

## AAPCA urges GoAP to solve all long-pending grievances



By A K News Service

**ITANAGAR, May 14:** Members of All Arunachal Power Contractors Association (AAPCA), led by their president Rumak Jomoh and general secre-

tary Tarh Talluk, during an event at Waii International Hotel here on Wednesday launched the association's calendar and also released byelaws.

Jomoh, in a fervent plea, urged the state

government to address all long-pending grievances of AAPCA. He also highlighted various initiatives to strengthen the association to serve the state while protecting interest of its mem-

bers besides hinted the future plans.

AACWA president Nabam Akin Hina, as a special invitee, exhorted all to remain united, saying "united we stand, divided we fall".

## BJP holds Tiranga Yatra for success of Operation Sindoor

**ITANAGAR, May 14:** The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) organized Tiranga Yatra, themed 'Citizens for National Security' from Ganga Tower Clock to IG Park Tennis Court here on Wednesday to salute unmatched courage and professionalism of the Indian Armed Forces reflected in Operation Sindoor in retaliation against April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that had claimed life of 26 tourists.

The party leaders also lauded visionary leadership of PM Narendra Modi for orchestrating such a bold and successful mission.

MLA-cum-general secretary Zingnu Namchoom, MLAs Techhi Kaso, Mutchu Mithi & Tojir Kadu, IMC mayor Tame Phassang, general secretaries Nalong



Mize, & Tadar Niglar, All Arunachal Ex-Servicemen Association members led by president Tatung Taro, rank and file of the party joined the procession.

"This reaffirmed the doctrine of New India", Yatra convener Mize said and underscored the unwavering support of state

people for the armed forces. This bold and calculated strike reflects the strength and maturity of India's evolving security doctrine, he said, adding such yatras would be organized at various levels across the state as success of Operation Sindoor was historic in India's fight against terror-

ism by neutralizing over 100 terrorists and destroyed multiple terror bases in Pakistan and PoK.

Itanagar MLA Techhi Kaso, while appreciating Operation Sindoor, warned Pakistan to refrain from terrorist activities, stating that any such actions would be met

(Contd on P.3)

## Beware of fake OSDs and PROs: GoAP

**ITANAGAR, May 14:** The GoAP has warned its employees and general public against individuals falsely claiming to be advisors, officers on special duty (OSDs) or public relations officers (PROs) to ministers, advisors or MLAs.

The directive, issued by Cabinet Affairs department, came in response to several reported instances of impersonation and unauthorized representation.

The GoAP also clarified that such appointments are regulated under the "Guidelines for Appointment of Principal Advisor, Advisor,



OSD etc., 2024," and no individual, unless officially notified, is authorized to hold these designations. As per the guidelines, only one OSD is allowed for each minister, who must either be a serving or retired government employee from the concerned department or a

qualified individual selected from outside. Furthermore, no person has been appointed as a PRO to any minister, nor as an OSD or PRO to any advisor or MLA.

To ensure transparency, the GoAP has released an official list of individuals appointed as advisors, OSDs, PROs, media assistants and videographers. The list includes Capt. Anupam Tangu (Advisor to DCM), Anupam Yadav and Ngawang Sempa (OSDs to CM), Saranga Jyoti Goswami (OSD to Agriculture and Horticulture Min-

ister) and Dr. Radhe Natung (OSD to Home and Interstate Border Affairs Minister), among others.

The advisory also calls on GoAP servants to maintain proper decorum and strictly follow the procedures laid down by the Department of Administrative Reforms, particularly in official dealings with elected representatives. The state government emphasized that this directive was approved by the Cabinet in its May 13 meeting and aimed at preserving the integrity and credibility of official positions.

## Class-X: Overall state results improve, decline in many dists

By Nipiyoti Kalita

**ITANAGAR, May 14:** The state results of class X examination of academic year 2024-25 as compared to 2023-24 showed overall improvement in student performance. The overall pass percentage increased from 49.76% in 2023-24 to 55.30% in 2024-25, marking a 5.54% improvement, according to official data.

Among top-performing districts are Kra Daadi, Kamle, Tirap, and Kurung Kumey. Kra Daadi showed

highest leap in pass percentage, improving by 38.45%, followed closely by Kamle with a 34.48% rise and Tirap with 31.89%. Kurung Kumey also made significant progress with a 29.82% improvement.

Capital Complex Itanagar registered a notable rise of 25.95%, while other districts such as Namsai, Lohit, and Pakke Kessang improved by 23.40%, 21.16%, and 24.31% respectively.

However, not all districts shared success as

several recorded drastic decline in pass percentages, with Lepa-Rada witnessing the steepest drop of 27.46%, followed by East Siang (-27.04%), Shi Yomi (-25.78%), and Upper Subansiri (-20.55%). Other districts such as Siang (-22.55%), Longding (-10.40%), and Lower Siang (-16.19%) also reported a significant decline in performance. Anjaw, which had a strong pass percentage of 68.29% in 2023-24, fell to 54.24% in 2024-25, reflecting a decline of

14.06%.

Despite these setbacks, the overall trend indicates positive momentum in educational outcomes in most districts, thanks to focused academic interventions and administrative efforts.

Education officials are now expected to look into the reasons behind the poor performance in certain districts and initiate corrective measures to ensure more balanced educational development across the state.

## Include left out border villages in VVP: MLA Aboh

**KHONSA, May 14:** Khonsa West MLA-cum-adviser to transport minister Chakat Aboh proposed inclusion of Moktowa village under Dadam block and other left-out villages under Lazur border block under Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II) during a coordination meeting involving all stakeholders and chaired by Tirap DC Techu Aran here on Wednesday.

District planning officer L. R. Roy highlighted aims and objectives of the VVP. While VVP-I focused on villages along the Indo-China border, VVP-II targets vil-



lages along the Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bhutan borders, he said.

Lazur EAC proposed cluster farming for sustainable agricultural practices by forming farmers' producer organizations to enhance agricultural productivity and ensure better market access for local farmers.

He also called for identifying and developing tourist sites to boost local economy through socio-cultural and eco-tourism.

Power EE informed about ongoing and planned electrification works in schools and hospitals, while the DDS raised concerns about lack of electricity in several

schools in the district.

DC Aran instructed all HoDs to submit a comprehensive gap analysis report for 11 identified VVP villages within one week. Timely submission of these reports would ensure effective implementation of the programme, he added. (DIPRO)

## Shopian encounter major blow to LeT

## Top LeT commander, 2 associates killed

**SRINAGAR, May 14:** Top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Shahid Kuttay and his two associates were killed in an encounter in Shopian on Tuesday giving a major blow to the terrorist group in Jammu and Kashmir, security forces sources said.

Kuttay hailing from Shopian's Wandhama in south Kashmir was chief operational commander of LeT and its shadow group - The Resistance Front (TRF). Adnan Shafi, also from Wandhama, was a top TRF and LeT commander while the third operative Haris Nazir was from Pulwama.

"Shahid Kuttay was in touch with leadership of LeT across border, including Sajid Jatt. His death will disrupt TRF/LeT's operations in J&K," the sources said with conviction.

The TRF had claimed



the responsibility for April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, which led to 26 deaths. In response, India launched Operation Sindoor to carry out airstrikes targeting terror infrastructure within Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir on May 6-7 night. After three days of attacks from Pakistan and India's strong retaliation, the two countries agreed to a ceasefire on May 10.

After the Pahalgam terror attack, intelligence agen-

cies intensified their hunt for local terrorists suspected of role in the assault. Kuttay and Nazir featured on the list of 14 active and 'most wanted' terrorists operating in South Kashmir's Anantnag, Shopian, and Pulwama districts.

Kuttay's house in Chotipora was also demolished in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack.

Shopian is a focal point due to its geography and history of militant presence.

"The neutralisation of Kuttay marks a tactical victory for Indian security forces. It will prove to be a major disruption in the activities of TRF and LeT in Kashmir," said sources.

"Kuttay was in touch with the top leadership of Lashkar across the border, including Sajid Jatt. His death will disrupt the TRF/LeT's operational planning, recruitment, and attack coordination. His role likely included overseeing infiltration routes and funding channels," they said.

Kuttay was involved in firing incident at Danish Resort on 08.04.24, in which two German tourists and one driver were injured. He was involved in killing of a BJP sarpanch at Heerpora in Shopian on May 18 last and is suspected to be involved in killing of TA personnel at Behibagh, Kulgam

(Contd on P.3)

## CM unveils Swami Vivekananda's statue at India's first village Kaho

By A K News Service

**ITANAGAR, May 14:** Chief Minister Pema Khandu, accompanied by his Council of Ministers while on way to chair the Cabinet meeting at Kibithu on Tuesday, unveiled a statue of Swami Vivekananda at Kaho, 8-km south of Indo-China Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Anjaw district.

Vivekananda Kendra, which has been instrumental in shaping educational development in the state, continues to work in alignment with Swami Vivekananda's vision of nation-building through spiritual awakening, character education and community service, VKV sources told this daily.

The installation of the statue at Kaho aims to ignite a spirit of nationalism and service among the youth, echoing the values promoted by the VKV across its institutions.

The ceremony was at-



tended by dignitaries, including Vivekananda Kendra Arunachal Pradesh Trust (VKAPT) joint secretary Rupesh Mathur, Kanyakumari-based Vivekananda Kendra vice president Hanumantrao, VKV Alumni Association

members and local residents. Leaders present emphasized the relevance of Swami Vivekananda's ideals in fostering a strong, self-reliant, and spiritually rooted society, especially in remote and sensitive border regions.

## RGU holds workshop on financial inclusion



**RONO HILLS, May 14:** Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU) vice chancellor Prof. S. K. Nayak underscored significance of financial inclusion and banking in the era of globalisation.

Addressing a day-long workshop on "Financial Inclusion and Banking", organized by Commerce the Department in collaboration

with Bank of Baroda here on Wednesday, he shared insightful examples and practical perspectives on dynamics of demand and supply in the financial sector.

Bank of Baroda NE zonal head GM Sonam T. Bhutia emphasized the significance of banking awareness, career prospects in banking sector,

and elaborated on banking concepts and loan approval process.

Bank's Jorhat regional head AGM Vivek Das spoke about role of financial inclusion in India and its critical role in promoting holistic development. He highlighted banking sector's significant contribution to the rising Fi-

nanacial Inclusion Index (FII).

Commerce HoD Prof. R. C. Parida, addressing faculty members, Ph.D. scholars, M. Com. & PGDBI students earlier explained the objective of the workshop. Dr. Olympia Kurmi lauded the insightful sessions of resource persons, according to a RGU release.







## India's Shubhanshu Shukla now set to travel to International Space Station on Jun 8

NEWDELHI, May 15 (PTI) Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station, piloted by Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla with three other crew members, has been delayed and will now be launched from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on June 8 at 6:41 pm IST.

The mission was earlier scheduled for launch on May 29.

The announcement was made by Axiom Space, a US-based commercial human spaceflight firm, and NASA.

After reviewing @Space, Station flight schedule, NASA and its partners are shifting launch opportunities for several upcoming missions. The new targeted no-earlier-than-launch opportunities, pending operational readiness, are: Axiom Mission 4: 9:11 am EDT, Sunday, June 8," NASA said in a post on X. Shukla's travel to space, onboard SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft, comes four decades after Rakesh Sharma's iconic spaceflight onboard Russia's Soyuz spacecraft in 1984.

Besides Shukla, the Ax-4 crew includes members from Poland and Hungary, marking each nation's first mis-



sion to the International Space Station in history and the second government-sponsored human spaceflight mission in over 40 years.

Shukla will conduct seven experiments in space that are aimed at encouraging microgravity research in India which hopes to build its own space station by 2035 and send astronauts to the moon by 2047.

ISRO has drawn up plans

to focus on India-centric food to carry out experiments on the ISS, including sprouting methi (Fenugreek) and moong (green gram) in microgravity conditions.

The Axiom-4 (Ax-4) mission will also include Sławosz Uznanski, European Space Agency (ESA) project astronaut, who will be the second Polish astronaut since 1978.

Tibor Kapu will be the

second national Hungarian astronaut since 1980.

Peggy Whitson will command her second commercial human spaceflight mission, adding to her standing record for the longest cumulative time in space by an American astronaut.

The Ax-4 crew will launch aboard a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft to the space station and spend up to 14 days at the orbiting laboratory.

## Brazil's Lula says would try to urge Putin to 'go to Istanbul and negotiate' with Zelenskyy

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 14 (AP) Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Wednesday he would try to urge Russian President Vladimir Putin to attend possible peace talks this week with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy, amid suspense over whether Putin would take part in the proposed meeting in Turkiye.

Putin proposed restarting direct talks "without preconditions" on Thursday in Istanbul about the more than three-year war. Zelenskyy then challenged the Kremlin leader to meet in Turkiye in person.

Lula has maintained close ties with Putin despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine — a position that has caused tensions with the Kyiv government and raised eyebrows in the West.

Lula on Wednesday stopped over in Moscow on his return from a state

visit in China, where he told journalists: "When I get to Moscow, I'm going to try to talk to Putin. It won't cost me anything to say, Hey, comrade Putin, go to Istanbul and negotiate."

They did not meet, but the Kremlin said he and Putin spoke by phone. The Kremlin said Lula referenced the peace talks and "intends to do everything in his power to ensure their success." It said Putin expressed gratitude for efforts to find ways to resolve the conflict.

The Kremlin did not mention any discussions of Putin's possible travel to Istanbul.

The Kremlin has declined to say who is going to Turkiye. Ukraine's presidential adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, said Zelenskyy will sit at the table only with the Russian leader.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio is among US officials

due to be in Turkiye for the talks.

In May 2024, China and Brazil issued a joint peace plan that called for a peace conference with Russia and Ukraine and no expansion of the battlefield, but Zelenskyy dismissed it.

On Tuesday, Brazil and China released a joint statement hoping that "a direct dialogue between the parties can begin as soon as possible."

The US and Western European leaders have threatened Russia with further sanctions if there is no progress in halting the fighting in Ukraine.

France's foreign minister said he is working with US Sen. Lindsey Graham, a leading ally of US President Donald Trump, on a potential new package of what he called "devastating" sanctions.

The measures would aim to "asphyxiate once and for

all the Russian economy" and squeeze Russia "by the throat," with possible 500 per cent import tariffs on Russian oil and countries that buy it, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said. He told French broadcaster BFMTV he would see Graham on Thursday in Turkiye.

Sanctions already adopted by Ukraine's allies have failed to stop Putin.

Russian forces have been readying a fresh military offensive to maximize pressure on Ukraine and strengthen the Kremlin's negotiating position, Ukrainian government and military analysts say.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said Tuesday that Russia is "attempting to prolong negotiations to extract additional concessions from the United States and while making additional battlefield advances."

## Trump handshake caps Syrian leader's journey from anti-US insurgent to nascent Mideast partner

BEIRUT, May 14 (AP) As an al-Qaida fighter in Iraq, he was detained by the American military. As the leader of a US-designated terror group fighting in Syria's civil war, he had a USD 10 million bounty on his head.

As the leader of a fast-changing Syria, Ahmad al-Sharaa shook hands Wednesday with US President Donald Trump, who later described him as a "young, attractive guy" with a "very strong past."

The handshake, at a meeting orchestrated by the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Turkey, captured al-Sharaa's long journey from hardened jihadi to the leader of a country that is gradually shedding its pariah status as it cements ties with America's top allies in the Middle East.

Trump said he would lift crippling sanctions that were imposed on the government of deposed Syrian President Bashar Assad, who was overthrown in December, expressing hope that al-Sharaa, who led the insurgency, can move Syria in a new direction.

"He's got a real shot at holding it together," Trump said. "He's a real leader. He led a charge, and he's pretty amazing."

The news sparked celebrations across Syria, where the economy has been ravaged by 14 years of civil war and international isolation. But al-Sharaa still faces daunting challenges to building the kind of peaceful, tolerant Syria he has promised.

From al-Qaida extremist to statesman

Before toppling Assad, al-Sharaa was known by the jihadi nickname he adopted, Abu Mohammed al-Golani. His ties to al-Qaida stretch back to 2003, when he joined the insurgency after the US-led invasion of Iraq.

He helped al-Qaida form an offshoot in Iraq that attacked both US forces and the country's Shiite majority, often using car and truck bombs. He was detained by the US and held for over five years without being charged.

The group's Iraqi leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, sent al-Sharaa to his native Syria in 2011 after a popular uprising led to a brutal crackdown and eventually a full-blown civil war. There, al-Sharaa established an al-



Qaida branch known as the Nusra Front.

The two insurgent leaders had a brutal falling out when al-Sharaa refused to join al-Baghdadi's Islamic State group and remained loyal to al-Qaida's central leadership. The Nusra Front later battled the Islamic State group.

In his first interview in 2014 on Qatari network Al Jazeera, he kept his face covered and said Syria should be governed by Islamic law, an alarming prospect for the country's Christian, Alawite and Druze minorities. Al-Sharaa also said he couldn't trust Gulf and other Arab leaders who he said had sold themselves to Washington to stay in power.

"They paid a tax, these Arab rulers, to the United States," he said.

But in the following years, he began rebranding himself and the armed group he led. In 2016, he announced that he had severed ties with al-Qaida. He began appearing in public unmasked and in military garb, and changed his group's name to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham — the Organisation for Liberating Syria — as it consolidated control over a swath of northwestern Syria.

His transformation — both political and sartorial — continued in 2021, when he gave an interview to an American network. This time he appeared in a shirt and trousers, with his short hair gelled back, and said his group posed no threat to the West. He also called for the lifting of sanctions on Syria.

A promise of change, but many obstacles

After leading the lightning insurgency that toppled Assad, al-Sharaa promised a new Syria.

He vowed to rid the country of Iranian influence and Iran-backed armed groups such as the Lebanese militia Hezbollah. He promised an inclusive, representative government that would allow the country's many ethnic and religious groups to live in peace.

Washington lifted the terror designation weeks after he took power, and he was embraced by Turkiye and Saudi Arabia, whose de facto leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, hosted Wednesday's meeting with Trump.

But the difficulties have been daunting.

Fourteen years of war left large areas in ruins and, along with the sanctions, devastated the economy. An estimated 90 per cent of the population lives in poverty. Assad's rule and the civil war also left deep fissures between the country's Sunni minority and the Alawite minority from which Assad hailed, and which benefited from his rule. Those rifts have proven tough to heal.

Al-Sharaa formed a transitional government that gave some positions to minorities but was dominated by his inner circle.

A constitutional declaration later broadened al-Sharaa's powers and said Islamic law would remain at the heart of legislation for a five-year interim period. Al-Sharaa argued that the measures were needed to stabilise the country, while many crit-

ics viewed it as a power grab.

"It appears that many of the steps taken have been rushed and performative rather than offering genuine meaningful change in Syria," said Lara Nelson, policy director at the Syrian research and policy group Etana. "There are concerns about authoritarian consolidation."

Sectarian clashes as civil war tensions linger

The biggest test for al-Sharaa came in early March, when the country witnessed its worst sectarian clashes since Assad's downfall.

After security forces crushed an armed rebellion, apparently led by Assad loyalists, on the mostly Alawite Mediterranean coast, fighters loyal to the new government carried out a wave of revenge killings.

More than 1,000 people were killed over two days, mostly Alawite civilians. Videos surfaced online showing houses set ablaze and bodies in the streets. Others showed Alawites being rounded up, mocked and beaten.

Weeks later, clashes broke out between fighters loyal to the government and minority Druze living in the Damascus suburbs. Smaller such incidents have occurred elsewhere in the country.

Meanwhile, Israel has invaded southern Syria and carried out a wave of airstrikes that it says are aimed at destroying the country's military capabilities and any armed groups that could pose a threat. A strike hit near the presidential palace earlier this month.

## Georgetown student from India released from immigration detention after federal judge's ruling

ALEXANDRIA, May 14 (AP) A Georgetown scholar from India who was arrested amid the Trump administration's crackdown on foreign college students was released from immigration detention Wednesday after a federal judge's ruling.

Badar Khan Suri, who was being held in Texas, will go home to his family in Virginia while he awaits the outcome of his petition against the Trump administration for wrongful arrest and detention in violation of the First Amendment and other constitutional rights. He's also facing deportation proceedings in an immigration court in Texas.

Immigration authorities have detained college students from across the country — many of whom participated in campus protests over the Israel-Hamas war — since the first days of the Trump administration.

Khan Suri is the latest to win release from custody, along with Rumeysa Ozturk, a Tufts University student from Turkey, and Mohsen Mahdawi, a Palestinian student at Columbia University.

Khan Suri was arrested by masked, plain-clothed officers on the evening of March 17 outside his apartment complex in Arlington, Virginia. He was then put on a plane to Louisiana and



later to a detention center in Texas.

The Trump administration has said that it revoked Khan Suri's visa because of his social media posts and his wife's connection to Gaza as a Palestinian American. They accused him of supporting Hamas, which the US has designated as a terrorist organization.

Khan Suri and his wife, Mapheze Saleh, have been targeted because Saleh's father worked with the Hamas-backed Gazan government for more than a decade, but before Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, Khan Suri's attorneys say.

According to the US government, Khan Suri has undisputed family ties to the terrorist organisation, which he "euphemistically refers to as the 'government of Gaza.'" But the American Civil Liberties Union has said that Khan Suri hardly knew the father, Ahmed Yousef.

US District Judge Patricia Tolliver Giles in Alexandria said she was releasing Khan Suri because she felt he had substantial constitutional claims against the Trump administration. She also considered the needs of his family and said she didn't believe he was a danger to the community.

"Speech regarding the conflict there and opposing Israel's military campaign is likely protected political speech," Giles said. "And thus he was likely engaging in protected speech."

The judge added: "The First Amendment does not distinguish between citizens and noncitizens."

Giles acknowledged the Trump administration's need to prioritise national security but said that "whatever deference may be appropriate, concerns of national security" do not supersede the judiciary.

David Byerley, a Justice Department attorney, had

argued against Khan Suri's release. He told the judge that Khan Suri's First Amendment case is inextricably intertwined with the deportation case in Texas, so he should stay there. He also cited costs of redetaining Khan Suri as a reason to not grant him bail.

After the court hearing, Khan Suri's lawyers declared victory and criticized the Trump administration for "disappearing" people over their ideas.

"He should have never had his First Amendment rights, which protect all of us regardless of citizenship, trampled on because ideas are not illegal," said Sophia Gregg, an ACLU attorney. "Americans don't want to live in a country where the federal government disappears people whose views it doesn't like. If they can do this to Dr. Suri, they can do this to anyone."

Khan Suri, an Indian citizen, came to the US in 2022 through a J-1 visa, working at Georgetown as a visiting scholar and postdoctoral fellow. He and his wife have three children: a 9-year-old son and 5-year-old twins.

Before his arrest, he taught a course on majority and minority human rights in South Asia, according to court records. The filings said he hoped to become a professor and embark on a career in academia.

Contd. from front page...

## BJP holds Triranga Yatra for...

with strong consequences.

Air Commodore (Retd) R D Musabi appreciated the Armed Forces for their outstanding performance in Operation Sindoor. Pakistan is nurturing terrorists to become a factory of terrorism, he said urged Pakistan people to understand the reality and reject such policies

Taro lauded Chief Minister Pema Khandu for flagging off the Tiranga Yatra from Walong along with his Cabinet colleagues. Besides state secretary and State BJP Yuwa Morcha General Secretary Tame Siyang and secretary Tiring Tiri also spoke, according to a BJP release. .

## Top LeT commander, 2 associates...

on February 3 last and in killing of non-local labourers at Wachi, Shopian on 18.10.24.

The encounter was carried out on the basis of human intelligence. "The operation reflects the improved intelligence gathering and coordination among Indian security forces. It will destabilise militant activities in the region," said sources.

PM Narendra Modi, in his address to the nation on Monday, had said, "Operation Sindoor is the new policy against terrorism. It is India's policy against terrorism. It is the new normal for India's fight against terrorism."

"First, if there is a terrorist attack on India, a befitting reply will be given. We will respond in our own way, on our own terms. We will take strict action at every place from where the roots of terrorism emerge. Second, India will not tolerate any nuclear blackmail. India will strike precisely and decisively on the terrorist bases flourishing under the guise of nuclear blackmail. Third, we will not see the government that patronises terrorism and the masters of terrorism separately," Modi said. (Agency)



# Suspected spy held in Haryana's Panipat for sharing information with Pakistan

**CHANDIGARH, May 14:** A suspected spy was arrested in Panipat district on Tuesday for allegedly supplying sensitive information to some individuals in Pakistan, Haryana Police said.

The suspect, Nauman Ilahi (24), is from Kairana in Uttar Pradesh, who had been working as a private security guard in the district, the police said on Wednesday.

"...(Ilahi) was in contact with some people in Pakistan and was supplying



sensitive information to them," Karnal SP Ganga Ram Punia, who is also holding an additional charge as Panipat SP, said. When asked who Ilahi

was in touch with, Punia said, "These things are part of investigations. We have seized his mobile phone, and further investigation is ongoing."

Ilahi's arrest comes amid heightened alert in Haryana in the wake of the recent military confrontation with Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror attack last month.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to cease all firing and military actions on

land, air and sea with immediate effect following four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes that brought the two countries to the brink of full-scale war.

This arrest comes close on the heels of another incident in which Punjab Police said they have arrested two persons, including a woman, for their alleged involvement in espionage activities linked to a Pakistani official posted at the High Commission in Delhi. *(PTI)*

# Bangladeshi man, agent held for helping 17 illegal immigrants acquire Indian passports

**AHMEDABAD, May 14:** The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) has arrested two persons, including a Bangladeshi national, for allegedly helping illegal immigrants from the neighbouring country acquire Indian passports using forged documents, officials said on Wednesday.

A total of 17 Bangladeshi nationals acquired Indian passports with the help of these accused, identified as Mohammad Didarul Alam and Shoeib Qureshi, the ATS said in a release.

A third accused, Robiul Islam, is hiding in South Korea, said the release.

ATS said that Alam, alias Rana Sarkar, illegally entered India from Bangladesh in 2012. His accomplice Qureshi,

originally from Rajasthan, has been running a shop named 'Al Quresh Enterprise' in the city's Narol area since 2015 for providing services like filling online forms for Aadhaar, PAN and passport, ATS said.

A native of Kishoreganj district of Bangladesh, Alam came to Ahmedabad in 2015 and got an Indian passport in 2017 using fake papers.

Since 2018, Alam has been running a shop named 'VIP Mobile and Money Transfer' in Baug-E-Kausar locality in Narol area.

With the help of Islam and Qureshi, Alam started helping illegal migrants obtain Indian passports using bogus birth certificates, rent agreements, Aadhaar and PAN cards, said the release.

Acting on a tip, the ATS raided Alam's shop a few days ago and recovered several Aadhaar and PAN cards, election ID cards, and an identity card issued by the Bangladesh government, besides other documents.

During a similar raid at Qureshi's shop, ATS discovered nearly 300 copies of forged Aadhaar, PAN cards and birth certificates, said the anti-terror agency.

The data stored in Qureshi's computer showed that the trio had helped 17 Bangladeshi nationals get Indian passports with the help of fake documents. Also, the applications of nine Bangladeshi nationals are pending with the Indian passport authorities, said the release. *(PTI)*

# Northeast may attract fresh investment of Rs 2.5-3 lakh cr, says Scindia ahead of biz summit

**NEW DELHI, May 14:** Fresh investment in northeastern states may go up in the range of Rs 2.5-3 lakh crore across sectors, Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Wednesday ahead of the business summit.

Union minister for the Development of North Eastern region (DoNER) Scindia said his ministry has received investment commitment of Rs 1.12 lakh crore from nine roadshows organised by his ministry and does not include any old



investment that has already been announced earlier. The minister was speaking during the curtain raiser

of the two-day Rising Northeast Investors' Summit 2025, scheduled to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 23.

Scindia said the DoNER ministry will ramp up investment numbers till the summit ends on May 24.

"You got to add to this kitty, the six industrial houses that we have met and what they are going to invest. Plus, you got to add to this kitty all what the PSUs are going to invest. The rough order book should be between Rs 2.5 lakh and 3 lakh crore," Scindia said.

Scindia has held one-on-one meetings with large conglomerates, including the Tata Group, Reliance Industries, Aditya Birla Group, etc, for investment in the northeastern region.

After the summit, DoNER will work with the Investment Promotion Authorities set up by the northeastern states to develop the investments on the ground, Scindia said.

"We will be hand-holding the investors and the state government to convert these commitments into reality," the minister added. *(PTI)*

# J-K: FIR against missing soldier for claiming Pahalgam attack was 'inside job'

**SRINAGAR, May 14:** An FIR was registered on Wednesday against a missing soldier after a video appeared on social media in which he had claimed that the Pahalgam terror attack was an "inside job".

The soldier, Dlhair Mushtaq Sofi, is a sepoy of 29 Rashtriya Rifles and a resident of the Tral area of Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district, according to police.

"The missing report... was lodged on 11.03. 2025. (It) has been converted into an FIR after a video showing him surfaced on social media," a police official said.

In the video, Sofi claims

that he is aware of "each and everything and how fake encounters are being done."

"Indian government, RAW, IB and Army were involved in the Pahalgam attack. I wanted to stay silent, but my conscience does not allow me to remain silent anymore," says the soldier in the video.

The soldier also mentions that his parents had committed a mistake by making him join the armed forces.

The police official said the video, verified by Sofi's father and uncle, prompted the registration of FIR No. 75/2025 under Sections 197(d), 152 BNS at Police

Station Ganderbal.

Section 197 of the BNS deals with offences related to imputations, assertions or communications prejudicial to national integration. The section covers making false or misleading statements that could endanger India's sovereignty, unity, or integrity.

Section 152 deals with the acts endangering India's sovereignty, unity and integrity.

The police official said preliminary enquiry has revealed the soldier was involved in online gambling and had debts exceeding Rs 10 lakh.

An investigation has been initiated, the official added. *(PTI)*

# Andhra to develop port-based economy with Rs 3,500 cr ship-building project: CM Naidu

**AMARAVATI, May 14 :** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced a strategic plan to develop a port-based economy harnessing the state's 1,000 kilometre-long coastline, establishing ports or fishing harbours at every 50 km interval.

The chief minister outlined that the plan is expected to spur economic growth in the state and generate employment and create infrastructure.

"We have unveiled a strategic plan to build a port-based economy by harnessing Andhra Pradesh's 1,000-kilometre coastline," said Naidu in a press release issued on Tuesday.

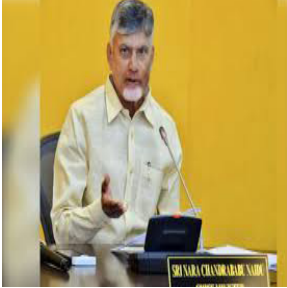
As part of the central government's bifurcation-era commitment, a

major initiative was discussed to establish a Ship Building and Repair Cluster at Dugarajapatnam in Nellore district.

The project, based on an initial feasibility report, is proposed to be developed over 2,000 acres through collaboration between the central and state governments. Of the 2,000 acres, 1,000 acres will be allocated for core ship-building units and another 1,000 acres for ancillary industries.

The plan includes setting up a greenfield port integrated with a ship-building and repair hub featuring four dry docks, outfitting jetties, and a ship-lift facility.

The estimated central investment of the project is Rs 3,500 crore, with the Government of Andhra Pradesh contributing



land as equity.

The chief minister said that a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) will attract global ship-building players and the project will bring Rs 26,000 crore investments creating 5,000 direct jobs, and 30,000 indirect jobs.

The chief minister instructed officials to prepare a detailed action plan to expedite the project. He also emphasised improving cargo movement via Visakhapatnam Port, crucial to the state's growth. *(PTI)*

PUBLIC UTILITIES

HOSPITALS

General Hospital, Naharlagun

0360-2246677 (Casualty Wing) / 0360-2244293 (O) CMO 0360-2244156 (O) Med. Supdt. / Ambulance General Hospital 0360-2244479

R.K. Mission Hospital, Itanagar:

Enquiry: (8:00 am to 8:00 pm) : 9774068893 & 2212263

Emergency: (8:00 pm to 8:00 am): 9774068893 & 2291626

Dialysis unit : 9856000167, Ambulance Service: 2291626

Heema Hospital, Itanagar : 2291094

NIBA HOSPITAL, PAPUNALLAH, NAHARLAGUN:

0360-2244574, 2351200

Raj Bhawan Dispensary:

0360-22122402

Hospitals in Guwahati:

GNRC Hospital - 0361-2227701, 2227702, 2227703

Down Town Hospital - 9864101111, 9864102222

GMC Hospital - 0361-2528417, 2529457

International Hospital - 0361-2347700, 2347701

B. Barooah Cancer Institute - 0361-2472364

POWER HOUSE ENQUIRY

ITANAGAR: C Sector- 2212241, Central Power House- 2212251, MOWB-II- 2212260, RK Mission- 2212269, Chandra Nagar- 2290409

NAHARLAGUN

Power House- 2244173, 22440038, Nirjuli- 2257577, 2257546, Banderdewa- 2266246, Doimukh- 2277243

CHILDLINE 1098 Day & Night

FIRE SERVICE

Itanagar- 0360-2212640|Naharlagun- 0360-2244399

POLICE STATION

Itanagar- 0360-2212233 Naharlagun- 0360-2244329

Banderdewa- 0360-2266236 Nirjuli (OP)- 0360-2257220

Doimukh- 0360-2277220

APST BUS SERVICE

From Itanagar

Itanagar Counter- 9774034571 / 8729868842

Naharlagun Counter - 03602351490

A. NIGHT SERVICES

1. Itanagar-Shillong (Daily)

2. Ita/Nlg-Daporijo (Daily)

3. Itanagar-Khonsa (Monday & Thursday)

4. Itanagar-Namsai (Daily)

5. Itanagar-Bomdila (Daily)

6. Itanagar-Aalo (Daily)

7. Itanagar-Dimapur (Daily)

8. Itanagar-Liromoba/Kamba (Daily)

B. DAY SERVICE

1. Itanagar-Guwahati (Daily)

2. Itanagar-Pasighat (Daily)

3. Itanagar-Pasighat (Daily)

4. Itanagar-Aalo (Daily)

5. Itanagar-Lilabari (Daily except Sunday)

6. Itanagar-Bomdila (Alternate day Except Thursday)

7. Itanagar-Jote (Daily except Sunday)

8. Naharlagun-Leporiang (Alternate day Except Sunday)

9. Nlg-Pakke-Kessang Alternate day (Except Sunday)

10. Naharlagun-Sonajuli (Daily Except Sunday)

11. Naharlagun-Balljan (Daily Except Sunday)

12. Naharlagun-Hawa camp Daily (Except Saturday)

13. Naharlagun-Kakoi Daily (Except Sunday)

14. Naharlagun-Gohamukh (Daily Except Friday)

15. Itanagar-Roing (Sumo) (Daily)

16. Itanagar-Koliriang (Sumo) (Daily)

DEPARTURE

: 4:00 pm

: 12 noon

: 1:00 pm

: 1:00 pm

: 4:30 pm

: 2:30 pm

: 3:00 pm

: 1:00 pm

: 6:00 am

: 6:00 am

: 11:00 am

: 6:00 am

: 3:30 pm

: 6:00 am

: 6:00am & 12.00noon

: 6:00 am

: 6:00 am

: 11:00 am

: 1:00 pm

: 12 Noon

: 1:00 pm

: 1:00 pm

: 6:00 am

: 6:00 am

DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES:

Your kind nature will bring many happy moments today. It's another high-energy day and unexpected gains are foreseen. Invitation in an award function of your child would be the source of happiness. You would likely to see your dream coming true as he lives up to your expectations. You are likely to be misunderstood in lover affair. You will experience an improvement in your approach and the quality of work at office today. During the night today, you would like to get away from your home and take a walk on the terrace or in a park. Your spouse might get too busy for you today.

TAURUS:

Today you are under magic spell of hope. Incase you are looking for ways to make little extra money- invest in secure financial schemes. Great day when you would receive all the attention you want- you would have many things lined up and you would have problems in deciding which ones to follow. Romance seem to take a backseat today as your beloved behaves highly demanding. Work at office will gain momentum as colleagues and seniors extend full cooperation. Today, you can come back from office and get indulged in some of your favourite hobbies. This will calm you down.

GEMINI:

Best day to restart to improve your health. You will make good money if you invest in conservative investment. A letter by post brings happy news for the entire family. You are likely to be dazzled by some natural beauty today. You can double your output- if you concentrate on your work. In your free time today, you can play any game. However, there is a possibility of an accident taking place, which is why you must remain alert all the time. Those who say that marriage is all about sex, they lie. Because today, you will know what true love is.

CANCER:

You are likely to enjoy some sporting activity which will maintain your physical fitness. You'll come to understand the fact today that investing often proves to be very beneficial for you, as any old investment made by you an offer profitable returns. Evenings with friends or shopping will be highly pleasurable and exciting. Your love life will bring you something really really awesome today. You will be in a position to put together major land deals and coordinate many people in entertainment projects. People of this zodiac sign need to stay away from alcohol or cigarettes today.

LEO:

Don't drink alcohol as it may upset your sleep and prevent you from deep rest. Any of your chronic diseases may bother you today, due to which you may have to go to the hospital and spend a lot of money. Family members or spouse will cause some tensions. Your sweetheart is going to become your living angel today; cherish the moments. Interacting with eminent people will bring you good ideas and plans. Stay away from gossip and rumours. You will do something really exciting with your spouse today. Remedy :- Health will enhance by placing crystal balls in bedroom.

VIRGO:

Meditation and yoga should be practiced for spiritual as well as physical gains. Today, investing in land or any property can be fatal for you. Avoid making such decisions as much as possible. Family members or spouse will cause some tensions. You will catch the eye of a special someone-if you move about within your group. Fresh problems will surface for you at workplace-especially if you don't handle things diplomatically. You may bear the brunt of your senior over numerous incomplete tasks left unattended by you in the past. Today, your free time will also be spent on completing your office work.

LIBRA:

Pressure from seniors at workplace and discord at home might bring some stress- which would disturb your concentration at work. Control your tendency to live for the day and to spend too much time and money on entertainment. People close might take undue advantage of you- if you behave extra generous. Likely to share candyfloss and toffees with beloved on the cards. Use your judgment before you sign up for any costly venture. Avoid getting friendly with people who waste your time. This is going to be the best day of your married life. You will experience the true ecstacy of love.

SCORPIO:

No need to worry about you health today. People around you will lift your morale and spirits. If you were about to take a loan and had been engaged in this work for a long time, then today is your lucky day. Get everybody to your big party- You'll have that extra bit of energy today which will make you organize events for your group. Don't allow your romantic views to be aired. Today you have a tendency to set your objectives much higher than you generally do- Do not get disappointed if results don't come as per your expectation. Your sharp observation will help you stay ahead of others.

SAGITTARIUS:

Victory celebrations will give you tremendous joy. You can share this happiness with friends to enjoy your joy. Expenditure rises but rise in income takes care of your bills. Relatives would try to take undue advantage of your extra generous behaviour. Control yourself otherwise you might be deceived. You must remember generosity to some extent is good but if it crosses a limit it might create some problems. No hope for romance today Your boss might praise your work today. Amidst your busy life, you will get enough time for yourself today and be able to do your favorite things.

CAPRICORN:

You are likely to spend your time in sports to maintain your physical stamina. Avoid any long-term investments and try to go out and spend some pleasant moments with your good friend. It is high time to change your dominating attitude in family. Work in close cooperation with them to share the ups and downs of life. Your changed attitude will give them unlimited joy. You may be overwhelmed by proposing as it unburdens you. Today you will be in the spotlight- and success is well within your reach. This day can be one of the best days for you, as you can plan well for a prosperous future.

AQUARIUS:

Try to avoid rich and high cholesterol diet. Today, one of your parents can lecture you on the importance of saving money. You need to listen to them very carefully, otherwise you may face problems in the upcoming time. Get together with family or close friends to make it an excellent day. If you feel that your beloved does not understand you, then take some time out and spend it with them. Talk openly and speak out your heart clearly. Enroll yourself into short-term programs that will help you learn latest technologies and skills. Busy natives will finally be able to spend some time alone after a long while.

PISCES:

Outdoor sports will attract you- Meditation and yoga will bring gains. Real estate investment would be lucrative. Unexpected guests crowd your place in the evening. Those undertaking a small vacation with their beloved will have a highly memorable period. Some co-workers would not like your way of handling certain important issues- but might not tell you- If you feel results are not as good as you had expected- it will be wise to review and alter the plans at your end. In any case, you should not waste your precious time. Remember to cherish the time, as once its gone, it won't ever come back.



# Justice B R Gavai sworn in as next CJI

NEW DELHI, May 14: Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai, who has been part of several benches that delivered landmark rulings including the one upholding the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 bestowing special status to Jammu and Kashmir, was on Wednesday sworn in as the 52nd Chief Justice of India.

The 64-year-old was administered oath by President Droupadi Murmu at a brief ceremony at the Ganatantra Mandap in the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

He succeeds Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who demitted office on Tuesday on attaining the age of 65.

CJI Gavai, who was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019, will have a tenure of over six months and would demit office on November 23.

He took the oath of affirmation in Hindi.

Soon after he took oath, CJI Gavai sought blessings of his mother Kamal Tai Gavai by touching her feet. He was greeted by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra



Modi, Union ministers and former judges.

PM Modi later posted pictures of the swearing in on his social media handle.

"Wishing him the very best for his tenure," the prime minister wrote on X.

Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, J P Nadda and Arjun Ram Meghwal attended the swearing in ceremony along with former president Ram Nath Kovind.

Born on November 24, 1960, in Amravati, Justice Gavai was elevated as an additional judge of the Bombay High Court on November 14, 2003. He became a permanent judge of the high court on November 12, 2005.

Justice Gavai has been

a part of several Constitution benches in the apex court which delivered path-breaking verdicts.

He was part of a five-judge Constitution bench which in December 2023 unanimously upheld the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 bestowing special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Another five-judge Constitution bench, of which Justice Gavai was a part, annulled the electoral bonds scheme for political funding.

He was part of a five-judge Constitution bench which, by a 4:1 majority verdict, gave its stamp of approval to the Centre's 2016

decision to demonetise Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 denomination currency notes.

Justice Gavai was also part of a seven-judge Constitution bench, which by a 6:1 majority held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes, which form a socially heterogeneous class, for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and educationally more backward among them.

A seven-judge Constitution bench also having Justice Gavai ruled that the arbitration clause in an unstamped or insufficiently stamped agreement between parties was enforceable as such a defect was curable and did not render the contract invalid.

In an important verdict, a bench headed by Justice Gavai laid down pan-India guidelines and said no property should be demolished without a prior showcause notice and the affected must be given 15 days to respond.

He is also heading the bench which is hearing matters related to forests, wild-

life and protection of trees.

He had joined the bar on March 16, 1985, and was the standing counsel for the Municipal Corporation of Nagpur, Amravati Municipal Corporation and Amravati University.

Justice Gavai was appointed an assistant government pleader and additional public prosecutor in the Bombay High Court's Nagpur bench from August 1992 to July 1993.

He was appointed a government pleader and public prosecutor for the Nagpur bench on January 17, 2000.

According to the memorandum of procedure -- a set of documents guiding appointment, elevation and transfer of high court and Supreme Court judges -- the law minister writes to the CJI to name his or her successor.

The memorandum of procedure says the senior-most judge of the apex court is considered fit to hold the office of the CJI and the views of the outgoing head of the judiciary have to be sought "at an appropriate time". (PTI)

## Op Sindoor marks 'milestone' in India's journey towards technological self-reliance: Defence Ministry

NEW DELHI, May 14: Operation Sindoor showcased the sharp rise of India's defence power and technological might as the military delivered precision strikes and neutralised Pakistani terror targets without crossing the borders, the Defence Ministry said on Wednesday.

The operation also produced concrete evidence of hostile technologies neutralised by Indian systems that included pieces of PL-15 missiles of Chinese origin and Turkish unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) named "Yiha" or "YEE-HAW", it said.

It marked a "milestone" in India's journey towards technological self-reliance in military operations, the ministry said on Operation Sindoor.

In perhaps referring to the strikes on the terror targets on early May 7, the ministry said the Indian Air Force bypassed and jammed Pakistan's Chinese-supplied air defence systems, completing the mission in just 23 minutes and demonstrating India's technological edge.

"Long-range rockets, quadcopters and commercial drones - these were recovered and identified, showing that despite Pakistan's attempts to exploit advanced foreign-supplied weaponry, India's indigenous air defence and electronic warfare networks remained superior," it said.

India's air defence systems, combining assets from the Army, Navy, and primarily the Air Force, performed with exceptional synergy and these systems created an impenetrable wall, foiling multiple attempts by Pakistan to retaliate, the ministry said while

highlighting various aspects of the operation.

India carried out precision strikes on terror infrastructure early on May 7, following which Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10.

The Pakistani actions were strongly responded to by the Indian side. The Indian military targeted eight Pakistani airbases with missiles and other long-range weapons on May 10 in retaliation for Pakistan's attempts to strike 26 military facilities.

"Operation Sindoor emerged as a calibrated military response to an evolving pattern of asymmetric warfare, one that increasingly targets unarmed civilians along with military personnel," the ministry said.

"The terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam in April served as a grim reminder of this shift. India's response was deliberate, precise, and strategic."

Beyond tactical brilliance, what stood out was the seamless integration of indigenous hi-tech systems into national defence, the ministry said.

Whether in drone warfare, layered air defence, or electronic warfare, Operation Sindoor marks a milestone in India's journey towards technological self-reliance in military operations, it added.

The ministry said India's offensive strikes targeted key Pakistani airbases -- Noor Khan and Rahimyar Khan -- with surgical precision.

Loitering munitions were used to devastating effect, each finding and destroying high-value targets, including enemy radar and missile systems, it said.

Loitering munitions, also known as "suicide drones" or "kamikaze drones", are weapons systems that can hover or circle a target area, searching for a suitable target before attacking.

A unique blend of counter-unmanned aerial systems, electronic warfare assets, and air defence weapons, as well as shoulder-fired weapons, were deployed to counter enemy threats.

The ministry said the multi-tier defence prevented Pakistan air force attacks on Indian airfields and logistic installations during the night of May 9-10.

"These systems, built over the last decade with continuous government investment, proved to be force multipliers during the operation," it said.

"They played a crucial role in ensuring that both civilian and military infrastructure across India remained largely unaffected during enemy retaliation attempts," it added.

The ministry said all strikes were executed without loss of Indian assets, "underscoring the effectiveness of our surveillance, planning, and delivery systems."

The use of modern indigenous technology, from long-range drones to guided munitions, made these strikes highly effective and politically calibrated, it said in a statement.

The Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) of the Indian Air Force brought all these elements together, providing the net-centric operational capability vital for modern warfare, it added. (PTI)

## Congress to take out rallies to question PM's 'silence' on Trump's ceasefire claims

NEW DELHI, May 14: The Congress on Wednesday accused the BJP of "politicising" Operation Sindoor and said it would take out rallies across the country to question the Prime Minister's "silence" on US President Donald Trump's claims of mediating a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

Addressing a joint press conference after a meeting attended by several Congress Working Committee members and senior leaders, party general secretary Jairam Ramesh and Congress media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said the BJP was trying to make the military action a "brand" for itself when the operation belongs to the armed forces and the country.

The Congress announced that in the coming days, 'Jai Hind Sabhas' will be held in various states to demand answers from the government and party leader Rahul Gandhi will address a press conference here on Friday.

The Congress made the assertions after the meeting that was attended by former Congress president Rahul

Gandhi, general secretaries Ramesh, K C Venugopal, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and Sachin Pilot, among others, at its 24, Akbar Road office here. Gandhi chaired the proceedings as Kharge was not present due to personal reasons.

A CWC resolution was adopted at the meeting which said the attack in Pahalgam raises "deeply troubling" questions about an "apparent intelligence failure".

"Despite heightened tensions and known threats in the region, the terrorists managed to execute a major attack, claiming precious lives. While we wait for an official assessment, it is unfortunate that no accountability has yet been fixed," the resolution said.

The terrorists responsible for the Pahalgam attack remain at large, and the CWC demands their immediate apprehension and prosecution, it said. The government must explain how such a lapse was allowed to occur and why necessary preventive measures were not taken despite clear warnings, it said.

"National security cannot be managed through public relations exercises

on television; it demands professional rigour, vigilance, and institutional accountability," the resolution said.

The resolution said equally surprising was the abrupt end to India's retaliatory action against Pakistan, which has left behind a trail of unanswered questions.

"The sudden halt, without clarity or communication, has led to speculation and concern across the country. Adding to this is the deeply problematic statement by US President Donald Trump, who was the first to claim that a ceasefire was brokered with the use of trade threats and pressure on India," the resolution said.

The government's silence on this matter is inexplicable and unacceptable, it said.

The Congress said successive Indian governments, cutting across party lines, have firmly maintained that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. President Trump's assertion, "unchallenged by the Modi Government, has internationalised a matter that must remain firmly within bilateral

frameworks", it said.

"This represents a dangerous and unprecedented hyphenation of India with Pakistan, which compromises our national position and prestige," it said.

The CWC also strongly condemned the "appalling statements" of Madhya Pradesh minister Vijay Shah on Colonel Sofiya Qureshi

Such behaviour is not only disgraceful but also undermines the dignity of our armed forces and the principles of gender respect within the military, the resolution said.

The CWC demanded his immediate resignation and called upon the government to initiate strict action under applicable laws.

The party's working committee expressed grief over the deaths of soldiers, officers, and civilians in Poonch and offered deepest condolences to their families.

In view of these grave concerns, the CWC reiterates its demands put forward by the Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for an immediate all-party meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the con-

vening of a special session of Parliament.

"At this time of national crisis, the government must take the Opposition and the people of India into confidence. Transparency, unity, and democratic dialogue are not weaknesses, but are the bedrock of strong and effective governance. The nation deserves answers, not evasion," the party said.

"Since April 22, we have consistently advocated for unity and solidarity. Yet, on the 25th of this month, the Prime Minister has convened a meeting exclusively with NDA chief ministers. This is a blatant attempt to politicise the operation. Why has he not attended a single all-party meeting so far?" it said.

At a time like this, he should have convened a meeting of all chief ministers, cutting across party lines, the Congress said.

Ramesh also accused the BJP of politicising Operation Sindoor. "We condemn the politicisation in the strongest terms," he asserted.

He said the BJP was indulging in "maximum silence on real issues and maximum politicisation". (PTI)

## Bihar BJP takes out 'Tiranga Yatra' in Patna

PATNA, May 14: The Bihar BJP on Wednesday took out "Tiranga Yatra" in Patna to celebrate the success of Operation Sindoor.

A large number of party workers, led by state president Dilip Jaiswal, started the yatra from the statue of Maharana Pratap on S P Verma Road and it culminated at Kargil Chowk near the historic Gandhi Maidan.

Those who participated in the yatra also included Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, Bihar JD(U) chief Umesh Kushwaha, and several other ministers, MPs, MLAs and workers. JD(U) is the alliance partner of the NDA

government at the Centre and the state.

The participants, carrying the national flag, expressed solidarity with the security forces and sent out a message of unity. They raised slogans hailing the success of Operation Sindoor and in support of the armed forces.

Addressing party workers, Jaiswal said, "The 'Tiranga Yatra' is not a political event... it's a demonstration of patriotism of the countrymen. Operation Sindoor is a clear demonstration of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's resolve to eliminate terrorists in their safe haven."

"The party aims to con-

nect with citizens across communities, emphasising a message of patriotism, national solidarity, and respect for the Tricolour. The yatra will focus on showcasing the bravery of the armed forces while connecting with citizens beyond political lines," the state BJP president said.

The yatra will be held at all division offices in the state on Thursday and from Friday, it will be organised at block levels across the state till May 23.

Operation Sindoor started on the night of May 7 with precision attacks on nine sites in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan destroying terrorist infrastructure. (PTI)

## Jaishankar congratulates Indo-Canadian Anita Anand on her appointment as Canada's foreign minister

NEW DELHI, May 14: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday congratulated Indo-Canadian lawmaker Anita Anand on her appointment as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Union minister extended greeting to his Canadian counterpart in a post on X.

"Congratulate @AnitaAnandMP on your appointment as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs," the EAM posted.

Indo-Canadians Anand and Maninder Sidhu have landed important portfolios in the new cabinet announced by Prime Minister Mark

Carney after reshuffle.

While Anand was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sidhu is the new Minister for International Trade in the new cabinet announced on Tuesday.

Carney announced the reshuffle almost two weeks after his Liberal Party won the federal elections in Canada. He replaced Justin Trudeau months ahead of the elections.

Anand, 58, was the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry before the polls and in the past has served in the roles including of defence minister. She replaced Melanie Joly, who is now the Minister of Industry. (PTI)

## SDPO threatens suicide alleging mental harassment by SP

BALASORE, May 14: A sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) in Odisha's Balasore district on Wednesday threatened to commit suicide for being subjected to mental harassment allegedly by the Superintendent of Police, an official said.

Brajmohan Pradhan (58), SDPO (Basta) with additional charge of SDPO (Jaleswar) in a letter to the IGP, Eastern Range, alleged that Balasore SP Raj Prasad insulted him in public and also assigned him the charge of SDPO of two separate places to put pressure on him.

Pradhan said he is posted as SDPO (Basta) and has been

assigned additional charge of SDPO (Jaleswar). He also alleged that he was not getting any support from the office to discharge his duty.

Demanding the withdrawal of the charge of SDPO (Jaleswar), Pradhan allegedly threatened to commit suicide if his request is not fulfilled.

He was admitted to a government hospital in Jaleswar after he complained of uneasiness.

Meanwhile, DIG Eastern Range Satyajit Naik visited Pradhan at the hospital, inquired about his health conditions and spoke to him regarding his grievances.

"I have discussed with

the SDPO regarding the issues surrounding his allegations. He had previously levelled accusations against SP Balasore, alleging torture and harassment," the DIG told PTI.

"I am inquiring into the allegations and other angles also," Nayak said.

The SP Balasore did not respond to phone calls.

JD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty, in a social media post criticised the state government for the mental torture of a tribal officer, especially considering that Odisha has a tribal chief minister who is also in charge of the Home Department. (PTI)

## Muslim youth forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' in UP's Mathura; case registered

MATHURA (UP), May 14: A Muslim man was allegedly forced to chant "Jai Shri Ram" and subjected to religious harassment by a group of youths in Mathura's Jamuna Par police station area, police said on Wednesday.

The accused also recorded a video of the incident and circulated it online.

A case has been registered based on a complaint filed by the victim, Sohail, according to Ajay Kishore, Station House Officer

(SHO), Raya police station.

Sohail, who works as a scrap dealer, told police he was visiting Chhota Deewana village in the district on Sunday to collect scrap when a group of youths stopped him.

He alleged that they misbehaved with him, made derogatory remarks, and then forced him to chant "Jai Shri Ram".

He further claimed the youths filmed the incident and made the video viral on social media platforms.

Sohail identified one of the accused as Tunda, while the others remain unidentified.

The victim approached the police on May 12 and submitted a written complaint, SHO Kishore said.

Based on his complaint, a case has been registered against one named and five unidentified individuals.

A probe has been initiated, and efforts are underway to identify and apprehend the accused, police added. (PTI)



# India appears to have had 'clear edge' in targeting Pak's military facilities: NYT report

**NEW YORK, May 14:** India appears to have had a "clear edge" in targeting Pakistan's military facilities and airfields during the recent four-day confrontation, the New York Times reported, citing satellite images.

High-resolution satellite imagery, from before and after the strikes, shows "clear damage" to Pakistan's facilities by Indian attacks, according to the report.

"The four-day military clash between India and Pakistan was the most expansive fighting in half a century between the two nuclear-armed countries. As both sides used drones and missiles to test each other's air defences and hit military facilities, they claimed to inflict severe damage," the report said.

It added that satellite imagery indicates that while the attacks were widespread, the damage was far more contained than claimed — "and appeared mostly inflicted by India on Pakistani facilities."

In the new age of high-tech warfare, the report said that



strikes by both sides, verified by the imagery, appeared to be precisely targeted.

"Where India appears to have had a clear edge is in its targeting of Pakistan's military facilities and airfields, as the latter stretch of fighting shifted from symbolic strikes and shows of force to attacks on each other's defence capabilities," the report said.

At Bholari air base, located less than 100 miles from the Pakistani port city of Karachi, India's defence officials said they had struck an aircraft hangar with a precision attack. "The visuals

showed clear damage to what looks like a hangar," the NYT report said.

Further, the Nur Khan air base, within a roughly 15-mile range of both the Pakistani Army's headquarters and the office of the country's prime minister and a short distance from the unit that oversees and protects Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, was "perhaps the most sensitive military target that India struck."

The Indian military said it had particularly targeted the runways and other facilities at some of Pakistan's key air bases and "satellite

images showed the damage", the report said, noting that on May 10, Pakistan issued a notice for the Rahim Yar Khan air base saying that the runway was not operational.

At Sargodha air base, in Punjab Province in Pakistan, the Indian military said it had used precision weapons to strike two sections of the runway.

"Satellite images of the sites Pakistan claimed to have hit are limited, and so far do not clearly show damage caused by Pakistani strikes even at bases where there was corroborating evidence

of some military action."

On the Pakistani officials' claim that their forces had "destroyed" India's Udhampur air base, the NYT report said "an image from May 12 does not appear to show damage."

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. The Indian armed forces launched a fierce counter-attack on several Pakistani military installations, including Rafiqui, Murid, Chaklala, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur and Chunian.

Radar sites at Pasrur and Sialkot aviation base were also targeted using precision munitions, causing massive damage.

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

# Military ops against India was 'designed' under supervision of Nawaz Sharif, claims Punjab minister

**LAHORE, May 14:** The military operation against India was "designed" under the supervision of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif, claimed a provincial minister on Wednesday.

Nawaz, the former three-time premier and elder brother of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, had congratulated Pakistan's civil and military leadership soon after the two countries reached an understanding on Saturday to end the conflict.

"The whole operation against India was designed under the supervision of former prime minister and PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif," Pakistan's Punjab province Information Minister Azma Bukhari claimed.

She said Nawaz is not a leader of "a, b, c, d type", rather his work speaks for himself.

"It was Nawaz Sharif who made Pakistan a nuclear power and now designed the whole operation against India," the minister claimed.

If the claim by Bukhari is true, then it is reflective of Nawaz's influence over the civil as well as military leadership of the country.

Interestingly, Nawaz at-



tended a high-level meeting at the PM House convened to assess the Indo-Pak tensions on May 8. The meeting was called a day after India hit nine terror infrastructure sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

Since Nawaz holds no government portfolio, he attended the meeting in the capacity of the head of the ruling party government, the Express Tribune had reported.

In the meeting, the elder Sharif pitched for utilising all available diplomatic resources to restore peace with India, the report said.

"I am not in favour of taking an aggressive position (against India)," Nawaz was quoted as saying.

Following the Indian

action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10.

Nawaz had been advocating for a diplomatic solution to the rising tensions with India.

"Pakistan is a peace-loving country and prefers peace, but also knows how to defend itself," Nawaz said in a post on X on Saturday.

"Thanks be to Allah Almighty for making Pakistan proud. I congratulate and congratulate the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shahbaz Sharif, the Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Sindhu, and the armed forces of Pakistan," he said.

Nawaz was the prime minister of Pakistan during the Kargil war of 1999. (PTI)

# Japan grounds military training aircraft after crash leaves 2 crew members missing

**TOKYO, May 14:** Japan grounded most of its aging military training aircraft on Wednesday after one of the planes crashed minutes after take off.

Two crew are missing after the T-4 training aircraft operated by the Japan Air Self-Defence Force crashed after taking off from Komaki Air Base, in the central Japanese prefecture of Aichi, officials said.

The force said the plane was lost from radar two minutes after departure. The authorities are searching for the missing aircraft and its

crew in an area near a reservoir known as the Iruka pond, officials said. The reservoir, in the city of Inuyama, is about 10 kilometres northeast of the air base.

The military has grounded temporarily nearly 200 T-4s until the cause of the accident is identified and safety checks and training are carried out, Hiroaki Uchikura, the air force chief of staff, told a news conference late Wednesday.

The crashed plane was a 36-year-old T-4 operated out of Nyutabaru Air Base,

in the southern prefecture of Miyazaki. It was not fitted with a voice recorder or a flight data recorder.

Defence Minister Gen Nakatani earlier Wednesday told reporters that parts of the aircraft have been found at the crash site. Officials were also preparing to collect fuel apparently leaked from the aircraft and floating in the reservoir, Nakatani said.

Lifesaving equipment and helmets of the crew were also found, Uchikura said.

Witnesses told the

NHK national broadcaster that they heard a loud noise like thunder, followed by sirens of police cars and fire engines.

The T-4 was returning to Nyutabaru air base after its crew had earlier helped deliver a F-15 fighter jet to Komaki Air Base for scheduled maintenance, Uchikura said.

A captain with more than 1,000 hours of flight experience had piloted the F-15, while a first lieutenant piloted the T-4. Both were in the T-4 on their way back to Komaki when the inci-

dent happened.

The crash is the latest in a series of defence aircraft accidents in recent years.

In April 2024, two SH-60K navy reconnaissance helicopters crashed during nighttime anti-submarine training near Torishima island, about 600 kilometres south of Tokyo, leaving all eight crewmembers dead.

In 2023, an army UH-60JA Black Hawk helicopter on a reconnaissance mission crashed off a southern island of Miyako, with the loss of 10 crew. (AP)

# Indian heritage Anita Anand is Canada's new foreign minister; Sidhu given International Trade



**OTTAWA, May 14:** Indo-Canadians Anita Anand and Maninder Sidhu have landed important portfolios in the new cabinet announced by Prime Minister Mark Carney after reshuffle.

While Anand was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sidhu is the new Minister for International Trade in the new cabinet announced on Tuesday.

Carney announced the reshuffle almost two weeks after his Liberal Party won the federal elections in Canada. He had replaced Justin Trudeau months ahead of the elections.

Anand, 58, was the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry before the polls and in the past has served in the roles including of defence minister. She replaced Melanie Joly, who is now the Minister of Industry.

"I am honoured to be named Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs. I look forward to working with Prime Minister Mark Carney and our team to build a safer, fairer world and deliver for Canadians," Anand, an MP from Oakville East, posted on X soon after taking oath.

Sidhu, 41, also took to X after swearing-in and said, it is an "honour of a lifetime" to be appointed as Canada's International Trade Minister.

"I'm grateful to Prime

Minister @MarkJCarney for the confidence he's placed in me to diversify trade, support Canadian businesses in reaching new global markets, and help create good-paying jobs across Canada," he said.

"I'm proud to stand alongside my colleagues as we work together to build the fastest-growing economy in the G7," he added in the post on X.

Sidhu's appointment as the Minister for International Trade comes at a time when Canada is battling the Trump administration's aggression towards Canada on tariffs.

Anand, who was a front-runner in the race to be the next prime minister to replace Trudeau, had in January declared that she is backing out from the race and also that she would not be seeking re-election. However, she had reversed the decision on March 1 saying, "Canada is facing a crucial moment in our nation's history."

Born and raised in rural Nova Scotia, Anand moved to Ontario in 1985.

The Prime Minister of Canada's website mentions that Anand was first elected as a Member of Parliament for Oakville in 2019 and previously served as President of the Treasury Board, as Minister of National Defence, and as Minister of Public Services and Procurement.

"Anand has worked as a scholar, lawyer, and re-

searcher. She has been a legal academic, including as a Professor of Law at the University of Toronto, where she held the J R Kimber Chair in Investor Protection and Corporate Governance," it said and listed her other academic achievements too.

According to Sidhu's website, the entrepreneur has been an MP from Brampton East since 2019 and for over four years, he has also been a Parliamentary Secretary at Global Affairs Canada "helping to strengthen diplomatic relations, promoting international trade, and supporting international development."

The Canadian prime minister's new cabinet has 28 ministers and they would be supported by 10 secretaries of State who will provide "dedicated leadership on key issues and priorities within their minister's portfolio," a statement said Tuesday.

Among the secretaries — basically junior ministers — is Randeep Sarai, Secretary of State (International Development). He is a member of parliament from Surrey Centre.

"Canada, meet your new Cabinet. This is a team that is empowered and expected to lead. Together, we will create a new economic and security relationship with the United States and build a stronger economy — the strongest economy in the G7," Carney said in a post on X as he shared a small video of the team together.

Soon after, Carney shared another post on X where he shared a photo of the new cabinet team members standing behind him as he addressed the media and said: "Canada has a new government. No matter how you voted, we are in your service. Together, we will build a stronger, more united Canada." (PTI)

# IMF disburses USD 1.023 bn tranche to Pak; to hold virtual discussions about budget

**KARACHI/ISLAMABAD, May 14:** The International Monetary Fund has disbursed a second tranche of USD 1.023 billion under the Extended Fund Facility programme for Pakistan, the central bank said on Wednesday.

The disbursement of the second tranche comes on a day when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is holding virtual discussions on Pakistan's upcoming budget as the visit of its mission to Islamabad was delayed due to security concerns in the region.

With the transfer, the total disbursements stand at approximately USD 2.1 billion under the IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) of USD 7 billion, which was signed between Pakistan and the global lender last year.

The federal government is planning to unveil the budget for fiscal 2025-26 on June 2.

The IMF talks will continue until May 16.

The Central bank said the second tranche amount would be reflected in its foreign exchange reserves for the week ending May 16.

The amount was approved last week by the IMF board under the ongoing Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and allowed an additional arrangement for the USD 1.4

billion Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

The RSF is intended to support countries facing climate vulnerabilities and natural disasters by strengthening long-term macroeconomic stability and resilience.

Pakistan is heavily dependent on the IMF bailout package which helped to shore up its dwindling reserves. The country got backing of the fund at a critical time last year when it was on the verge of bankruptcy and was saved by the lender by providing \$3 billion on a short term basis.

According to the details on the IMF website, Pakistan has received at least 25 bailout loans since becoming members of the fund. Interestingly, different governments announced to say goodbye to the IMF but so far failed to fulfil the promise.

The decision to release the funds came after the IMF expressed satisfaction on the first review of Pakistan's economic reform programme supported by the EFF Arrangement, the bank said.

The IMF noted that Pakistan's policy efforts under the EFF had already delivered "significant progress" in stabilising the economy and rebuilding confidence,

amidst a challenging global environment.

"Fiscal performance has been strong, with a primary surplus of two per cent of gross domestic product achieved in the first half of FY25, keeping Pakistan on track to meet the end-FY25 target of 2.1 per cent of GDP.

Pakistan's gross reserves stood at USD 10.3 billion at end-April, up from USD 9.4 billion in August 2024, and are projected to reach USD 13.9 billion by end-June 2025 and continue to be rebuilt over the medium term, it was pointed out.

Meanwhile, the IMF talks that started virtually Wednesday will continue until May 16.

The global lender has appointed a new mission chief to Pakistan and the mission is now expected to travel to Islamabad over the weekend, subject to the security situation, government sources told The Express Tribune on Tuesday.

The IMF mission delayed its scheduled arrival here on Tuesday due to uncertainty caused by the India-Pakistan conflict that had affected air travel across the region.

"Virtual discussions are expected to be held from today. For the second and final leg of the talks, the

IMF team is expected to arrive in Islamabad on Saturday and stay until May 23," the source said.

The IMF's Resident Representative to Pakistan Mahir Binici did not respond to a request for comment on the change in the travel plan.

Finance Ministry spokesperson Kumar Abbasi also did not respond to questions on the change in the travel plans.

Meanwhile, the IMF appointed Iva Petrova, a Bulgarian origin staff member, as new Mission Chief to Pakistan. She would join the discussions along with the outgoing Mission Chief Nathan Porter - who served in the position for an extended term.

Binici also did not comment on whether both outgoing and new mission chiefs would join both rounds of talks.

Petrova, who holds a PhD degree in economics from the Michigan State University, has been serving as the IMF Mission Chief to Armenia. Previously, she had served with the missions to Israel, Iceland and Latvia.

In Pakistan, the fiscal policy is expected to remain tight in the next fiscal year too. The IMF has asked Pakistan to make a budget on the assumption of having 1.6 per cent of the GDP primary

budget surplus, which will require generating about Rs 2 trillion over and above the non-interest expenses.

The tax target for the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is proposed to be 11 per cent of the GDP or Rs 14.3 trillion. The IMF would examine whether the government plans to take credibly realistic measures to back the new tax target, said the sources.

The IMF has set multiple fiscal conditions, whose successful completion has so far helped smooth continuation of the programme despite initial setbacks.

Pakistan has met the IMF targets for a primary budget surplus by the federal government, as well as net revenue collection and cash surplus targets by the four provinces.

Against a primary surplus target of Rs 2.7 trillion, the federal government reported a surplus of Rs 3.5 trillion, or 2.8 per cent of GDP.

The size of the federal budget still remains tentative due to redoing of defence needs and the government plans to announce less than Rs 18 trillion budget. The overall budget deficit target after incorporating a large provincial cash surpluses is projected at 5.1 per cent of the GDP or Rs 6.7 trillion, the sources said. (PTI)



# At Cannes opening, Robert De Niro calls Trump 'America's philistine president'

**CANNES, May 14:** Much of the cinema world, including Robert De Niro, Leonardo DiCaprio and Quentin Tarantino, descended on the Cannes Film Festival as the French Riviera extravaganza got its 78th edition underway.

Expectations are running high for a potentially banner Cannes. All of the ingredients — loads of stars, top-tier filmmakers, political intrigue — seem to be lined up.

Over the next 12 days, Cannes will play host to megawatt premieres including those of “Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning”, Spike Lee’s “Highest 2 Lowest” and Ari Aster’s “Eddington”.

DiCaprio skirted the red carpet but drew a standing ovation when he presented De Niro with an honorary Palme d’Or on Tuesday. The moment, which brought together two of Martin Scorsese’s most regular stars, came 49 years after “Taxi Driver” was crowned with the Palme d’Or.

DiCaprio praised De Niro as “the archetype” actor, while also praising the 81-year-old performer — a



fierce critic of US President Donald Trump — for “fighting for our democracy.”

When the crowd rose to its feet for a lengthy ovation for De Niro, DiCaprio handed him the Palme. “Thanks, kiddo,” said De Niro.

After thanking the festi-

val, De Niro quickly turned to speaking about Trump, who recently said he wants to enact a tariff on films made outside the country.

“Art is the truth. Art embraces diversity. And that’s why art is a threat to the autocrats and the fascists of the world,” said De Niro. “America’s philistine president has had himself appointed head of one of America’s premier cultural institutions. He has cut funding and support to the arts, humanities and education. And now he an-

nounced a 100 per cent tariff on films made outside the United States. You can’t put a price on connectivity.”

The opening ceremony, which preceded the premiere of Amelie Bonnin’s French romance “Leave One Day”, was attended by Tarantino, who emerged to grandly declare the festival open, and then promptly dropped the mic and walked off stage.

On Wednesday, Tarantino will pay tribute to Western filmmaker George Sherman. Also in attendance: Sean Baker, the “Anora” director and last year’s Palme d’Or winner.

The ceremony capped a busy day at Cannes that included a three-film salute to Ukraine, the introduction of the jury that will decide the Palme d’Or, headed by Juliette Binoche, and the debut of a restoration of Charlie Chaplin’s “The Gold Rush” for its 100th anniversary.

Cannes is coming off a 2024 festival that produced a number of eventual Oscar contenders, including “Emilia Perez”, “The Substance”,

“Flow” and the best picture winner, “Anora”.

Asked Monday if he’s feeling the pressure this time around, festival director Thierry Fremaux said the only kind of pressure he believes in is in beer. (Beer on tap in France is “biere a la pression.”)

Cannes launched the same day Gerard Depardieu, one of France’s most famous actors, was found guilty of having sexually assaulted two women on a 2021 film set. In one of France’s most prominent #MeToo cases, Depardieu was given an 18-month suspended prison sentence. The 76-year-old has long been a regular presence at Cannes.

This year’s Cannes Film Festival, the premier international cinematic gathering, is also unspooling following Trump’s call for tariffs on movies made overseas. Confusion over the still-unformed plans characterized most responses.

“I don’t know what to say, really, about that,” Binoche told reporters Tuesday. “We can see that

he’s fighting and trying in many different ways to save America and save his ass.”

Along with Binoche, the other eight jurors include Halle Berry and Jeremy Strong, who was unable to attend Cannes last year for the premiere of his Trump film “The Apprentice”. Strong referenced that film, which led to his first Oscar nomination, in his comments on the American president Tuesday.

“Truth is under assault,” said Strong. “Specifically at this temple of film, the role of film is increasingly critical because it can combat those forces in the entropy of truth, and can communicate truths, individual truths, human truths, societal truths, and affirm and celebrate our shared humanity.”

Berry, responding to Cannes’ new protocols on attire for the red carpet, said she had “an amazing dress” with a long train for the opening ceremony but wore something else instead. Cannes has outlawed nudity and dresses with long trains for its evening premieres at the Palais.

“I had to make a pivot,” said Berry. “But the nudity part, I do think is probably also a good rule.”

Cannes will follow up Tuesday’s festivities with the return Wednesday of Tom Cruise. Three years after he brought “Top Gun: Maverick” to the festival, he’s back with the latest “Mission: Impossible” movie.

Twenty-two films vie for Cannes’ top prize, the Palme d’Or, to be presented May 24. Those films include Wes Anderson’s “The Phoenician Scheme”, Richard Linklater’s “Nouvelle Vague”, Lynne Ramsay’s “Die, My Love”, Joachim Trier’s “Sentimental Value”, Kelly Reichardt’s “The Mastermind”, Oliver Hermanus’ “The History of Sound”, Julia Ducournau’s “Alpha” and Jafar Panahi’s “A Simple Accident.”

In Cannes’ Un Certain Regard section, three prominent actors are making their directorial debuts: Harris Dickinson (“Urchin”), Kristen Stewart (“The Chronology of Water”) and Scarlett Johansson (“Eleanor the Great”). (AP)

## Bella Ramsey on growing up between 'Game of Thrones', 'The Last of Us': I'm more self-assured now

**NEW DELHI, May 14:** As someone who started acting at the young age of 11, British actor Bella Ramsey never imagined pursuing a career that would lead to starring in not one but two critically-acclaimed and popular shows like "Game of Thrones" and "The Last of Us".

Ramsey, who identifies as non-binary and uses the pronouns as they/them, shot to fame with their role of the courageous and spirited Lyanna Mormont in HBO's epic fantasy series "Game of Thrones".

The popularity of their performance in the show led to their casting in another HBO series "The Last of Us", based on a video game of the same name. In the show, Ramsey stars alongside fellow "Game of Thrones" alum Pedro Pascal; the two never shared screen time in the earlier series.

"I was 11 when I started on 'Game of Thrones', and now I'm 21. So I've been doing this for 10 years now. It's been a while and I think that I was really well protected throughout my time in the industry...

"I'm so grateful for the opportunity in 'Game of Thrones' because it sort of set me up for the rest of this career that I didn't know was going to happen. And I didn't even know that I wanted it until it started happening," Ramsey told

PTI in a group interview.

Ramsey said earlier they used to be hard on themselves if they felt they didn't perform well in a scene. However, they have realised that one imperfect scene doesn't define the whole project.

"I've become maybe more self-assured... I've got to a point where I understand the process of filmmaking a lot more than I did when I was 11. So it has let me give myself more grace in terms of like realising if one scene I'm like at 95 per cent and not on a 100 per cent. It's okay.

"It's like 20 seconds in an entire series, especially with 'The Last of Us'. So I think that I've understood the process of filmmaking more, which has kind of helped me as an actor. Also, I want to explore all the other ventures within the film industry."

"The Last of Us", created by Craig Mazin of "Chernobyl" fame and Neil Druckmann, is set over two decades after the destruction of modern civilisation.

The first season of the HBO series, which premiered in 2023, followed Joel (Pascal), a hardened survivor tasked with escorting a teenage girl, named Ellie (Ramsey), across an post-apocalyptic America ravaged by a deadly fungal outbreak.

In season two, which takes place five years after the first chapter's events, Joel and Ellie are drawn into conflict with each other and a world even more dangerous and unpredictable than the one they left behind, according to the official logline.

Ramsey, now 21, said they felt "quite similar in age" to Ellie while filming for season two.

"I think my voice got a bit deeper. Maybe that's something that's a little more nuanced... Ellie's growing up and has become a bit more gruff," they said, adding that Ellie in the second season is more of a protector.

"In season one, she was protected by Joel and sort of needed to be taken care of. She didn't like that, she thought she could get through without Joel... In season two, she has even more of this protective energy over herself and the people around her... She is establishing her independence," Ramsey added.

For the actor, it was nice to see their character evolve as the story progresses.

"Growing up and becoming an adult with an overprotective parental figure, that's always a clash, especially when the parental figure and the kid are kind of the same person. So that was an interesting dynamic to play this season."



A notable aspect of "The Last of Us" is the terrifying, fungus-infected humans known as "infected". Their grotesque transformations and deadly behaviour are the result of a mutated Cordyceps fungus.

Ramsey said they shot the show's first season during the COVID-19 pandemic and the world around that time felt eerily similar to "The Last of Us".

"There was an apocalypse (going on). And the show was mimicking an aspect of real life. In season two, I feel the post-apocalyptic-ness of 'The Last of Us' is very much the backdrop for this really human and emotional story, which is why it connects with so many people... having the extreme violence, aggression and terror of the general world around them."

"The Last of Us", which is streaming on JioHotstar in India, also features Gabriel Luna and Rutina Wesley alongside Kaitlyn Dever, Isabela Merced, Young Mazino, Ariela Barer, Tati Gabrielle, Spencer Lord, Danny Ramirez and Jeffrey Wright.

The series is produced by PlayStation Productions, Word Games, Mighty Mint and Naughty Dog. (PTI)

## True couture doesn't need stage: Gaurav Gupta after Halle Berry skips his gown due to new Cannes rule

**NEW DELHI, May 14:** We remain proud of the vision we created together, says celebrated Indian designer Gaurav Gupta after Cannes jury member Halle Berry had to pass over wearing his gown at the film gala's opening ceremony due to updated dress code regulations.

At the opening presser of the 78th Cannes Film Festival on Tuesday, Berry said she was supposed to wear a dress designed by Gupta but couldn't opt for it because "the train is too big".

The festival updated its dress policy on the eve of its 2025 edition, stating "nudity" and "voluminous outfits, in particular those with a large train" are prohibited on the red carpet.

Gupta said his teams had been working closely with Berry and her stylist to bring "a special moment to



life at Cannes".

"While the gown couldn't be worn due to updated regulations around long trains, we remain proud of the vision we created together. True couture doesn't always need a stage; sometimes, just the intention is enough to ignite the imagination," Gupta told PTI when reached out for a comment on Berry skipping to wear his designs.

The designer also shared a video of Berry's comments on his Instagram Story on Tuesday.

"I had an amazing dress to wear tonight by Gupta, and I cannot wear it because the train is too big. I'm not going to break the rules. The nudity part is also probably a good rule," Berry says in the clip.

She eventually appeared on the red carpet in a sleeveless dress with vertical black and white stripes from French fashion brand Jacquemus' summer-spring 2025 ready-to-wear collection.

Gupta has previously designed Cannes looks for Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Mindy Kaling, and Aditi Rao Hydari. Last week, he dressed Bollywood actor Kiara Advani for her Met Gala debut. (PTI)

## FWICE, AICWA ask producers to boycott Turkiye for film shoots in light of its support towards Pak

**NEW DELHI, May 14:** The Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) on Wednesday appealed to Indian artistes and producers to boycott Turkiye as a shooting destination in the wake of its pro-Pakistan stance.

Later in the day, All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) also announced a complete boycott of Turkiye for film shoots and other cultural collaborations.

The development comes after Turkiye criticised India's strike on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir in retaliation of the Pahalgalam terror attack. Islamabad had also used Turkish drones in the conflict.

Following its support to Pakistan, calls for boycott-

ing Turkish goods and tourism have surfaced across India, with online travel platforms like EaseMyTrip and Ixigo issuing advisories against visiting the country.

"The Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), the apex body representing 36 crafts of workers, technicians, and artists in the Indian media and entertainment industry, strongly urges all Indian film producers to reconsider choosing Turkey as a shooting destination in light of its growing support towards Pakistan on matters that deeply concern India's national interests," the FWICE said in a statement.

"We therefore appeal to all production houses, line producers, actors, directors, and crew members across the Indian film fraternity to

stand in solidarity with the nation and boycott Turkey as a location for film shoots until such time that the country revisits its diplomatic stance and aligns with principles of mutual respect and non-interference," the federation further said.

The FWICE said it hopes the Indian film community will "respect this appeal in the larger national interest".

In a statement shared on X, the AICWA said no Bollywood or Indian film project will be shot in Turkiye, effective immediately. No Indian producers, production houses, directors, or financiers will be allowed to take any film, television, or digital content projects to the country, it added.

"Turkish actors, filmmakers, production houses, and

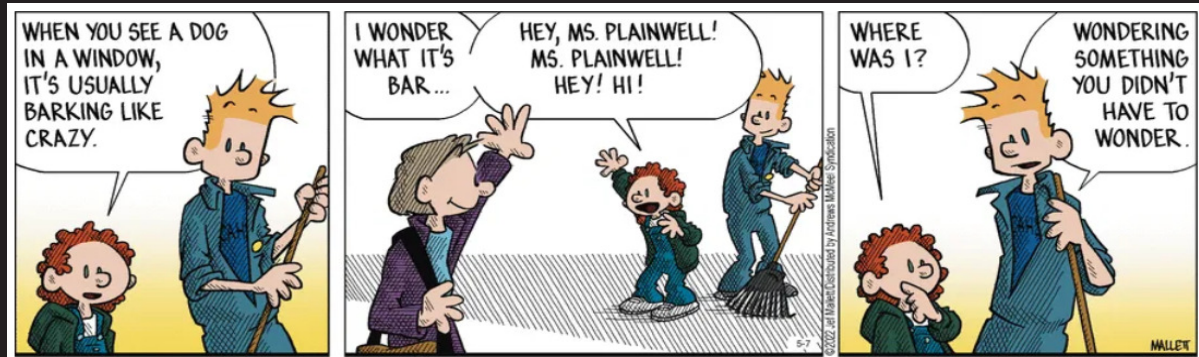
other creative professionals will no longer be permitted to work in the Indian entertainment industry. Any existing contracts or agreements with Turkish entities must be reviewed and, where possible, terminated.

"AICWA will closely monitor the activities of Indian film professionals and organisations to ensure compliance with this directive," the statement read.

Strict action will be taken against any individual or entity found violating the decision of the AICWA, it added.

Not only Turkiye, India's trade relations with Azerbaijan is also expected to come under strain due to Baku backing Islamabad and condemning India's recent strikes on terror camps in Pakistan. (PTI)

### FRAZZ



By Jef Mallett

### BIG NATE



By Lincoln Peirce

### DON BRUTUS



By Chip Sansom



## Lakshya bows out of Thailand Open; Malvika, Aakarshi, Unnati advance



**BANGKOK, May 14:** Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen suffered a shock defeat but the trio of Malvika Bansod, Aakarshi Kashyap and Unnati Hooda advanced to the women's singles second round after hard-fought victories in the USD 475,000 Thailand Open Super 500 tournament here on Wednesday.

World No. 10 pair of Tressa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, currently the best-ranked Indians in the world, also made a positive start to their campaign, reaching the

second round with a 21-15 21-13 win over Malaysia's Ong XY and C Ting.

The third-seeded Indian combination, which is returning after missing the Sudirman Cup mixed team championships due to injuries, will next square off against Japan's Rui Hirokami and Sayaka Hobara.

Sen, a 2021 World Championships bronze medallist, fell to Ireland's Nhat Nguyen in a tense three-game battle, losing 18-21 21-9 17-21 in a men's singles match

that lasted one hour and 20 minutes.

After dropping the first game, Sen found his rhythm in the second, dominating with aggressive rallies. However, Nguyen held his nerve in a close-decider, edging ahead at 17-13 before sealing the win.

World No. 33 Priyanshu Rajawat too made a first-round exit as he went down 13-21 21-17 16-21 against Alwi Farhan of Indonesia.

In women's singles, world No. 23 Malvika, a runner-up

at the 2024 Hylo Open, ousted Turkey's Neslihan Arin 21-12 13-21 21-17 to set up a clash with former world champion Ratchanok Intanon, seeded seventh.

Aakarshi survived a thrilling contest against Japan's Kaoru Sugiyama, winning 21-16 20-22 22-20. It was a match of narrow margins, with the Indian holding her nerve in the final stages of the decider.

The 17-year-old Unnati, the 2022 Odisha Masters and 2023 Abu Dhabi Mas-

ters winner, also fought her way through to the next round, registering a gritty 21-14 18-21 23-21 victory over Thailand's Thamowan Nithittikrai.

Unnati, who reached the semifinals at Taipei Open last week, will face top seed Thai Pornpawee Chochuwong, while Aakarshi meets fourth seeded Supanida Katethong, also from Thailand.

However, it was the end of the road for Rakshitha Sree Santhosh Ramraj, who lost her women's singles opener 18-21 7-21 to eighth seed Yeo Jia Min of Singapore.

Former national champion Anupama Upadhyaya, who was part of India's Sudirman Cup team, too fell by the wayside, going down 11-21 9-21 to Thailand's former world champion Ratchanok Intanon.

The women's pair of K Selvam and S Singhi, and men's pair of P Krishnamurthy Roy and S Pratheek K also lost in the opening round of doubles events.

National Games gold medallist Tharun Manneppalli will face Justin Hoh of Malaysia later in the day. *(PTI)*

## Punjab FC crowned AIFF U-17 Elite Youth League champions

**GUWAHATI, May 14:** Punjab FC dished out a dominant display as they clinched the AIFF U-17 Elite Youth League title after defeating Jamshedpur FC 4-1 here on Wednesday.

A superior first-half show saw Punjab surge ahead 4-0 at the break through goals from Karish Soram (28th minute), Ashish Lohar (34th), Vikash Kisku (37th) and Usham Thougamba Singh (39th).

Heerangamba Seram (84th) pulled one back for Jamshedpur FC late in the match.



After a cagey start to the game, Karish broke the deadlock with a fine goal, curling the ball in from the corner just after the half-hour mark. The goal changed the complexion of the game.

A few minutes later,

Ashish Lohar made a smart interception on the half-line, just as Jamshedpur were looking to put bodies forward in attack. The full-back sprinted up the line, turned inside, stepped past the keeper, and sent the ball into the net from an acute angle.

Punjab FC captain Aniket Yadav got involved in the third goal, making a bustling run into the box before squaring it to Kisku who tapped it in from close range.

Usham Singh was the

creator and scorer of the fourth goal, as he played Thongram Rishikanta Singh into a half-space. The latter unleashed a left-footer that crashed into the upright and fell kindly into Usham's path, as he scored into a near-empty goal.

The mountain that Jamshedpur had to climb proved to be too high in the second half. Although Heerangamba scored an 84th minute header to pull one back, they were just too far behind to mount any semblance of a comeback. *(PTI)*

## Carlos Alcaraz and Coco Gauff advance to Italian Open semifinals with straight-set wins

**ROME, May 14:** Carlos Alcaraz won in straight sets despite a strong challenge from Jack Draper to reach the Italian Open semifinals, and Coco Gauff extended her unbeaten streak against Mirra Andreeva to also advance to the last four at the clay-court tournament Wednesday.

Alcaraz was made to work hard on his serve and saved six of the eight break points he faced on his way to a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Draper, who beat him earlier this year.

The third-ranked Alcaraz, who withdrew from the Madrid tournament due to an upper right leg problem that bothered him during the Barcelona Open final, moved well on the court, often took to the net and used his trademark drop shots and groundstrokes to the best effect.

The four-time Grand Slam champion, who also had a left leg injury, had lost to Draper in their most recent meeting in the semi-

finals at Indian Wells, California, in March.

Alcaraz rallied from 2-4 to claim the first set. A turning point then came in the eighth game of the second set, when Draper looked like he could force a decider. That game lasted almost 10 minutes and Alcaraz saved two break points before coming out on top. Alcaraz broke at love in the next game and sealed the match.

"The most important thing that I did today was not thinking about the shots at all," Alcaraz said. "Not thinking about the fact that I was down, just trying to do the things that make me happy. On court I just tried to be aggressive, play good shots, drop shots, go to the net. That's what I like to do on the court, and I think that made the difference today."

Alcaraz's next opponent will be either defending champion Alexander Zverev or Lorenzo Musetti.

**Gauff in control**

In the women's draw,

Gauff played aggressively throughout to advance to the last four for the third time with a 6-4, 7-6 (5) win.

Both players hit high-quality shots in the tiebreaker, including Andreeva's superb drop shot just behind the net from a tight angle that allowed her to level at 5-5 before Gauff won the last two points to seal the match.

Gauff has won all four of her matches against the 18-year-old Andreeva, having also beaten her at the French Open and U.S. Open in 2023, and two weeks ago in Madrid.

Gauff will next play the winner between No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka and Zheng Qinwen. Jasmine Paolini and Peyton Stearns face off in the other semifinal.

Rome is the last big warm-up before the French Open starts on May 25.

**Sinner meets the pope**

Also Wednesday, top-ranked Jannik Sinner visited the new pope, gave him a ten-



nis racket and offered to play, during an off day for Sinner. Leo XIV, the first American pope, is an avid tennis player.

The pope and Sinner posed for photos in front of the Davis Cup trophy that Sinner helped Italy win for the second consecutive time last year.

Sinner has a quarterfinal match Thursday in his first tournament back after a three-month ban for doping that was judged to be an accidental contamination. He will next face freshly-crowned Madrid champion Casper Ruud, who beat Jaume Munar 6-3, 6-4. *(AP)*

## Pahalgam fallout: Pakistan doubtful for Asia Cup hockey in Rajgir

**NEW DELHI, May 14:** The national federation is awaiting a government advisory but Pakistan's participation in this year's Hero Asia Cup hockey tournament in India is in serious doubt because of the prevalent tension between the two countries after the Pahalgam terror attack.

The Asia Cup will be staged in Rajgir, Bihar from August 27 to September 7. Hosts India, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Oman and Chinese Taipei are scheduled to participate in the 12th edition of the continental showpiece, a qualifying tournament for next year's World Cup to be held in Netherlands and Belgium.

"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," HI secretary general Bholanath Singh told PTI.

"We can't predict anything right now especially after the recent barbaric Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor that India conducted following that.

"There is still close to three months for the tournament but we will abide by what our government suggests us. There are no two ways about it."

In the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives and injured many, the govern-

ment ordered all Pakistani nationals to leave the country and revoked their visas.

A fortnight after the gruesome incident, India responded launched 'Operation Sindoor' and carried out missile strikes on terrorist hubs in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

This led to further escalation as Pakistan launched drone and missile attacks, which were neutralised by India's robust air defence system. India responded by hitting military installations and air defence systems located in prominent Pakistani cities like Lahore and Rawalpindi among others.

The two countries agreed to a ceasefire on May 10 after Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations reached out to his Indian counterpart.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address to the nation, made it clear that any engagement with Pakistan will hinge on clear evidence of action against terrorism by that country.

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

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.

"It's very hard to predict right now whether a new team will be added in such a scenario or it will be a seven team tournament. The Asian Hockey Federation will take a call on this," the official said on condition of anonymity.

The last time a Pakistani hockey team did not compete in a multi-nation event in India was the 2016 Junior World Cup, which took place a few months after a terror attack at the Pathankot air base.

Malaysia had replaced the Pakistani team in that event.

The current scenario has also put a question mark on Pakistan's participation in the upcoming Junior World Cup to be held in Chennai and Madurai from November 28 to December 10.

The Asia Cup assumes high significance as it is a World Cup qualifier, with the winner earning a direct spot for next year's mega-event that will be held in the Belgian city of Wavre and Netherlands' Amstelveen from August 14 to 30.

Five-time winners South Korea are the defending champions with both India and Pakistan seeking their fourth Asia Cup title. *(PTI)*

## Top Indian cyclist Esow Alban hit by two bikers during on-road training ride

**NEW DELHI, May 14:** Top Indian cyclist Esow Alban was on Wednesday hit from behind by two bikers while he was on a training ride on the road near the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex here but fortunately escaped with "minor" injuries.

The 24-year-old Esow from Andaman and Nicobar Islands resides and trains at the SAI Cycling Academy, which houses a top-class velodrome. The facility at the IG Sports Complex has got recognition from the world body UCI.

"Today, I was hit from behind by two bikers during my training ride. They were speeding at over 100 km/h. I was in my lane. Focused. Disciplined. Yet they

blamed me and showed no regret," Esow wrote on his Instagram handle.

"I'm grateful to be safe, with only a few scratches." His buttock and hands had bruises and the rear wheel of his cycle was broken from the impact.

Esow is the first Indian cyclist to win an individual medal at the global level, a silver in keirin event at the 2018 junior track world championships. He won a silver in sprint and a bronze in keirin in the 2019 edition also.

"This could've been worse -- not just for me, but for any cyclist on the road. To everyone out there: We cyclists are not in your way. We are humans. We are athletes. We represent our na-

tion," he said.

"Respect cyclists. Give us space. Give us safety."

"Thank you to my coach, team coach, and the officer who stood by me and are helping with the investigation."

Cycling Federation of India Secretary General Maninder Pal Singh said it was a "minor" accident and Esow "is fine now".

"He (Esow) has been given first aid and he is fine now. It was a minor accident and he is at his room. He should be able to train again tomorrow," Singh told PTI.

"He was on a routine training ride on the road (near IG Sports Complex). He was behind a bus and then hit by a bike." *(PTI)*

## IPL allows temporary replacements considering non-availability of a few foreign players

**NEW DELHI, May 14:** The Indian Premier League on Wednesday allowed teams to make temporary replacements in their squad for the remainder of the tournament considering the non-availability of a few foreign players owing to the forced rescheduling of the event.

IPL had to be suspended last week due to the India-Pakistan military conflict but the announcement of the ceasefire paved the way for its resumption on May 17.

As per the original schedule, the IPL final was to be held on May 25 but now it will take place on June 3, making it trickier for the players who had to report for national duty.

While a few players are not returning due to personal reasons, the likes of

Jamie Overton, representing CSK this season, will stay back in the UK for the white-ball series against the West Indies at home.

In an email to franchisees which was accessed by PTI, IPL informed the teams of the temporary replacement player option.

"... in the current situation, where we had to temporarily suspend IPL 2025, resulting in its completion beyond the earlier set-out date of May 25, 2025, we have reassessed the Replacement Player provisions.

"Given the non-availability of certain foreign players due to national commitments or personal reasons or any injury or illness, Temporary Replacement Players will be allowed until the conclusion of this

tournament.

"This decision is subject to the condition that the Temporary Replacement players taken from this point forward will not be eligible for retention in the following year," IPL said in its note.

As per the IPL Player Regulations 2025-27, players can be replaced if they are injured or ill, provided the injury or illness occurs during or before the 12th league match of the relevant team in that season.

"Temporary Replacement players will have to register for the IPL Player Auction 2026. The replacements which were approved or taken before the suspended period will be eligible for retention ahead of 2026 player auction," the note added. *(PTI)*