of lumber, metal sheeting, insulation and stray belongings - a suitcase, a sofa, some sixpacks of paper towels.

Rescuers were searching for survivors all night and into the morning, the sheriff's office said. An emergency shelter was set up at a local high school and donations of

The National Weather Service hadn't yet confirmed that a tornado struck, but meteorologist Philomon Geertson said it was likely. It ripped across the largely rural area and extended to the London Corbin

food and other necessities were arriving.

Airport shortly before midnight. Resident Chris Cromer said he got the first of two tornado alerts on his phone around 11:30 p.M. Or so, about a half-hour

before the tornado struck. He and his wife grabbed their dog, jumped in their car and scrambled to the crawlspace at a relative's nearby home because the couple's own crawlspace is small.

"We could hear and feel the vibration of the tornado coming through," said Cromer, 46. A piece of his roof was ripped off, and windows were broken, but homes around his were destroyed. "It's one of those things that you see on the news in other areas, and you feel bad for people - then, when it happens, it's just surreal," he said. "It makes you be thankful to be alive, really."

The storm was the latest severe weather to cause deaths and widespread damage in Kentucky. Two months ago, at least 24 people died in a round of storms that swelled creeks and submerged roads. Hundreds of people were rescued, and most of the deaths were caused by vehicles getting stuck in high water.

A storm in late 2021 spawned tornadoes that killed 81 people and leveled portions of towns in western Kentucky. The following summer, historic floodwaters inundatparts of eastern Kentucky, leaving dozens more dead. Missouri pounded by storms, with deaths confirmed in St. Louis About 1,200 tornadoes strike the U.S. Annually, and they have been reported in all 50 states over the years. Researchers found in 2018 that deadly tornadoes were happening less frequently in the traditional "Tornado Alley" of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas and more frequently in parts of the more densely populated and tree-filled

management of stray dogs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ El Aarjate (Morocco)

mutt with a blue tag clipped to her ear whimpers as she's lifted from a cage and carried to a surgery table for a spay and a rabies vaccine, two critical steps before she's released back onto the streets of Morocco's capital.

The "Beldi," as Moroccan street dogs are called, is among the hundreds taken from Rabat to a dog pound in a nearby forest. As part of an expanded "Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Return" programme, dogs like her are examined, treated and ultimately released with tags

that make clear they pose no danger. "We have a problem: That's stray dogs. So we have to solve it, but in a way that respects animals," said Mohamed Roudani, the director of the Public Health and Green Spaces Department in Morocco's Interior Ministry

Trying to balance safety and animal well-being

Morocco adopted "Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Return," or TVNR, in 2019. One facility has opened in Rabat and more are set to be launched in at least 14 other cities, aligning Morocco with recommendations from the World Organisation for Animal Health. The government has spent roughly \$23 million over the past five years on animal control centres and programmes.

Roudani said Morocco's updated approach balanced public safety, health and animal well-being. Local officials, he added, were eager to expand TVNR centres throughout the country.

Though population estimates are challenging, based on samples of marked and tagged stray dogs, Moroccan officials believe they number between 1.2 to 1.5 million. Some neighbourhoods welcome and care for them collectively.

However, others decry their presence as a scourge and note that more than 100,000 Moroccans have needed rabies

vaccinations after attacks. A draft law is in the works that would require owners to vaccinate pets and

impose penalties for animal abuse. Inside the centre

On a visit organised for journalists to a TNVR centre in El Aarjate, enclosures for dogs appear spacious and orderly, with clean floors and the scent of disinfectant.

Food and water bowls are refreshed regularly by staff who move between spaces, offering gentle words and careful handling. Some staff members say they grow so attached to the dogs that they miss them when they're released to make space to treat incoming strays.

Veterinarians and doctors working for the Association for the Protection of Animals and Nature care for between 400 and 500 stray dogs from Rabat and surrounding cities.

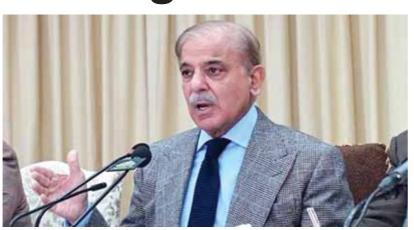




Pakistan to send diplomatic team abroad to counter India's global outreach

ours after India decided to send its delegations to key partner countries to put across its resolve to tackle terrorism against the backdrop of Operation Sindoor, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that he will send a diplomatic team to important world capitals to present the country's stance.

The decision was made by Prime Minister Shehbaz on Saturday after a telephone conversation with former foreign minister and chief of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, according to the Prime Minister's Office. Pakistan's decision to send its delegation came hours after India announced that it would send seven all-party delegations to key partner countries, including members of the UN Security Council, later this month to convey India's message of zero tolerance against terrorism following the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor. Prime Minister Shehbaz



egation to important world capitals to expose Indian propaganda," state-run Radio Pakistan reported. He has entrusted the leadership of the delegation to Bilawal.

"I was contacted earlier today by Prime Minister [Shehbaz Sharif], who requested that I lead a delegation to present

"decided to send a high-level diplomatic del- Pakistan's case for peace on the international stage. I am honoured to accept this responsibility and remain committed to serving Pakistan in these challenging times," Bilawal wrote on X on Saturday.

Apart from Bilawal, the delegation includes Energy Minister Musadik Malik, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader

Khurram Dastgir Khan, Senator Sherry Rehman, former foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar, Muttahida Qaumi Movement lawmaker Faisal Subzwari, former foreign secretaries Tehmina Janjua and Jalil Abbas Jilani. The delegation will also "underscore Pakistan's sincere efforts for peace and stability in the region," according to the PM Office. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said the delegation would soon visit the United States, the UK, Brussels, France, and Russia to highlight Pakistan's stance on the recent conflict.

India carried out precision strikes under 'Operation Sindoor' on terror infrastructure early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people. Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Israeli strikes across Gaza kill at least 103 people

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip)

sraeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 103 people overnight and into Sunday, hospitals and medics said, and prompted the main hospital in northern Gaza to close as Israel intensifies its war in the territory that, after more than 19 months, shows no signs of abating. More than 48 people were killed in airstrikes in and around the southern city of Khan Younis, some of which hit houses and tents sheltering displaced people, according to Nasser Hospital. Among the dead were 18 children and 13 women, hospital spokesperson Weam Fares said.

In northern Gaza, a strike on a home in the built-up Jabaliya refugee camp killed nine people from a single family, according to the Gaza health ministry's emergency services. Another strike on a family's residence, also in Jabaliya, killed 10, including seven children and a woman, according to the civil defense, which operates under the Hamas-run government.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the overnight strikes. Israel blames civilian casualties from its operations on Hamas because the militant group operates from civilian areas. The bloodshed comes as Israel ramps up its war in Gaza with a new offensive named "Gideon's Chariots", in which Israel says it plans to seize territory, displace hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to Gaza's south and take greater control over the distribution of aid.

Israel's new offensive

Israel says the new plan is meant to ramp up pressure on the militant Hamas group to agree to a temporary ceasefire on Israel's terms — one that would free Israeli hostages held in Gaza but wouldn't necessarily end the war. Hamas says it wants a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and a pathway to ending the war as part of any new ceasefire deal.

Israel had said it would wait until the end of US President Donald Trump's visit to the region before launching its new offensive, saying it was giving a chance for efforts to bring about a new ceasefire deal. And while teams are still negotiating a potential truce in the Qatari capital Doha, there appears to have been no breakthrough. Trump did not visit Israel on his trip, which wrapped up on Friday.

Israel shattered a previous 8-week ceasefire in mid-March, launching fierce airstrike that killed hundreds. Days before the end of that ceasefire, Israel also halted all imports into Gaza, including food, medicine and fuel, deepening a humanitarian crisis and sparking warn-

ings of an increasing risk of famine in the territory — a blockade that continues. Israel says that move is also meant to pressure Hamas.

The war in Gaza began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and abducting 251 others. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 53,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants.

Strikes pound Gaza

In northern Gaza, parts of which have been flattened by Israel's onslaught, at least 43 people were killed in multiple strikes, according to first responders from the health ministry and the civil defense. Gaza City's Shifa Hospital said among the dead, 15 were children and 12 were women. In Jabaliya, a built-up refugee camp in northern Gaza, 10 people, including seven children and a woman were killed, according to the civil defence, which operates under the Hamas-run government. Among the dead were two parents and their three children and a father and his four children, it said.

Health officials said that fighting around the Indonesian Hospital in northern Gaza and an Israeli military "siege" prompted it to shut down. The hospital was the main medical facility in the territory's warwrecked north, after northern Gaza's previous main hospital, Kamal Adwan, was forced to stop serving Palestinians last year because of Israeli strikes, as was a second facility, Beit Hanoun Hospital.

The Israeli military also had no immediate comment on operations at the hospital. In central Gaza, at least 12 people were killed in three separate strikes, hospitals said. One strike in the Zweida town killed seven people, including two children and four women, according to according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in the town of Deir al-Balah. The second hit an apartment in Deir al-Balah, killing two parents and their child, the hospital said. In Nuseirat camp, a strike hit a house and killed two people, said the camp's Awda hospital. Nasser Hospital said it struggled to count the dead because of the condition the bodies were brought in.

Houthi rebels launch missile at Israel

As the war in Gaza grinds on, the conflict between Israel and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen has escalated. The Israeli military said it intercepted a Houthi missile launched at the country early Sunday, which set off air raid sirens in multiple parts of the country.

Arab leaders promise to press for ceasefire, reconstruction of Gaza

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Baghdad

rab leaders at an annual summit in Baghdad called Saturday for an immediate end to Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip and to allow aid into the Palestinian territories without conditions. They promised to contribute to the reconstruction of the territory once the war stops. In March, an emergency Arab League summit in Cairo endorsed a plan for Gaza's reconstruction without displacing its roughly 2 million residents. Saturday's summit was attended by

Arab leaders, including Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi. The Egyptian leader said that even if Israel succeeds in normalising relations with all Arab states, "a lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East will remain elusive unless a Palestinian state is established in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions." Egypt was the first Arab country to normalise ties with Israel.

Among the guests were Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who called for the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza and the flow of aid into the besieged territory.

He said that the UN rejects any "forced displacement" of Palestinians.

Saturday's summit comes two months after Israel ended a ceasefire reached with the Hamas militant group in January. In recent days, Israel has launched widespread attacks in Gaza and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed a further escalation to pursue his aim of destroying Hamas. "This genocide has reached levels of ugliness not seen in all conflicts throughout history," Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a speech that called for allowing aid to flow Al-Sudani added that into Gaza. Iraq will work on setting up an Arab fund for the reconstruction of the region in which Baghdad will pay USD 20 million

Final statement calls for end to Israeli attacks in Gaza

for Gaza and a similar amount for

"We demand an immediate end to the Israeli aggression on Gaza and an end to hostilities that are increasing the suffering of innocent civilians," said the final statement issued after the summit that was read by Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein. "Humanitarian aid should be allowed

into all areas in Palestine without conditions." The leaders said they reject any attempt to displace Palestinians in Gaza saying that any such move would be "a crime against humanity and (an act of) ethnic cleansing." The statement said Arab leaders support Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' call for the holding of an international peace conference that leads to a two-state solution.

El-Sissi said that Egypt, in coordination with Qatar and the US, is "exerting intense efforts to reach a ceasefire" in Gaza, adding that the efforts led to the release of Israel-American hostage Edan Alexander. He said that Egypt plans to hold an international conference for the reconstruction of Gaza "once the aggression stops."

Abbas calls for Hamas to give up power in Gaza

Abbas, the Palestinian president, called on Hamas to abandon power in Gaza and along with other militant groups to hand over weapons to the Palestinian Authority.

Hamas seized control of Gaza from Abbas' Western-backed Palestinian Authority in 2007, and reconciliation attempts between the rivals have repeatedly failed.

British climber scales Everest for 19th time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA | Kathmandu

British mountain guide has scaled Mount Everest Sunday for A scaled Mount Everes 2, the 19th time breaking his own record for the most ascents of the world's highest mountain by a non-Sherpa guide.

Kenton Cool, 51, from southwest England, scaled the 8,849-metre peak on Sunday along with several other climbers and he was doing well and on way down from the summit, said Iswari Paudel of Himalayan Guides Nepal, which equipped his expedition.

Cool first climbed Mount Everest in 2004 and has been doing it almost every year since then. He was unable to climb Everest in 2014 because the season was canceled after 16 Sherpa guides were killed in an avalanche, and again in 2015 when an earthquake triggered an avalanche that killed 19 people. The 2020 climbing season was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Hundreds of climbers and their guides are at the mountain during the popular spring climbing season, hoping to scale the world's highest peak.

Bird flu: Mexico, Chile halt poultry imports from Brazil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Sao Paulo

exico, Chile and Uruguay have halted poultry imports from Brazil after ▲ ▼ ■ the country confirmed its first bird flu outbreak on a commercial farm, authorities said Saturday. On Friday, Brazil's Agriculture and Livestock ministry said China and the European Union had halted poultry imports from Brazil. Mexico's National Service for Agro-Alimentary Health, Safety and Quality said in a statement Saturday that it suspended temporarily the import of chicken meat, fertile eggs, live birds and other poultry products from Brazil as a precautionary measure.

Chile and Uruguay have also halted poultry imports, Luis Rua, secretary of international trade at Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, told local news service Broadcast Agro.

Brazil is one of the world's leading producers and exporters of poultry, accounting for 14 per cent of global chicken meat production, according to the US Department of Agriculture. An egg shortage in the United States following a bird flu outbreak there boosted Brazilian egg exports to the U.S., rising by

more than 1,000 per cent between January and

April 2025, compared to the same period the previous year, according to trade data from the Brazilian government.

Brazilian authorities said Friday the virus was found at a facility in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, adding that a contingency plan has been implemented "not only to eliminate

the disease but also to maintain the sector's productive capacity, ensuring supply and, consequently, food security for the population."

The agriculture ministry also said it notified the World Organization for Animal Health, the Ministries of Health and the Environment and

agreed on with each importing country, based on international health certificate requirements, the Agriculture and Livestock ministry added. Depending on the type of disease, some deals apply to the whole country while others involve limits on where products can come from - for example, a specific state, city or just the area of the outbreak.

Restriction on poultry exports follows rules

Brazilian chicken exports have previously faced resistance over sanitary concerns. In 2018, the European Union temporarily banned imports of chicken from 20 Brazilian plants due to concerns about salmonella.

PUBLIC NOTICE

nembership no. 243 of Late Smt. Saraswat Tyagi to her daughter Smt. Asha Devi Tyag w/o Sh. Dinesh Kumar R/o A-44, Meera Bagh, Paschim Vihar, Delhi - 110087 as pe order of the Financial Commissioner on the Case No. 269 of 2004-CA dated 09.05.2023. Any objection on clearance o President / Secretary of The Upkari CGHS Ltd, Plot No. 09, Sector-12, Dwarka, Nev Delhi - 110078 within 07 days from the

> I, Nareshpal Father of No.14833405H Hav Vikas Malik, R/o-Vill & PO-Kiwana, Teh & Dist- Shamli, U.P.-247775, have changed my name from Nareshpal Singh Malik to Nareshpal, vide affidavit dated 17/05/2025

Notary Public Delhi

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ranju Rani, W/o- JC-

473831P Nb/Sub Lalit Kumar,

R/o- Vill- Mukimpur Mandia,

Ghaziabad, U.P.- 245304, in

my husband's service records,

my name is Ranju Devi which

is incorrect, my correct name

is Ranju Rani.

Pilkhuwa,

PD(2050)C

No.15567362Y Bhurudin, R/o- Vill-Behlolpur, PO- Bakkarwala, Dist- Yamuna Nagar, Haryana- 135021, have changed my son's name from Mohd Hussain to Hussain & in my service record his DOB is wrongly written as 09/03/2010 whereas his correct DOB is 09/03/2008, vide affidavit dated 17/05/2025 before

I, Khusbu Singh, W/o No.16019504L Hav Shakti Singh Rana, R/O- Vill-Notary Public Delhi. Sandoli, PO- Khazuriya, Teh-Bisauli, Dist- Badaun, U.P-I, Govindamma spouse of JC-243720, have changed my 774570X Sub Maj Kakarla name from Khusbu Singh to Pandu, Vill-Rajupata, PO-KS Khushbu Singh, vide affidavit Palli, Teh & PS- Giddalur, dated 17/05/2025 before

PD(2049)C Public Delhi. before Notary Public Delhi.

Dist.- Prakasam, (AP), PIN-523357, Now at Unit- 6121(I) Fd Wksp Coy EME (608 EME BN), C/o 56 APO declare that I have changed my name from Govindamma to Kakarla Govindamma, vide affidavit No. IN-DL85679094065812X, Dated 17/05/2025 by Notary

PD(2052)C

PD(2051)C

Central Coalfields Limited A Miniratna Company (A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. www.coalindia.in/respective Subsidiary Company (CCL, www.centralcoalfields.in), CIL e-procurement portal https://coalindiatenders.nic.in and Central Public Procurement Portal https://eprocure.gov.in in addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal https://gem.gov.in"

Office of the Superintending Engineer

1st Circle, Public Works Department, Almora

Phone/Fax: 05962-230295 Email: sepwdalm@rediffmail.com

Letter No.: 2156(i)/ Nivida-01/2025-26

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering) **E-TENDER NOTICE**

The Superintending Engineer, 1st Circle, PWD Almora invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from dated

SI. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rupee in lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering
1	CD Almora Improvement of Bartoli Banthok Motor Road in Jageshwar Constituency District Almora under State Sector (In anticipation of Vidhiwat approval of forest land).	₹ 5000.00 + 18% GST	₹ 4.48 Lakh	120 Days	12 Month (Including Rainy Season and Winter Season)	Class "B" & Higher in Road work in Central Govt./Any state Govt./Any Govt. Undertaking.

Trump budget would cut ocean data, leave boaters, forecasters scrambling for info

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New York

apt Ed Enos makes his living as a harbour pilot in Hawaii, clambering √aboard arriving ships in the predawn hours and guiding them into port. His world revolves around wind speeds, current strength and wave swells. When

Enos is bobbing in dangerous waters in the dark, his cellphone is his lifeline: with a few taps he can access the Integrated Ocean Observing System and pull up the data needed to guide what are essentially floating warehouses safely to the dock. But maybe not for much longer.

President Donald Trump wants to eliminate all federal funding for the observing system's regional operations. Scientists say the cuts could mean the end of efforts to gather real-time data crucial to navigating treacherous harbours, plotting tsunami escape routes and predicting hurricane intensity.

"It's the last thing you should be shutting down," Enos said. "There's no money wasted. Right at a time when we should be getting more money to do more work to benefit the public, they want to turn things off. That's the wrong strategy at the wrong time for the wrong reasons."

Monitoring system tracks all things ocean The IOOS system launched about 20 years

ago. It's made up of 11 regional associations in multiple states and territories, including the Virgin Islands, Alaska, Hawaii, Washington state, Michigan, South Carolina and Southern California.

The regional groups are networks of university researchers, conservation groups, businesses and anyone else gathering or using maritime data. The associations are the Swiss army knife of oceanography, using buoys, submersible drones and radar installations to track water temperature, wind speed, atmospheric pressure, wave speeds, swell heights and current strength.

The networks monitor the Great Lakes, US coastlines, the Gulf of Mexico, which Trump renamed the Gulf of America, the Gulf of Alaska, the Caribbean and the South Pacific and upload member data to public websites in real time.

Maritime community and military rely on system data

Cruise ship, freighter and tanker pilots like Enos, as well as the US Navy and Coast Guard, use the information directly to navigate harbours safely, plot courses around storms and conduct search-and-rescue operations. The associations' observations feed into National Weather Service forecasts. The Pacific Northwest association uses tsunami data to post real-time coastal escape routes on a public-facing app. And the Hawaii association not only posts data that is helpful to harbour pilots but tracks hurricane intensity and tiger sharks that have been tagged for research. The associations also track toxic algal

blooms, which can force beach closures and kill fish. The maps help commercial anglers avoid those empty regions. Water temperature data can help identify heat layers within the ocean and, because it's harder for fish to survive in those layers, knowing hot zones helps anglers target better fishing grounds.

The regional networks are not formal federal agencies but are almost entirely funded through federal grants through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The current federal budget allocates \$43.5 million for the networks. A Republican bill in the House natural resources committee would actually send them more money, \$56 million annually, from 2026 through 2030.

70 applications received for e-manufacturing scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

he Government has received 70 applications for ₹23,000-crore electronics component manufacturing scheme, and majority of applicants are small and medium enterprises, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. These applications have come within half a month of opening the window for the scheme. "Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme has received tremendous response. Within 15 days of opening the application, around 70 applications have come," Vaishnaw said media.

The Minister did not disclose the name of applicants. However, sources have earlier mentioned that Tata Electronics, Dixon Technologies and Foxconn were among the big players that have shown interest in the scheme.

Vaishnaw said that while some of the big players have applied, there has been huge interest in the scheme from small and medium players. "80 per cent of the applications have come from small and medium enterprises," the Minister said.

The government opened applications for the ₹22,805-crore electronics component manufacturing scheme (ECMS) on May 1. The scheme aims to address demand-supply deficit in the electronic component segment. Electronic Industries



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

Association of India (Elcina), the country's oldest industry body of the Indian electronics sector, estimates that the demand-supply deficit for inputs in the electronics segment will increase to \$248 Billion (about ₹21 lakh crore) by 2030 to cater to projected \$500 Billion electronics production and it would be met largely by imports in absence of any mea-

sure from the government. The major portion of the scheme, ₹21,093 crore, is earmarked for subassemblies like camera module, multi-layered printed circuit board (PCB), flexible PIONEER PHOTO

PCB, passive components that are fixed on the PCB by machines.

A total of ₹1,712 crore has been earmarked for making parts used in sub-

Adani-Sparton to develop antisubmarine warfare solutions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

Billionaire Gautam Adani's group has signed a deal with a US undersea warfare company Sparton to develop electronic sensors and navigation systems that could be used for anti-submarine warfare, the conglomerate said on Sunday. Adani Defence & Aerospace has signed a binding collaboration agreement with Sparton (DeLeon Springs LLC) to assemble anti-submarine warfare (ASW) solutions for the Indian Navy, it said in a statement. The partnership aims to localise the assemblage of sonobuoys and other ASW systems in India under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

It will be the first private company in India to offer indigenous Sonobuoys solutions to the Indian Navy. Headquartered in De Leon Springs, Florida, Sparton develops, produces and supplies electronic systems to support undersea warfare for the US Navy and allied military forces. The firm was, in December 2020, acquired by Israeli defence electronics company Elbit Systems Ltd.

Prior to the current deal, the Adani Group had in 2018 set up a joint venture partnership with Israeli weapons giant Elbit Systems to manufacture lethal Hermes 900 drones. In 2020, Adani-Elbit announced 'mini' drone missile weapons production.

Adani Group has also partnered with

Israel Weapon Industries to manufacture assault weapons, sniper rifles and machine guns. In a statement on Sunday, Adani Defence & Aerospace said it "has signed a binding collaboration agreement with Sparton (DeLeon Springs LLC), a group company of Elbit Systems and a leading provider of advanced anti-submarine warfare systems. This partnership marks a significant step toward localising the assembly of complex electronic systems and advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) solutions for the Indian and global markets".

The partnership will combine Sparton's pioneering ASW technology with Adani Defence's established expertise in development, manufacturing, and sustenance for the Indian Navv.

Sonobuoys are mission-critical plat-forms for enhancing Undersea Domain Awareness (UDA), providing an effective means to detect, locate and track submarines and other underwater threats. Playing a key role in anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and other naval operations, they support in maintaining naval security and protecting carrier strike groups.

Sparton manufactures electronic sensor systems, navigation systems and undersea warfare delivery systems.

For decades, India has been importing this critical naval capability from global markets, increasing our dependence on

India largest market for electric threewheelers: IEA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA - New Delh

ndia continues to be the world's largest market for electric three-wheelers for a second year in a row as sales rose nearly 20 per cent to reach about seven lakh vehicles in 2024, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in a report.

In its Global EV Outlook 2025, the Paris-based energy watchdog said India continues to drive most growth in the global electric three-wheeler market.

Despite the global three-wheeler (3W) market shrinking five per cent from the previous year, electric 3W sales grew more than 10 per cent to surpass 1 million vehicles in 2024. Electric 3W sales represented almost one-quarter of all 3W sales, up from onefifth in 2023, it said. The market is highly concentrated, with China and India together accounting for more than 90 per cent of electric and conventional 3W sales.

"Electrification of 3Ws in China has stagnated at less than 15 per cent over the past three years. In 2023, India overtook China to become the world's largest market for electric 3Ws, and it maintained this position in 2024, with sales growing close to 20 per cent year-on-year to reach nearly 7,00,000 vehicles," it said.

This translated into a record 57 per cent electric sales share in 2024, 3 per cent up on the previous year.

This growing trend, it said, looks set to continue thanks to policy support under the new PM E-DRIVE scheme, which allocated Budget in 2024 to support the rollout of more than 3,00,000 electric 3Ws for commercial use — for which the total fleet (electric and ICE) was estimated at more than 10 million vehicles in 2023.

IEA said China, India and Southeast Asia remain the world's largest 2/3W markets, accounting for around 80 per cent of 2024 global sales, with 2/3Ws serving as the primary mode of private passenger transport in these regions.

"India's increasingly dynamic electric 2W market hosted a total of 220 OEMs in 2024, up from 180 in 2023, although the four market leaders accounted for a combined 80 per cent of the 1.3 million electric 2Ws sold in the country in 2024 (6 per cent of the overall 2W market)," the report said.

While the upfront purchase price of electric 2Ws remains higher on average than that of conventional 2Ws, increasing competition is prompting OEMs to offer

☐ Investment Corridors and SEZs: Establishing India-Arab corridors with Special Economic Zones and tech parks to streamline trade, investment and work

Green Energy Collaboration: Combining India's leadership in solar, hydrogen, and clean tech with the Middle East's energy transition goals to create solar farms, hydrogen pipelines, and carbon-

☐ **Digital Trade Agreements:** Advocating for India-GCC digital trade frameworks encompassing e-commerce, data security, localisation, and digital services. Skill Development and Human Capital Exchange: Partnering with Indian institu-

tions to train Arab youth in emerging fields like AI, robotics, fintech, and healthcare,

force mobility.

trading systems.

assemblies and capital goods used in electronics manufacturing. The scheme classifies display module

and camera module sub-assembly in A category, while category B products include bare components like non-surface mount devices (non-SMD), multi-layered printed circuit board, lithium-ion cells for digital applications, enclosures for mobile, IT hardware products and related devices.

SEBI mandates e-book mechanism for private debt securities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

arkets regulator Sebi has made the electronic book mechanism mandatory for all private placement debt issues of ₹20 crore or above and expanded the platform's scope to include REITs and InvITs. The move, based on recommendations from a working group and public feedback, is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the Electronic Book Provider (EBP) platform. Under the new framework, the use of the EBP platform is now mandatory for private placements of debt securities, non-convertible redeemable preference shares (NCRPS) and municipal bonds, where the issue size is ₹20 crore or more, including single, shelf and subsequent issues within a financial year, according to a Sebi circular.

ry for all private placements of debt securities with an issue size of ₹50 crore or more. SEBI has extended products on the EBP platform to infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) and real estate infrastructure trusts (REITs).

"An issuer, if desirous, may choose to access EBP platform for private placement of securitised debt instruments or security receipts or commercial papers (CPs), certificates of deposit (CDs) and issuers constituted as REITs, SM REITs and InvITs can also access the EBP platform for private placement of units of REITs, SM REITs and InvITs," Sebi said on Friday.

The regulator said that issuers are required to submit the placement memorandum and term sheet — containing key terms and conditions — at least two working days before the issue opens, or three working days in the

Projects worth ₹60,000 crore announced in Advantage Assam Summit underway: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Guwahati

mplementation of projects worth over ₹60,000 crore, out of investment proposals for ₹5.18 lakh crore received during a business summit in February, has already commenced, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday. The state government was expecting a total investment in projects worth ₹1.50 lakh crore within the first year of the summit, he said.

Sarma was speaking at an MoUsigning ceremony of 20 projects worth ₹22,900 crore here, proposals for which were received during the Advantage Assam 2.0 summit. He said several projects in the infrastructure space were being implemented, with focus also on

innovation and sectors such as agriculture, horticulture and dairy, which are employment-centric.

"We had received proposals for ₹5.18 lakh crore... during the summit. We had been careful to keep aside proposals which didn't seem serious so that there was no big gap between the monetary amount of oposals received during the summit and the ones actually implemented," Sarma said. He said that in the infrastructure sector, three projects worth ₹30,000 crore — Guwahati ring road, Narengi-Kuruwa bridge over Brahmaputra and Guwahati-Silchar express highway — which were announced during the summit, have been approved.

Regarding the "investment sector", he said binding MoUs were being signed during the ceremony with committed proposals worth ₹22,900 crore for projects in the executionary stage.

The signed MoUs include key projects in waste management, Tata Gateway, solar power production and ethanol production. Taking into account the ₹10,000-crore new brownfield plant in Namrup, a total of over ₹60,000 crore worth projects were being realised, the CM said. "As per our calculation, we are expecting total investment in projects worth ₹1.50 lakh crore within the first year of the summit," he added.

The CM also emphasised on small industries, agriculture, horticulture, veterinary, dairy and allied sectors for development of the state as these are more

BEYOND BORDERS: INDO-ARAB CHAMBER FUELS ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL REVIVAL



DR WAIEL AWWAD

• n the rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape of the 21st century, the alliance between India and the Arab world is gaining remarkable momentum. At the forefront of this transformation stands the Indo and Arab Countries Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (IACCIA), headquartered in New Delhi. The Chamber has emerged as a dynamic force in transforming historical ties into modern economic partnerships, ushering in an era of shared prosperity, mutual growth, and strategic collaboration.

A Historic Bond Reimagined

India and the Arab world share centuries of cultural and commercial connection-woven together through trade routes, cuisine, language, spirituality and intellectual exchange. From the ancient spice routes of Gujarat to the philosophical and linguistic confluence during the Islamic Golden Age, this enduring relationship is being redefined by the demands of the modern era: technology, capital and innovation.

The IACCIA is playing a pivotal institutional role in revitalising this legacy with a forward-looking mission-to foster trade, investment, and industrial partnerships between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the broader Arab world.

Strategic Convergence: Technology Meets Capital

India has emerged as a global technology hub, home to more than 14 million skilled tech professionals, leading IT firms, biotech centres, AI start-ups, fintech disruptors and space innovation programs. Meanwhile, the Middle East/West Asia holds vast capital



reserves, with sovereign wealth funds in the GCC (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, Bahrain and Qatar) managing trillions of dollars.

This presents a unique opportunity for synergy: India offers innovation and human capital; the Middle East offers financial strength. While China has aggressively pursued regional influence through initiatives like the Belt and Road, India's democratic institutions, strategic autonomy and innovation-driven economy position it as a trusted and stable partner for the Arab world.

India and Arab Countries Chamber:

Driving the Transformation The IACCIA serves as the strategic bridge

between these complementary strengths, with initiatives that include:

☐ Facilitating B2B and G2G Engagements: Organising trade delegations, bilateral forums, and expos to connect Indian businesses and policymakers with Arab counterparts

☐ Attracting Sovereign Investments: Engaging with funds such as ADIA, PIF, and QIA to channel investments into India's infrastructure, clean energy, agritech, fintech, and healthcare sectors. Promoting Joint Ventures: Supporting Indo-Arab collaborations in smart cities, petrochemical transformation, electric mobility and AI-enabled governance.

☐ Policy Advisory: Offering actionable insights, trade policy recommendations, and strategic roadmaps for bilateral cooperation in a post-oil world.

Cultural Affinity as a Soft Power Anchor

An often-overlooked asset in Indo-Arab relations is the deep cultural affinity. With over 9 million Indians living and working across the GCC, 14 million visit the region annually and more than 70 billion US Dollar revenue, India is more than a trading partner-it's a familiar presence. Shared values, linguistic ties (such as Arabic with Urdu and Hindi) and mutual respect for traditions create a strong foundation for deeper economic integration.

The Chamber recognises the importance

of cultural diplomacy in fostering trust. Through film festivals, educational exchanges, halal industry forums and joint cultural celebrations, the IACCC ensures that human connection remains

A Roadmap for Strategic **Partnership**

central to commerce.

To unlock the full potential of Indo-Arab cooperation, the IACCIA has outlined a bold and pragmatic roadmap:

Technology Transfer and Co-Innovation Hubs: Aligning Indian expertise in AI, renewable energy, cybersecurity, and space tech with Arab economic diversification strategies like Saudi Vision 2030 and UAE's Operation 300bn.

A Pillar in a Multipolar World As the global order evolves toward mul-

building a future-ready workforce.

tipolarity, India and the Arab world are emerging as key players in a broader South-South alliance. The Middle East is transforming beyond its identity as an energy supplier, just as India transcends its service economy label. The IACCC is at the heart of this recalibration-promoting deep, transformative engagement over transactional trade.

In a world fraught with supply chain shocks, technological disruption and climate instability, true resilience lies not in isolation but in strategic interdependence. Through platforms like the IACCIA, India and the Arab world can forge one of the most future-ready and resilient partnerships in the world.

The Way Forward

The future of India-Arab collaboration is more than economic-it is civilisational. With India's unmatched technological capabilities and the Arab world's financial prowess and strategic location, the two regions have the potential to shape a new model of prosperity for the Global Southequitable, inclusive, and innovative.

As Dr APJ Abdul Kalam once said, "When there is harmony between the mind, heart, and hands, great things happen." The India and Arab Countries Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, embodies this harmonyblending innovation (mind), culture (heart) and trade (hands) to craft a shared destiny.

With a clear roadmap and deep cultural roots, the time is ripe for India and the Arab world to leap forward-together.

(The author is Acting Secretary General,





Unplugging

for a Clearer Mind

BY DR PARUL MALHOTRA

et's be honest — when was the last time you managed to get through an entire day without checking your phone? In our ultra-connected age, where screens are basically omnipresent, the notion of going off-screen may seem far-fetched or even alienating; FOMO creeps in. The need of constant connectivity and the gratification feeds this fear. Welcome to the world of digital detox, a mindful escape from technology that guarantees not only peace of mind, but a renewed, more focused you.

Why We Need a Break from the Digital World

Technology is not the culprit. It actually brings us together, teaches us, and even entertains us. For many of us, it is a medium of staying connected and updated. But when our daily routines become a whirlwind of constant screen time, the effect on our mental health becomes impossible to ignore. Checking emails all the time? That's causing chronic stress, even if you don't know it. We have fallen victims of overloading from technology, and what comes is a distorted perception, scrambled emotions, work life imbalance and a deep craving for silence.

What Is a Digital Detox?

A digital detox is a time when you consciously get away from digital gadgets — phones, laptops, tablets, TVs - to live in the real world and tap into your inner self. When you clear the clutter, what's left is clearer, more accessible. It is like a sense of accomplishment making you feel lighter and less stressed.

The Magic of Mental Clarity

PROFESSIONAL HELP

If you're unsure where to start, consult a doctor or registered dietitian. A personalised plan tailored to your medical history, lifestyle, and goals is always safer and more effective. Fat loss is not something that should be punishing and extreme for your bodies.

Mental Clarity is the sense of being mentally clear, focused, and emotionally levelled. It's when your mind is in alignment, your energy is consistent, and making decisions is easy. But in a world filled with notifications, gaining this clarity is more difficult. It is really hard to resist that temptation to check a text message or an email from your colleague and that overwhelming desire to check social media.

WHEN YOU EVEN BRIEFLY LEAVE SCREENS BEHIND, YOU'RE GIVING YOUR BRAIN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECHARGE. YOU SLEEP MORE SOUNDLY, YOUR ATTENTION IS IMPROVED, AND YOU BEGIN TO PAY ATTENTION

IN A CULTURE WHERE WE CONFUSE "BUSY" WITH "SUCCESSFUL," DECIDING TO DISCONNECT CAN BE RADICAL. BUT OCCASIONALLY THE BOLDEST THING YOU CAN DO IS PULL AWAY FROM THE DIN. A DIGITAL DETOX IS FREE. YOU DON'T REQUIRE A RETREAT OR A MOUNTAIN CABIN

BENEFITS OF UNPLUGGING

BETTER CONCENTRATIONConstant toggling between apps, tabs, and notifications pieces together our brain's capacity for concentration.
Turning off even for one hour can extremely enhance focus and productivity.

IMPROVED SLEEP QUALITY

VIVACITY

Blue light from screens interrupts melatonin, the sleep hormone. Taking an hour-long break from technology prior to bedtime can improve sleep quality and leave you feeling more rested.

LESS STRESS AND ANXIETY

The persistent comparison habit of social media can increase worry. Taking a break from your account for some time

ALL YOU REQUIRE IS THE COURAGE TO STOP, AND LISTEN — NOT TO ALERTS, BUT TO YOURSELF. YOU MIGHT FEEL ANXIOUS BUT THIS IS REWARDING allows you to take back your emotional space and de-

STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS

When you aren't sidetracked by your phone, you connect more genuinely with others around you. Eye contact, heartfelt talks and humour build connections no likes and comments can offer.

BETTER EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Digital detox helps you connect with yourself. You are more attuned to your thoughts, emotions, and needs, enhancing emotional resilience.

BOOSTED CREATIVITY

Constant digital input leaves little room for original thought. Unplugging gives your mind the silence it needs to wander.



START YOUR OWN DIGITAL DETOX

Set clear boundaries: Begin by declaring screen-free spaces, such as your bedroom or dining room.

Digital Avoidance: Pick one day of the week to go device-free.

Take a social media break: Even a Facebook-free or Instagram-free weekend might feel like fresh air. Use tech to restrain tech: You can use screen time controls to track and limit your use.

Swap scrolling with quiet: Sit quietly, write in a journal, take a walk, read a book — and pay attention to what you experience.

Adopting Digital Minimalism: Choosing quality over endless scrolling. It's not about quitting tech, but being aware of your screen time and opting for intentional use.

Precise detox: If one particular app, site, or a game is taking up too much of your time, try to limit your use.

Losing Weight Without Harming Your Body

CONTROL

rejecting technology entirely; it's

about using it mindfully. In a world

where screens dictate our time and

attention, unplugging helps us regain

mental clarity, emotional balance,

and presence. By setting

boundaries we turn technology from a

master into a

A digital detox doesn't mean

eople nowadays hav

People nowadays have become crazy about losing weight to such an extent that they can go for an extreme diet, unhealthy detox, even overtraining their bodies, asking for weight loss medication and even surgeries at a BMI as low as 25. But the real side of the story is that weight loss which is rapid is futile

and can cost you your health as well. When you practise unsafe and unindicated weight loss approaches, it may predispose your body to nutritional deficiencies and muscle loss. As doctors, we urge you to approach weight loss as a long-term health goal, not a quick fix.

Knowledge about variation in weight loss and fat loss — Many crash diets result in water loss or even muscle loss — not actual fat loss. True fat loss happens gradually. A safe and sustainable rate is about 0.5 to 1 kg per week. This ensures your body can adjust without stress or damage.

Your body needs fuelling, not starving — If you drastically cut down calories from your diet, it will slow down your metabolism and make you feel lethargic and nutrient deficient too. So always opt for a balanced diet, rather than a crash diet, which is inclusive of complex

carbohydrates (like oats and brown rice), healthy fats (almonds, walnuts,



cottage cheese, avocado, olive oil), and protein (lean meat, fish, eggs, legumes). Regular meals every 3-4 hours help regulate blood sugar and reduce binge eating.

Fats or carbohydrates are your friends, not your enemy — Contrary to popular belief, fats and carbs are not your enemies. Healthy fats support hormone production, while whole carbs provide lasting energy. Eliminate ultra-processed foods and refined sugars, but keep natural, fibrerich carbohydrates in your diet such as millets.

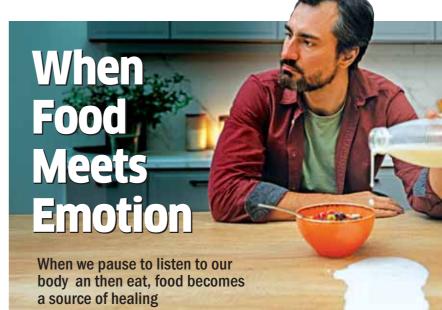
Regular physical activity — Overtraining can raise cortisol levels, leading to fat storage — especially around the abdomen. Focus on a combination of resistance training (to preserve muscle) and moderate-intensity cardio (like walking, swimming, or cycling). Aim for at least 150 minutes of activity per week.

Good quality sleep and stress management are crucial — Lack of sleep and high stress both affect weight. Poor sleep disrupts hunger hormones (ghrelin and leptin), making you crave high-calorie foods. High stress raises cortisol, which increases belly fat.

Prioritise 7-8 hours of restful sleep and try stress-reducing habits such as deep breathing, journalling, or mindfulness.

Hydration is key — Water plays a key role in metabolism, digestion, and appetite control. Replace sugary drinks with water, herbal teas, or black coffee. Often, we confuse thirst with hunger, leading to unnecessary snacking.

The author is the Bariatric & Metabolic Surgeon



BY PRATIKSHA VATS

In our fast-paced world, food has increasingly become just fuel — we eat on autopilot mode, rarely have time to truly taste or appreciate our meals. But let us reawaken our understanding; eating or cooking food is basically — an emotional experience only.

Our body responds in a positive way, when we cook or eat with gratitude. Our thoughts affect our hormones, digestion, and even nutrient absorption, and it heals physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Transferring Energy into FoodThe phrase "cook with love" isn't just poet-

ic - it's a powerful act. The emotions of the cook subtly transfer into the meal itself. Food prepared with a chaotic mind often carries that energy forward. Conversely, meals made with care and affection tend to feel more nourishing.

Every Bite is a Mirror

Each meal is a mirror — reflecting not just our food choices, but our state of mind. It's also important to recognise how we treat food and those who prepare it. Criticism at the dining table, especially toward the cook or the

food, creates tension that disrupts digestion and emotional balance. Such negativity silently impacts our health and relationships. Research shows that this is one of the common reasons a person lies ill, as he/she consumes food with a negative state of mind.

Mind Over Meal

How we feel while eating matters deeply. Stress, anxiety, guilt, or sadness can hinder digestion and trigger hormonal imbalances. Even a perfect diet can fall short if our emotions aren't in harmony while eating. I recall

an elderly patient who battled digestive issues despite a healthy diet and treatments. The real cause was emotional — guilt over her son's struggles. Once she embraced self-forgiveness, her health began

o improve. Emotional Eating vs. Conscious Eating

Like many, I've turned to food during emotional highs and lows — eating not out of hunger, but as a way to celebrate. Emotional eating may offer short-term comfort, but it often leaves behind guilt. At times, I ate simply because others were eating or because my favourite food was available and not the need.

— The author is the medical writer creating informative

content on healthcare and wellness

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Mandaviya unveils Khelo India calendar with new sports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

ports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Sunday announced the broadening of the scope of the Khelo India initiative with the introduction of multiple Games to cover school sports, martial arts, beach and water sports from this year onwards.

While launching Khelo India Annual Calendar, Mandaviya said that the government will soon introduce a series of Khelo India Games and other competitions, including Khelo India North-East Games, among others.

He said the aim was to strengthen India's sporting ecosystem, provide strategic year-round schedule to boost grass-

roots competitions, talent identification. The Khelo India Annual Calendar is not just a schedule but it is a strategic blueprint strengthening India's domestic competition structure for transforming India into a global sporting powerhouse," Mandaviya said. "Over the past decade, Indian sports have undergone a remarkable transformation.... We have created a dynamic and inclusive sporting ecosystem with regular national-level competitions under the Khelo India initiative. Taking this vision forward, we will soon introduce Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG), Khelo India School Games (KISG), Khelo India Water Sports, Khelo India North-East Games, among others."

Mandaviya said these events will be



pivotal in identifying, nurturing, and preparing India's young talent. The Khelo India platform already includes four structured national-level Games, namely the Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo İndia University Games, Khelo India Para Games, and Khelo India Winter Games.

A special focus is being given to the Khelo India School Games (KISG), which will follow a tiered structure, starting from the district level, moving to the state level, and culminating in national-level

Furthermore, the inclusion of events like the Khelo India Martial Art Games, Khelo India Tribal Games, and Khelo India Swadeshi Games aims to bring indigenous and traditional martial arts

into the mainstream, the sports ministry

The first edition of the Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG) is set to take place in Diu from May 19-25, which will draw national attention to coastal and beach sports, while also highlighting the region's tourism potential.

The calendar for the remainder of the year includes events such as the Khelo India School Games (August to December), Khelo India University Games (March-April), Water Sports and North-East Games (May-June), Tribal Games (September in Chhattisgarh), and the Indigenous and Martial Art Games (July-August in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh)

Alev Kelter sent off for Kevin De Bruyne may skip Club World Cup over injury fears stamping opponent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Sydney

nited States Olympic rugby star Alev Kelter will face a judicial hearing and potentially lengthy suspension after being sent off in a women's rugby test against Australia on Saturday for stamping on the head of an opponent.

Kelter received a straight red card in the 79th minute of the Pacific Four Series test against Australia after referee Aimee Barrett-Theron reviewed footage that showed Kelter stamping forcefully on the head of Australian center Georgie Friedrichs. In comments captured by television microphones, Barrett-Theron

said "12 blue (Kelter) is going to receive a permanent red card because this is thuggery, it is deliberate and it is very dangerous foul play. "She's clearly stamped on the head of the Australian player. That's reckless, that's dangerous and she's going off."

Friedrichs was not seriously injured in the incident. The United States team coach Sione Fukofuka later apologized to the Australian

Foul play in rugby that involves contact with the head is treated with extreme seriousness. Rugby, like many contact sports, has changed its rules in an effort to limit the danger of concus-

sion and other head injuries. Kelter is a three-time US Olympic representative in rugby sev-

ens and won a bronze medal in Paris last year. She previously played ice hockey and soccer for the University of Wisconsin. In rugby, judicial hearings over foul play usually take place withing 48 hours of a match.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

evin De Bruyne has cast doubt over whether he will play at the Club World Cup because he fears getting injured before he leaves Manchester City.

The Belgian playmaker is out of contract at the end of the season and will become a free agent. But there is the potential he could sign a short-term extension that would enable to him to play in the newly expanded Club World Cup in June and July. "I think in a way I have to take care of myself because if I get injured in the Club World Cup, what am I going to do?" De Bruyne said. "Nobody's going to take care of me at that point. So there's a big chance probably I won't play it, but I don't know,

De Bruyne will leave City after 10 years and 14 major trophies after the Premier League club decided not to offer him a new deal. At the age of 33, he is now considering his options, but says there has been uncertainty over whether City wants him to be part of its squad for the Club World Cup in United States.

With two games left to go this season, he said he had to consider what is best for his own career as he prepares for his next move. "I have



to take care of my family. I've got three kids, my wife, it's not an easy process at this time,"

The timing of the Club World Cup, which has been expanded from seven teams to 32, has led to FIFA introducing a short-term transfer window to enable players whose contracts expire on June 30 to move to clubs participating in the tournament. It also allows players like De Bruyne to sign short-term deals purely to take part before moving on as free agents.

But that brings with it the risk of him suffering a serious injury that would jeopardise a future transfer.

If he doesn't play at the Club World Cup, De Bruyne will leave City emptyhanded after Saturday's FA Cup final defeat to Crystal Palace. City also surrendered the Premier League title this season after winning an unprecedented four in a row. "This year has just not gone the way we wanted it to. You have to accept it. You have to move on and work hard and go again," De Bruyne said. "It's alright. This doesn't change anything that's happened in the past 10 years." De Bruyne said he has yet to decide on his next move would and whether he would look to join another Premier League team.

PBKS make 219/5 against RR in IPL, Wadhera, Singh hit 50

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jaipur

rehal Wadhera and Shashank Singh struck fine half-centuries to rescue Punjab Kings and help them to a competitive 219 for 5 against Rajasthan Royals in an Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

PBKS, currently on 15 points and in a good position to make the playoffs, were reduced to 34/3 in only the



fourth over with RR's right-arm involved in a 58-run fifth-wicket pacer Tushar Deshpande (2/37) getting rid of openers Priyansh Arya (9) and Prabhsimran Singh (21).

But Wadhera blazed to a 37-ball 70, studded with five boundaries and as many sixes, and shared a 67run fourth-wicket partnership with skipper Shreyas Iyer (30) to bail

stand with Shashank Singh (59 not out, 30 balls).

Earlier, a fit-again Sanju Samson was back to lead Rajasthan Royals and replaced Nitish Rana in the XI. Kwena Maphaka was drafted in place of Jofra Archer.

Brief scores: Punjab Kings 219 for 5 in 20 overs (Nehal Wadhera 70, Wadhera, who struck his third Shreyas Iyer 30, Shashank Singh 59 half-century of the season, was also not out; Tushar Deshpande 2/37).

Italy eyes Grand Slam status for Italian Open tournament

op-ranked Jannik Sinner is dominating men's tennis and Italy swept both the Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup team titles last year, Jasmine Paolini just became the first home player to win the Italian Open in 40 years and is about to move up to Number 4 in the women's rankings. Players like Lorenzo Musetti, Federico Cinà and Tyra Caterina Grant provide the potential for Italy to dominate tennis for years to come. Still, Italian Tennis and Padel Federation president Angelo Binaghi wants more. Much more.

Binaghi has the grandiose aim to make the Italian Open a fifth Grand Slam tournament alongside the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open - upending a century of tennis history. "In what other part of society is there a monopoly that lasts for more than 100 years?" Binaghi said Sunday, the final day of the Italian Open. "Why are there always four and always the same four? ... It's absolutely unfair and doesn't help tennis grow." The Italian Open is a Masters Series event that is one rung below the Slams in the hierarchy of tennis tournaments. But the event at the Foro Italico now runs for two weeks like the majors and is starting in Bologna. "We're now the world



booming thanks to the successes of Sinner, Paolini and many other Italian players.

Italy has also hosted the ATP Finals in Turin since 2021 and recently extended its hosting contract for the year-ending tournament featuring the top eight men's players through 2030.

Also, the Davis Cup Final 8 will begin a three-year run in Italy this November,

champion both on the court and at the organisational level," Binaghi said. Earlier this year, Binaghi expressed interest in acquiring the license for the Madrid Open, which immediately precedes Rome in the tennis calendar. The idea was that eliminating Madrid and making Rome bigger could constitute a fifth Slam. "We need to be attentive on the international market and try to take advantage of every

opportunity that arises, from the smallest ATP 250 all the way up to the biggest tournaments," Binaghi said.

A request for comment sent to the

Grand Slam board, which represents the four majors, was not immediately answered. Retractable Roof After years of delays, organizers announced new plans to build a retractable

roof over the Italian Open's main stadium, Campo Centrale. At a cost of 60 million euros (\$67 million), the roof is slated to be ready for the

2028 tournament and will also result in 2,000 extra seats being added - increasing the capacity to 12,500.

Larger grounds

For this year's tournament, the event grounds at the Foro Italico were increased from 12 to 20 hectares (30 to 50 acres) and another statue-lined competition arena was added. The Stadio dei Marmi hosted three courts: a 3,000-seat arena and two courts each featuring seating for 800.

The 3,000-seat arena became the tournament's third-largest show court after Campo Centrale and the Grand Stand Arena, making the Pietrangeli court which also features an array of statues the fourth largest.

PHF wants visa guarantee for Asia Cup: official

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Karachi

akistan Hockey Federation (PHF) wants the continental body to guarantee visas for its contingent to participate in the Asia Cup to be held in India from August 27 to September 7, according to an official here.

Pakistan's participation in the tournament, to be held in Rajgir (Bihar), is in serious doubt because of the tensions between the two countries after the Pahalgam terror attack, and Hockey India (HI) has said it is awaiting a government advisory on the matter.

"It is too early to say anything but we will follow the government's directive on this issue, which has been the case in the past. We can't predict anything right now especially after the recent barbaric Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor that India conducted following that," HI secretary general Bholanath Singh

A senior PHF official said that the Asia Cup was vital for Pakistan as it is a qualifying tournament for next year's men's World Cup to be held in the Netherlands and Belgium. "We don't want to lose the opportunity of going to the World Cup

via the Asia Cup," the official said.
"So we believe, one solution could be moving the event from India or Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) guaranteeing visas for our team," he added. The PHF official said there would also

be the World Cup qualifying events in early 2026 but the Asia Cup represented a good chance to qualify.

Pakistan didn't qualify for the last World Cup held in 2023 in India.

Hosts India, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Oman and Chinese Taipei are scheduled to participate in the 12th edition of the continental showpiece.

In case Pakistan doesn't get the nod to travel to India, the decision to make the tournament a seven-team affair or bring in a new team to fill the vacant slot, will be entirely in the hands of the Asian Hockey Federation.

"If the government advisory does not give an all clear, then Pakistan won't travel to India. It all depends on the government position at that time," a HI source

Alex Noren was out of golf for seven months and now in final group at major

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Charlotte

lex Noren finally made his way back to tournament golf after seven A to tournament gon and months away because of a hamstring tear. One week later, the Swede is in the final group at the PGA Championship alongside the world's number one player.

Noren last played the Dunhill Links Championship on Oct. 6. Instead of closing down the practice range every night, he spent his time at home coaching his daughter's softball team.

"It was a lot easier to have this break when I'm 42 than when I was younger," Noren said. "As soon as I kind of could play, I thought I was in sort of the same form I was in before I got injured. But I'm still extremely - not surprised - but I'm fortunate to be in this position this early, yeah." He got there with a burst at the finish, four birdies over his last five holes, for a 66 that gave him the lead until Scottie Scheffler played a closing stretch equally impressive. Noren, a 10-time winner on the European Tour after a college career at Oklahoma State, has only two top 10s in the majors and has never seriously contended.

The injury involved a torn tendon in his hamstring on the sit bone. It was a tough injury because it requires so much time to heal. He couldn't swing a club. He couldn't run or jump, but he otherwise lived a normal life spending time with his family. That was nice. "It's good to take a break sometimes," said Noren, who has a reputation as among the hardest workers in golf. "I missed it, but I also liked what I had at the time, which helps me maybe realize a little bit that I don't think it's the end of the world if you play bad."

Fitzpatrick falters

Former US Open champion Matt



Fitzpatrick is in a drought that has seen him go 20 straight tournaments without a top 10 dating to the Memorial last year, so it was worth noting that he worked his way into a tie for the lead at the PGA Championship.
He even had a 12-foot birdie putt for the

lead on No. 12 and winced when it narrowly missed. And then two holes set him back. He three-putted on the par-3 13th from down the slope 45 feet away. On the reachable 14, he drove right in thick grass on the

hill leaving a delicate chip. He left that in the rough. The next one raced across the green into more rough. Fitzpatrick had to get up-and-down with a 5-foot putt to make bogey on the easiest hole at Quail Hollow on Saturday. He wound up six shots behind and looking at the big picture. "I made big steps in where I've been over the last four or five months, so happy I'm up front," he said.

"Always a day you like to go forward but

Open qualifying

The final round of the PGA Championship will have big ramifications for the final two majors of the year. The top 60 in the world ranking published Monday will be exempt from US Open qualifying. The top 50 are exempt from the British Open.

Jacob Bridgeman was at No. 60 coming into Quail Hollow and missed the cut,

which could cost him. The next six players behind him not only made the cut, players like Si Woo Kim, Matthieu and Joe Highsmith (number 69) go into the final round within touch of the lead.

Pavon is already in the US Open but could still bump out Bridgeman. The US Open also takes the top 60 in the world in two weeks after the Memorial.

The British Open has one cutoff for the top 50. Davis Thompson is at number 50 and missed the cut, and could get passed. He can only wait and hope.

Boost in prize money

The PGA Championship bumped its purse by \$ 500,000 to \$ 19 million, third-highest among the three U.S. Majors.

The Masters last month raised its purse by \$ 1 million to \$ 21 million. The US Open will announced its purse next month at Oakmont. It was \$21.5 million in 2024. The

British Open was \$17 million last year and its prize fund has yet to be announced. The winner of the PGA Championship gets \$3.42 million. The last time it was at Quail Hollow in 2017, the purse was \$10.5 million and Justin Thomas won \$1.89 million. This year, the runner-up will get just over \$2 million.

Hometown flavour

Duke alum Alex Smalley gave his home state fans something to cheer the opening two rounds. Ben Griffin from Chapel Hill was in the mix. And on Saturday it was JT Poston's turn. He played bogey-free over the last 15 holes and finished with a 30-foot birdie on the 18th hole for a 68, leaving him four shots behind and in the penultimate group. Poston already has experience winning before a home state crowd, having won the Wyndham Championship for his first PGA Tour title.

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