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Senior IAS officer arrested by ACB in liquor scam case

Ranchi (Agency): Jharkhand's senior IAS officer and current principal secretary of Panchayati Raj Department Vinay Kumar Choubey was arrested on Tuesday by the state Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in connection with the high-profile liquor scam. The arrest followed a day-long interrogation at the ACB office in Ranchi, marking a dramatic turn in a case that has lingered in the background of state politics and bureaucracy for over two years.

The ACB team arrived at Choubey's residence early in the morning and escorted him to the bureau's office. Sources confirmed that medical personnel were summoned to the ACB headquarters later in the day—a clear indicator of impending custodial action. Around 4:30 pm, Choubey was taken to court, officially confirming his arrest. Former Joint Commissioner of

Excise, Gajendra Singh, was also called in for questioning the same day.

Vinay Kumar Choubey was once a powerful figure in Jharkhand's administrative circles. As a close aide of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, he held



critical departments such as Urban Development and Excise, and played a key role in infrastructure projects like ministerial housing under the Smart City scheme and flyovers in Ranchi. His fall began when the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoned him to Raipur in connection with the liquor scam un-

earthed in neighbouring Chhattisgarh. Following that, Choubey was gradually stripped of key responsibilities and distanced from the Chief Minister's Office. The case dates back to March 2022 when Choubey, then the Excise Secretary, spearheaded the adoption of a new liquor policy in Jharkhand modeled after Chhattisgarh. The earlier excise policy was dismissed as a revenue failure, and the new plan was projected as a more efficient alternative. Meetings were reportedly held in Raipur during this period, and soon after the policy's implementation, a syndicate operating out of Chhattisgarh became active in Jharkhand. This resulted in the circulation of counterfeit holograms and a surge in illicit liquor, severely impacting the state's revenue.

25 thousand will be given for taking the accident victim to the hospital

Indore (Agency): Mohan government of Madhya Pradesh has announced a relief scheme. MP cabinet has announced under Rahveer Yojana that the person who takes the injured person in a road accident to the hospital will be given a reward of 25 thousand rupees. Apart from this, he will be honored with a letter of appreciation and will be kept free from any kind of legal questions. Mohan government of Madhya Pradesh has announced a relief scheme. MP cabinet has announced under Rahveer Yojana that the person who takes the injured person in a road accident to the hospital will

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Although this is a scheme of the central government, but

in Madhya Pradesh, the government announced this scheme during the Indore cabinet meeting held on Tuesday. It is being told that after a long discussion, it has been agreed to implement this scheme in MP. This scheme will be implemented by the end of this month. This will save the lives of injured people and will also give encouragement and respect to the citizens. The most important condition in this scheme is that the seriously injured person has to be taken to the hospital in the 'Golden Hour', so that it can be proved that if he was not taken to the hospital on time, he could have died. If a person injured

in a road accident undergoes an operation, he has to remain admitted in the hospital for at least three days, if there is a serious injury to the head or spine, then in that situation the citizen who takes the patient to the hospital will be entitled to this award. Often people shy away from taking the injured to the hospital to avoid getting caught in the hassle of police and law. In such a situation, due to this scheme, now people will not hesitate to come forward to help. This will help in saving the injured and will also reveal the names of those people who come forward without hesitation to help others.

SC told Waqf Amendments discriminate against Muslims, undermine secularism

New Delhi (Agency): The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 came under intense scrutiny in the Supreme Court on Tuesday, with senior lawyers arguing that the law unfairly targets the Muslim community, imposes discriminatory conditions on Islamic endowments, and threatens the secular character of the Constitution.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih heard more than four hours of submissions from senior advocates Kapil Sibal, Rajeev Dhavan, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, CU Singh, and Huzefa Ahmadi.

The petitioners contended that the 2025 amendment violates Articles 15, 25, 26, and 29 of the Constitution and pointed out that no similar provisions exist in the laws governing religious endowments of other faiths such as the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act, or the Uttar Pradesh Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Act, 1983.

Opening the arguments, Kapil Sibal argued that the amended Act empowers the Central Government to indirectly appoint non-Muslims to the Central Waqf Council, altering the representative character of institutions meant to regulate Muslim religious properties. While State Waqf Boards remain under state jurisdiction, Sibal noted that the Council could now have a non-Muslim majority.

"There would be only eight Muslim members, while the rest may be non-Muslims nominated by the government. Hindu, Sikh, and Christian endowments are regulated solely by members of their own faith. Why this differential treatment?" Sibal asked.

He further criticized the amendment's inquiry mechanism, highlighting that government officers are now empowered to determine Waqf status—acting as judge in their own cause. A waqf, he pointed out, can only challenge the officer's decision after the same proceedings have concluded.

Chief Justice Gavai observed that the amended law now im-

poses harsher consequences for failing to register Waqf properties.

"Earlier, only the mutawalli was penalized for non-registration. Now, the entire Waqf property is affected. This is a drastic change," he noted.



Senior Advocate Huzefa Ahmadi denounced the removal of the concept of "waqf by user" as a regressive step, arguing that it threatens centuries-old mosques, graveyards, and Islamic charitable institutions that were never formally documented but are historically and religiously acknowledged.

"By sleight of hand, such

waqfs now vanish," Ahmadi warned, describing the move as both retrospective and disruptive to the community's heritage.

Abhishek Manu Singhvi questioned why Muslims alone are required to produce proof of religious use over five or ten



years when making an endowment—an obligation not placed on other faiths.

"Endowments exist in every religion. Why this selective religious regulation? This contravenes Article 15," Singhvi said.

Rajeev Dhavan echoed these concerns, asserting that the law violates Articles 25, 26, and 29 of the Constitution.

Unseen, unstoppable, unmatched: Indian Air Force asserts combat readiness after ceasefire

New Delhi (Agency): Reaffirming its combat preparedness in the aftermath of a recent ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has released a powerful video showcasing its operational capabilities and past missions.

The video, posted on X, opens with the message: "Indian Air Force responds with resolve, always." Set to the backdrop of Piyush Mishra's stirring composition "Aarambh Hai Prachand," the montage highlights recent IAF exercises and operations. Phrases such as "Unseen, Unstoppable, Unmatched" and "Swift, Lethal, Agile" appear throughout, underlining the force's agility and power.

During a recent media briefing, Director General Air Operations Air Marshal AK Bharti reflected on the IAF's role in Operation Sindoor.

He quoted a verse from

Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas: "Vinay na maanat jaladh jad, gaye teen din beeti. Bole Ram sakop tab, bhay binu hoye na preeti." ("The ocean, unmoved



by polite requests, remained obstinate for three days. Then Lord Rama, in anger, said—without fear, love does not arise.") The reference underscored the strategic rationale behind India's response posture—balancing restraint with assertiveness when necessary.

"All our military bases and systems remain fully operational and prepared to undertake any mission, should the need arise," Bharti emphasized, affirming continued operational readiness

in case of future contingencies.

On May 7, as part of Operation Sindoor, Indian defense forces targeted nine terror camps located across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK). The coordinated strikes aimed at eliminating infrastructure linked to terrorist organizations including Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Targets included Markaz Subhan Allah, Bahawalpur (JeM), Markaz Taiba, Muridke (LeT), Sarjal, Tehra Kalan (JeM), Mehmoona Joya, Sialkot (HM), Markaz Ahle Hadith, Barnala (LeT), Markaz Abbas, Kotli (JeM), Maskar Raheel Shahid, Kotli (HM), Shawai Nalla Camp, Muzaffarabad (LeT), and Syedna Bilal Camp, Muzaffarabad (JeM). The operation was seen as a calibrated but firm response, intended to neutralize threats without escalating tensions beyond control.

SSB strengthened spirit of national service: Union Home Ministry

New Delhi (Agency): Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the Central armed police force, has instilled a sense of patriotism and attachment among the people living in border villages, Union Home Secretary Govind



Mohan said on Tuesday. Addressing a meeting of senior officers of the SSB and the Ministry of Home Affairs held here to review the operational and administrative functions of the force, the Union home secretary said in its glorious history of over 61 years, the SSB strengthened the spirit of national service and patriotism, living up to

its motto of 'Seva, Suraksha Aur Bandhutva'.

During the meeting, Director General, SSB, Amrit Mohan Prasad, talked about the current structure, border deployment, operational and technological advancements, and the future challenges. He made a presentation highlighting the effective presence of SSB on the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders, the role played by the force in Naxal-affected areas and in terror-affected areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

He informed that during the period starting from 2020 to 2025, the SSB arrested 184 foreign nationals for illegally crossing the border. It rescued as many as 2156 people from human trafficking networks, and also apprehended 1094 smugglers. He also informed that various public welfare schemes, such as medical camps and veterinary services, are also being run by the SSB in the border areas. Several senior officials of the MHA and the SSB attended the meeting.

'11 years, 151 foreign trips, 72 countries': Kharage slams PM Modi's foreign policy

New Delhi (Agency): Congress President Mallikarjun Kharage on Tuesday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his foreign policy, alleging that despite the Prime Minister's 151 foreign visits to 72 countries, including 10 trips to the US, India seems isolated on the global stage.

In a post on X, Kharage said, "PM Modi has been making frequent foreign trips for the last 11 years, but when India needed international support to expose Pakistan, no other country came forward to support us."

The Congress President questioned whether these trips have yielded meaningful results for India's global standing.

He accused PM Modi of making foreign visits more focused on photo opportunities than diplomatic achievements.

Kharage further in the post on X said, "In the last 11 years, Prime Minister Modi has made 151 foreign trips and visited 72 countries. Out of these, he has visited the US 10 times. Yet, our

country stands alone under the Modi government's foreign policy. Is it the Prime Minister's job to visit foreign countries and only pose for photos?"

The Congress President highlighted the International



Monetary Fund (IMF's) USD 1.4 billion loan to Pakistan and the sudden ceasefire declaration during anti-terror operations as examples of India's diminishing influence.

"The IMF has provided a bailout loan of \$1.4 billion to Pakistan. But nobody supported India's stance. A ceasefire was suddenly declared while our brave Armed Forces were con-

ducting operations against terrorists," Kharage said in his post.

He criticised Modi for not addressing US President Trump's claims of brokering the India-Pakistan ceasefire, suggesting a lack of clarity and transparency in India's foreign policy.

"The US President has insulted our country by saying, 'I brokered' the ceasefire between India and Pakistan about 7 times. The entire country was united in the tough action against terrorists, but Modi ji is trying to cover up the issue by not providing clarity to the people of the country regarding US President Trump's statements, so far," added the Congress President.

Earlier, Kharage today criticised the Modi government for alleged security lapses that led to the Pahalgam terror attack, resulting in 26 deaths.

Kharage claimed that the government failed to provide adequate security arrangements for tourists, despite being aware of potential security threats.

BRIEFS

In the Maa Madhidai temple of the town, the boy and the girl got married by exchanging garlands



Staff Reporter Baberu. In the Maa Madhi Dai temple of Baberu town on Monday evening, Abhay Raj, son of Ramkishore, age about 22 years, resident of Mamsi Khurd village of Kamasin police station area and Chandni Devi, daughter of Dayaram, age about 19 years, resident of Sardhuva, both were having a love affair for about four years. In which the girl came from home with her lover Abhayraj of her own free will and first got the court marriage form filled by a lawyer in Chitrakoot, after that at the Madhi Dai temple of Baberu town, both of them got married by wearing the alphabet to each other and filling sindoor in the parting and took blessings by bowing at the Maa Madhi Dai temple. At the time of marriage, other devotees were also present at the Maa Madhi Dai temple of Baberu town. While talking to the journalists, the groom Abhay Raj said that this girl is my elder brother's sister-in-law, we both belong to the same community, and our love affair was going on for about 4 years. And we were also in a relationship, earlier Chandni's parents were ready for the marriage but for the last few days they got angry and used to beat the girl, due to which the girl called me and told me that they beat me so I will commit suicide or else take me away, on the other hand the girl's father used to threaten to trap me. Due to which we both have adopted this path and both of us got married at Maa Madhi Dai temple in Baberu. And we both will live our life well. On the other hand the girl also said that I am an adult and I am getting married of my own free will, I have not married under anyone's pressure.

One Nation One Election Vidhansabha Conference concluded



Staff Reporter Maudha. As per the order of the top leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party, a Vidhan Sabha conference of One Nation One Election was organized in the Pandav Guest House of the town. The chief guest of the program, State Vice President Member Legislative Council Manvendra Singh was welcomed by the people present. In this conference program, the chief guest gave detailed information about One Nation One Election to the people present so that people could understand that the previous governments never thought anything about this subject, due to which our country always went in loss. He told that on the implementation of One Nation and One Election, the country will progress day by day. In this conference program, Rajya Sabha MP Baburam Nishad gave his support about the national election. At the beginning of the program, Sadar MLA Dr. Manoj Prajapati gave a grand welcome to the chief guest and special guest as well as the visitors present with flower garlands. The program was presided over by District President of Khangar Samaj Kishore Kumar. In this conference, Kanpur Bundelkhand Regional General Secretary Sant Vilas Shivhare, District President Sunil Pathak, District Panchayat President Jayanti Rajput, District Coordinator of the program Brij Kishore Gupta, Arun Agarwal, Ramdev Singh, Satti Din Prajapati, Dr. Aradhana Rajput, Arvind Shrivastava, Shakuntala Nishad, Sadhna Singh were present. Rekha Singh, Hina Parveen, Najra Khan, Wahid Ali, Anees Ahmed, Qureshi Naseem, Lala Akash Tripathi, Jitendra Pal, Karan Sahu, Lalaram Nishad and all the divisional presidents and officials of the fronts were present.

The game of fake number plates continues, case filed

Staff Reporter Maudaha. Police has started investigation by registering a case in the case of illegal mining and overloading by mining mafia by putting fake number plates on trucks. Mushir Ahmed, a resident of Sekhanpurwa of Girwan Thama area of Banda district, told in a complaint letter to the Superintendent of Police that after buying a truck UP 91 T 4207 from Mohammad Farid, a resident of Hussainia Qayam Kuan of the town, he had also taken NOC from ARTO Hamirpur. But the said Mohammad Farid is driving his truck by putting fake number plate on other trucks. The truth of which came out after three consecutive challans, the victim told that when he talked to the accused about this, the accused is threatening him. On the complaint of the victim, the police has started investigation by registering a case under other serious sections including fraud.

A woman was molested in a warehouse, a case was filed

Staff Reporter Maudha. A young man working at an electronic equipment shop in the town molested and behaved obscenely with the shop owner's daughter in the warehouse. On the complaint of the victim's mother, the police have registered a case and started the investigation. A woman from the town told in the complaint letter given to the police station that her husband has an electronic equipment shop where Bhainsata resident Gyan Singh Prajapati works. On Monday, her husband had gone to Kanpur to get goods and she was with her daughter at the shop, but she went upstairs for some work and her daughter went to the warehouse, then the accused also followed her to the warehouse and started behaving obscenely and molesting her daughter. After which her daughter told the whole incident to her mother. On the complaint of the victim, the police have registered a case against the accused and started the investigation.

Summer camp focuses on learning with fun



Staff Reporter Banda. In the summer camp to be organized during the summer holidays, emphasis will be laid on children's studies along with fun. Children from class 4 to 6 will develop intelligence through games. The objective of this camp is to strengthen the reading-writing and basic math abilities of children according to their class level. In the training organized in Mahua Block Auditorium on Tuesday, Anganwadi workers were taught the tricks of studying in a creative way with children. Pratham Education Foundation District Coordinator Ranjit Verma said that in the Kamal Camp, special focus will be given on basic math activities with children from class 4 to 6. In the summer camp running from 21 May to 20 June,

The labor room was dependent on one fan, the mother and child struggled with the heat all night

Staff Reporter Sumerpur. The heat is making the pregnant women suffer a lot in the maternity centre located in the Banki road of the town near the new primary health centre. There is only one cooler installed in the maternity centre. That too remains closed due to being out of order. The mothers and children admitted here after delivery keep boiling in the heat throughout the night. A similar scene was seen during the investigation done on Tuesday. The workers who became active after the arrival of the media have started repairing their faulty cooler and fan. On Tuesday at 11.30 AM, a woman who came to the Maternity Centre on Banki

Marg for delivery was moaning in pain. There was only one fan running for air. The cooler was missing. The attendant Sadakali Shyam Kunwar who came along said that there is no cooler. Even cold water is not available. The cooler installed in the Maternity Ward after the delivery was switched off. Here Seema said that the mother and child boil in the heat the entire night. The cooler remains switched off due to being out of order. The situation here has become bad due to the heat. After this, the new Primary Health Centre was inspected. A cooler has been installed in one room after the news was published. The cooler for the other room is being repaired.

Due to the Medical Officer in Charge Dr. Pushpendra Kumar being at the headquarters, the arrangements here are in a bad state. Despite having a budget of lakhs of rupees, the arrangements are in a bad shape. The government hospitals which treat the sick are themselves sick in the name of arrangements. The Medical Officer in Charge said that in both the hospitals, the broken coolers for providing cool air to the patients have been asked to be repaired and installed by evening in any case. Along with this, the water coolers are also being repaired so that the patients can get cool water when they come to the hospital.

Due to unknown reasons, the woman committed suicide by hanging herself, her condition is critical

Staff Reporter Maudaha. Due to unknown reasons, a woman attempted to commit suicide by hanging herself, and has been referred to the Sadar Hospital as her condition became serious. Sumitra Devi (35) Devin, a resident of village Bhaisamari of Sisoler police station area, tried to commit suicide by hanging herself in her house due to

unknown reasons. She was brought to the government hospital of the town for treatment in a critical condition, from where, seeing the woman's serious condition, she was referred to the Sadar Hospital after first aid. At present, the condition of the woman is said to be critical, while the reasons for the suicide attempt are not known.

Rampur mine: Overloading is rampant, accidents await

- Mining businessmen are spoiling the efforts of the administration
- The game of clearance of NR trucks continues in full swing
- Roads are collapsing due to overloading, bridges are cracking

Staff Reporter Banda. Despite the administration's efforts, overloading is not being curbed in the district. Most of the overloading is happening because of the NR trucks coming out of Rampur mine. Rampur mine of Madhya Pradesh has always been surrounded by controversies. The reason is that two of the mine operator Malhotra & Company's agents Meena and Khan have so much influence that the overloaded trucks of looted sand from UP pass under the nose of the responsible officers from the Mineral Department to the GST Department and the Divisional Transport Department. The joint team of all these departments

formed by the District Magistrate takes action in other places. But in the name of action against the NR overloaded trucks coming out of Rampur mine, only formality is done every month. This type of action clearly shows that the influence and magic of Khan and Meena speaks loudly over the heads of the responsible officers of all these departments. Sources tell that Khan and Meena offer bribes every month to the employees from the floor to the bosses sitting at the top. This is the reason why in the dark of the night, without caring about the dilapidated bridge, defying the orders of the former District Magistrate, NR overloaded trucks filled with sand pass through it recklessly. In this way, the UP government incurs a loss of revenue worth lakhs every day. Here, we will tell you about Rampur mine that the entire business of this mine located in Madhya Pradesh runs on stolen sand from UP. Although Rampur mine is located in Madhya Pradesh, illegal mining is carried out indiscriminately under the guise of a legal mine. Because, sand is pulled from Nihalpur located in Naraini

Action taken on nearly two hundred NR trucks in a month

When Joint Commissioner State Tax Department Santosh Verma was talked to in this regard, he told that the joint team formed includes State Tax Department, Divisional Transport Department, Police Department and Mineral Department and continuous action is taken. During the investigation in the last one month, about two hundred and fifty NR trucks were caught and action was taken. He further told that even after the action, the movement of NR trucks is not being stopped. Whenever the joint team does checking, a large number of NR trucks are caught from Girwan to Banda. All its data is also available on the website. Apart from this, he said that action on NR trucks will continue by the joint team in future also.

tehsil area of Uttar Pradesh by heavy banned machines, under the patronage of Khan and Meena, by ripping the chest of Ken river and is taken to Rampur mine of Madhya Pradesh. The same sand pulled from Rampur mine from UP is again loaded in overloaded trucks and sent to Akbarpur of Girwan without valid documents, by taking minute to minute location of the trucks. These sand filled trucks leave for their respective places from the bypass located in front of the Medical College without Ravana. The most surprising thing is that the department of the joint team formed by the District Magistrate only does a formality in the name of

action. With full protection of the responsible people, illegal sand of Rampur is taken through UP indiscriminately in overloaded vehicles. On one hand, this overloaded sand causes loss of government revenue. On the other hand, Akbarpur bridge connecting two provinces located in Girwan police station area has become dilapidated due to the movement of these vehicles. Any untoward incident can happen at any time. Apart from this, all the roads on this route have been destroyed due to the movement of overloaded vehicles. It has become difficult for the passersby to walk. But the responsible people do not care about it.

Connect socially and economically backward women to the group - BDO



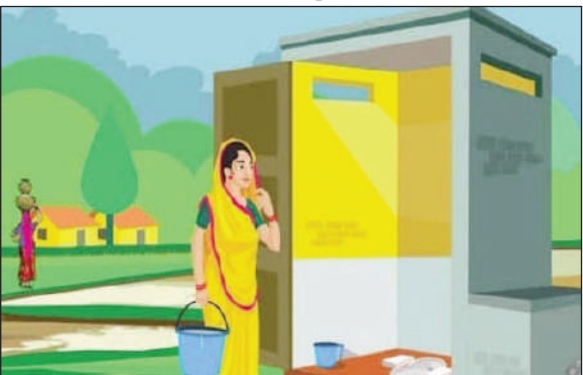
Staff Reporter Pratapgarh, Kunda. Under the Prime Minister's vision of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas, connect socially and economically backward women in the village to the group. BDO Praveen Kumar Srivastava said these things to the group and bank friends in the NRLM meeting held in the block auditorium. BDO

reviewed the work of group sakhis and bank sakhis formed under NRLM. He said that backward and poor women in their Gram Panchayats should be benefited socially and economically by connecting them to groups. Group and bank sakhis were motivated to be active in their work. Block mission managers were also alerted to be vigilant towards

their work. On this occasion, bank sakhis Meena Devi, Rita Devi, Shobha Pandey, Priya Devi, Sushila Devi, Pooja Vishwakarma, Savitri Patel, Kanchan Devi, group sakhis Archana, Meena Devi, Neelam, Suman Maurya, Sushma, Sangeeta, Sonam Mishra, Uma Devi etc. were present.

Villagers said: The name is of our village, but people of neighbouring village are taking benefit by constructing it

Staff Reporter Pratapgarh. Serious irregularities have been exposed regarding the construction of community toilet in Gram Panchayat Saraigai of Baba Belkharnath Dham block. The community toilet which was approved in the name of Gram Panchayat Saraigai was constructed in the neighbouring village Ganaideh, about one kilometer away from the boundary of the village. The people of the village are angry with this and are



demanding an investigation from the administration. Villagers said that the land of account number 00052 of Ganaideh village is registered in the name of Izhar, Ajmatullah, Haviullah, Inayullah, Shah Alam and Ajmatullah. Toilet has been built on this land whereas the proposal and approval of the toilet was done in the name of Saraigai Gram Panchayat. Former village head Shiv Bahadur Singh and village resident Kallu Singh said that

the toilet has been constructed in the neighbouring village Ganaidih, due to which the villagers of Saraigai are not getting any benefit. There is still a need for a community toilet in the village. The villagers have demanded strict action against the culprits by investigating this irregularity. They have also reiterated the demand for construction of a community toilet at a new place in Saraigai.

Check your mailbox: Trump’s new tariff proposition, as India & China try to wrap up deals



New Delhi (Agency): For the Donald Trump administration, whose tariff proposals generally have a half life of less than 10 days, a fresh twist in plans should not really come across as a surprise. But for a majority of countries waiting to know about what tariffs the new Trump administration has in store for them before the 90-day pause runs out, Washington DC has a fresh suggestion: just check your mailbox.

Trump’s latest plan, while acknowledging that his own self-imposed 90-day deadline to make trade deals with some 180-odd countries is simply too tight to meet, there are hints of a surprising tweak. Since he admittedly does not have time to strike agreements with most countries, Trump’s simply going to start tariffing most of these countries without any deliberations at all. “So at a certain point over the next two to three weeks, I think Scott (Bessent) and Howard (Lutnick) will be sending letters out essentially telling people — and we’ll be very fair — but we’ll be telling people what they will be paying to do business in the United States,” Trump said while speaking at a roundtable in the recently-concluded United Arab Emirates trip. Acknowledging there was not enough time to meet with every country that the US had hit with tariffs in early April, Trump said Treasury Secretary Bessent and Commerce Secretary Lutnick would begin their outreach to those nations soon. “I guess you could say they could appeal it, but for the most part I think we’re going to be very fair,” he said. “But it’s not possible to meet the number of people that want to see us.”

On April 2, the American president levied a 10 per cent tariff on all imports and higher additional tariffs on dozens of countries that had larger trade imbalances with the US. Trump later announced a 90-day pause on those higher tariffs, allowing time for nations to negotiate trade deals.

Subsequently, the US has announced agreements with the United Kingdom and an interim deal with China to lower tariffs, though Trump has signaled that his proposed 10 per cent rate will be a floor for all countries.

IMF cites ‘enterprise risks’ for Pakistan amid tensions with India; lists 11 new structural benchmarks to avail loan

New Delhi (Agency): JUST TWO DAYS before its board met on May 9 in Washington DC to approve a \$2.4 billion facility to Pakistan, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff had flagged “reputational risks” over perceived misuse of its lending and the increase in “enterprise risks” due to rising tensions with India.

In the Supplementary Information docket prepared on May 7 for the IMF board, the Fund’s Middle East and Central Asia department said, “The rising tensions between India and Pakistan, if sustained or deteriorate further, could heighten enterprise risks to the fiscal, external and reform goals of the program.”

It said that “reputational risks” could come from any “perceived lack of even-handed” or “perceived misuse of Fund disbursements”. “Careful Fund communication will be essential to underscore the Fund’s neutral role and avoid misperceptions about its lending activities,” the docket on Supplementary Information said.

India had abstained from

voting in the board meeting as it raised concerns over the efficacy of IMF programs for Pakistan given its “poor track



record” and also on the possibility of “misuse of debt financing funds for state-

sponsored cross-border terrorism”, according to the May 9 official statement by the Ministry of Finance.

Board should look “deep within” and take into account the facts before generously bailing out the country.

The IMF released the report, including the Supplementary Information docket, a day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had said that in current times, any financial assistance to Pakistan is no less than terror funding. “I believe that a big chunk of \$1 billion coming from the IMF will certainly be utilised to fund terror infrastructure. Can this (funding from) IMF, which is an international organisation, not be considered an indirect funding? I want to put this question before the people of the world,” he said while addressing military personnel in Bhuj. In the Supplementary Information, the Fund staff noted that as mitigants, the Pakistani authorities reiterated their strong commitment to the program, which was designed by the IMF to help restore economic stability, build resilience through stronger reserve buffers, and advance reforms to create stronger and inclusive growth.

Power demand in May dips slightly as weather brings relief to grid managers

New Delhi (Agency): Power demand in the first half of May remained subdued as thunderstorms and rain tempered temperatures in India, with peak demand reaching 231 gigawatts (GW) between May 1 and 17—slightly below the 233 GW recorded in the same period last year.

Forecasts of continued light rain and winds through May are expected to ease pressure on grid managers, who had anticipated significant shortages amid record demand. India consumed 82.1 billion units (BU) of electricity between May 1 and 17, slightly below the 83.8 BU recorded during the same period last year, according to data from the National Load Despatch

Centre (NLDC). Peak demand this year was 231 GW on May 15, while the lowest—202 GW—was met on May 7. In



comparison, peak demand last year touched 233 GW on May 6, with the lowest at 207 GW on May 12. Last year’s peak demand of 250 GW was recorded on May 31. The subdued demand follows a modest 2.3 per cent year-on-year growth in

April, attributed to a high base effect, according to ICRA.

In January, the NLDC had flagged May and June as

conditioner use and helped keep the power supply situation manageable so far. “In May, we’ve been quite comfortable in terms of power availability and prices. The average market price for the first 13–14 days has been around Rs 4.40 per unit,” Rohit Bajaj, joint managing director at the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX), said.

“In fact, we’ve even seen prices dip to Rs 3 on some days, especially after sudden rains. On May 4, for instance, the price dropped to Rs 3.11. There were several days when prices stayed below Rs 4,” Bajaj added.

With low demand, the grid is also relying less on thermal-based capacities compared to last year.

In need of extensive repairs after Indian airstrikes, Pakistan’s Rahim Yar Khan airbase runway closure extended till June 6

New Delhi (Agency): Pakistan has extended the closure of the sole runway at its Rahim Yar Khan airbase—hit and damaged by India’s military strikes last Saturday (May 10)—till the morning of June 6. On the day of the airstrike, the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority had issued a notice to airmen, or NOTAM, saying that the runway at the airbase will be unavailable for flight operations for a week—till 4:59 am Pakistan time (5:29 IST) on Sunday (May 18).

However, according to a new NOTAM that has replaced the previous notice, now the runway will not be available till 4:59 am Pakistan time on June 6. This indicates that the extensive runway repairs needed after India’s precision strikes may be

taking longer than earlier anticipated. Like the previous NOTAM, the new notice also said that closure is due to work in progress, without going into specifics, and that the runway will not be available for flight operations.

Rahim Yar Khan, which is in the southern part of Pakistan’s Punjab province and faces the Rajasthan frontier, has a dual-purpose airport—it is home to a forward operational base of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Central Air Command and the Sheikh Zayed International Airport.

Satellite images released by the Indian armed forces in the days that followed the airstrike show a large and deep crater in the middle of the Rahim Yar Khan airbase runway caused by an Indian

airstrike. Satellite imagery also showed extensive damage to a building at the airbase.

“RWY NOT AVBL FOR FLT OPS DUE WIP,” stated the latest NOTAM. The



earlier notice was also similarly worded. According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), use of the code ‘WIP’ in a NOTAM refers to work in progress. As per the US Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA), ‘WIP’ describes any work being done on the airport surface. Given that the NOTAM specifically mentions the runway at the airbase, it indicates that work

in progress is on the runway itself. The airbase’s sole runway—Runway 01/19—has a bituminous surface and is 3,000 metres or 9,843 feet in length, per airport data available on Flightradar24.

The airbase was one the multiple key Pakistani military targets that India hit amid a military conflict that lasted four days, before the two nuclear-powered neighbours arrived at a ceasefire understanding on the evening of May 10. The airbase was among the six Pakistani military targets hit on May 10—Rafiki, Murid, Chaklala, Sukkur and Juniya being the other five—by India using “air-launched precision weapons” from Indian fighter aircraft. The Indian response followed Pakistan’s “escalatory” and “provocative” actions in which it attempted air intrusions at multiple locations, which were thwarted by the Indian armed forces. India and Pakistan engaged in the worst fighting in decades in the wake of

India’s precision strikes at nine terror infrastructure locations in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as part of ‘Operation Sindoor’ in the wee hours on May 7. These strikes were in response to the deadly attack at Pahalgalam on April 22 in which 26 people, almost all of them tourists, were gunned down by Pakistan-backed terrorists.

Following India’s precision strikes at terror infrastructure early on May 7, the tensions saw a major escalation with Pakistan launching drone and missile attacks against India all along the Line of Control and the international border, and India neutralising Pakistani attacks and retaliating with strikes at Pakistani military assets in various parts of that country.

Inside an election time govt social media cell that was converted to a 24/7 war room post Op Sindoor



New Delhi (Agency): Following India’s targeted strikes on terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir on the intervening night of May 6 and May 7, and the subsequent military escalation that ensued between the two countries, social media became a battleground of information warfare. Fake information, deepfake visuals and footage from video games run amok on platforms like X and Instagram. In response, a small team at the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), which was set up last year during the Lok Sabha polls to flag and takedown election-related misinformation on social media platforms, promptly received personnel reinforcement and was asked to step up monitoring and flagging misleading content related to the conflict to be taken down. The monitoring happened round the clock, with people working across shifts. On May 9, two days after the military escalation between India and Pakistan, the IT Ministry expanded its election time content monitoring cell and converted it into a war room for Section 69(A) of the Information Technology Act, the legislation which allows the Central government to issue content blocking orders to social media companies, The group, which included at least 19 people, including those possessing technical know-how across the ministry and the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In), had a clear mandate: to block Pakistani sponsored social media content under section 69A of IT Act. The group flagged for takedown content and accounts spreading misleading information on the Internet – and tens of thousands of social media accounts were blocked in the process. Several websites were also blocked. The group received inputs from various central and state agencies as well, along with its own round-the-clock monitoring of social media. In times of uncertainty, online disinformation campaigns often act as a strategic ploy to capture the narrative war. Such campaigns — which have become routine now on social media platforms that have been unable to curb the sheer number of misleading content on their sites —have been used in previous and ongoing conflicts as well, such as the Israeli strikes on Gaza, and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. During the military escalation between India and Pakistan, the government carried out a coordinated effort to tackle misleading information online, even as many questioned the clamour that was spreading particularly on Indian news channels.

How India–Bangladesh trade ties are fraying — and China gaining ground?

New Delhi (Agency): With Bangladesh set to graduate from the United Nations’ Least Developed Country (LDC) category in November 2026 — a move that will end its duty-free access to export markets such as the European Union, posing fresh challenges — the country has begun a sharp economic pivot away from New Delhi towards Beijing, thereby straining trade ties with India. Political and economic tensions between India and its largest trade partner in South Asia are growing, as the union government on Saturday decided to impose a number of import restrictions on goods from Bangladesh — particularly ready-made garments, the country’s largest export item and a key source of foreign exchange.

This follows early signs of deteriorating ties between two countries, when New Delhi in April decided to terminate the five-year-old

transshipment facility for Bangladesh’s export cargo — a mechanism that helped Dhaka smoothly ship its goods to several Western countries using Indian land routes and airports.

While government sources say that Saturday’s import restrictions and the termination of the transshipment facility are a result of similar restrictions imposed by Dhaka and port congestion caused by goods from Dhaka respectively, Bangladesh’s Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus — an economist and Nobel laureate who has suggested expanding the influence of the Chinese economy around India’s strategically important Northeast region — has contributed to w o r s e n i n g India–Bangladesh trade relations. However, this fits squarely into China’s broader strategy to limit India’s influence, as India chose not to join the China-

led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement and is positioning itself as an alternative manufacturing

sector could see a push due to the free trade agreements. India has already received duty-free access to the UK market for its garment



destination by pursuing closer economic integration with the US, UK, EU, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) region. New Delhi has decided to restrict garment imports from Bangladesh as it is looking to attract labour-intensive jobs in the sector. This comes as India’s textile

exports and has sought similar access in its trade deals with the EU and US. Think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that Indian textile firms have long protested the competitive edge enjoyed by Bangladeshi exporters — who benefit from duty-free Chinese fabric imports and

export subsidies — giving them a 10–15 per cent price advantage in the Indian market. “Top global brands like H&M, Zara, Primark, and receive export incentives for sales to India — giving them an estimated 10–15 per cent price advantage,” GTRI said. A government official said that Bangladesh has recently imposed port restrictions on exports of Indian yarn via land ports, allowing Indian yarn exports only via seaports. This has ostensibly been done in response to demand by Bangladeshi textile mills, even though the land route offers the quickest and cheapest yarn supply to the ready-made garments industry in Bangladesh, the official said. Notably, yarn exports to Bangladesh comprise 20 per cent of India’s total exports to Bangladesh worth \$11.38 billion in FY25.

Official data showed that cotton yarn and handloom product exports to Dhaka stood at \$2.39 billion during the last financial year. India imports ready-made garments from Bangladesh

valued at over \$700 million annually. “Bangladesh cannot cherry-pick terms of bilateral engagement solely to benefit itself or take India’s market access for granted. India is willing to engage in discussion but it is Bangladesh’s responsibility to create an environment free of rancour,” the official quoted above said.

China has been rapidly increasing its influence on South Asian countries, particularly Bangladesh. For instance, China has allowed 97 per cent of Bangladeshi goods duty-free access to its domestic market since June 2020. More importantly, it is helping the country diversify its export base and move its industry up the value chain. According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the largest number of infrastructure projects developed with Chinese help in South Asia are in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is China’s second-largest buyer

of military hardware globally, accounting for almost one-fifth of China’s total exports between 2016 and 2020. Chinese arms make up over 70 per cent of Bangladesh’s major arms purchases, according to a 2020 report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

“The fall of Sheikh Hasina’s pro-India government in mid-2024 and the rise of an interim administration under Muhammad Yunus have brought a willingness to align with Beijing. Yunus’s visit to China in March 2025 yielded \$2.1 billion in new investments and cooperation agreements. China’s involvement in sensitive infrastructure projects like the Teesta River development marks a growing strategic footprint — posing a direct challenge to India’s influence in the region,” said former trade officer and head of GTRI Ajay Srivastava.

EDITORIAL

Perilous Currents

In the aftermath of Operation Sindoor and the horrific April 22 attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir ~ where 26 civilians, mostly tourists, lost their lives ~ the government's sharpened focus on the Indus river system marks a significant shift in India's strategic posture. As national grief turned into political resolve, Delhi's response has included suspending its participation in the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and fast-tracking infrastructure on rivers allocated to Pakistan. But while the impulse to retaliate is understandable, India's move to potentially weaponise water could be a perilous path, both diplomatically and environmentally. The IWT, signed in 1960, has withstood wars, border skirmishes, and diplomatic frost. It has long been viewed as a rare example of pragmatic cooperation between two hostile neighbors. India's decision to re-evaluate the treaty and pursue unilateral hydrological projects ~ like doubling the length of the Ranbir canal on the Chenab ~ may seem like a demonstration of sovereignty and strength. Yet, it raises questions about long-term consequences. First, any significant diversion of Indus waters would take years to implement. Projects of this scale involve complex engineering, significant environmental assessments, and financial investment. Yet the political optics of such plans ~ especially in the wake of Pahalgam ~ can inflame tensions faster than any dam can be built. Islamabad has already declared that such diversions would constitute an act of war, highlighting how water, once a tool for peace, is now emerging as a geopolitical fault line. India must also recognise that any disruption to Indus flows can worsen already dire economic and social conditions in Pakistan, potentially fueling greater instability in the region. Strategic advantage must not come at the cost of regional collapse or humanitarian fallout. Secondly, India's credibility as a responsible upper riparian state is at stake.

If Delhi unilaterally abrogates or sidelines an international agreement, it undermines its moral position in other cross-border water disputes ~ particularly with China, which controls the headwaters of the Brahmaputra and other Himalayan rivers. Encouraging the idea that water treaties are conditional may prove selfdefeating in the long run. Moreover, in a climate-stressed subcontinent, where glacial melt and erratic monsoons already threaten water security, escalatory hydro-politics could be disastrous. Rather than treating water as a finite commodity to be hoarded or denied, the future demands cooperative basin management and resilient infrastructure. That said, Pakistan cannot continue to ignore its responsibilities, and if the threat to agriculture forces it to abandon its support to terrorists, it will be a welcome outcome. The persistence of cross-border terrorism and its denialism over the Pahalgam massacre have severely eroded trust. India's push to assert its treaty rights and develop its own water infrastructure ~ within legal bounds ~ should be seen as a sovereign imperative, not an act of provocation. India must remain clear-eyed. The symbolism of water runs deep in both culture and strategy, but its use as a tool of coercion can trigger cycles of conflict that outlive any single act of terror. The challenge ahead is to uphold strength without sacrificing prudence ~ a balance that defines mature statecraft.

Harnessing AI for systemic change: Can India's startups solve its urban

Ramvilas Sharma



Navigating rush hour might soon feel less chaotic. At dozens of intersections, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now analysing traffic patterns, drawing insights from Google Maps data, and suggesting optimised timings for traffic signals. This type of AI-driven solution aims to reduce frustrating stop-and-go traffic, save fuel and cut emissions. It's a small intervention in a massive system, yet it hints at a larger possibility: Can India harness the potent combination of digital infrastructure, entrepreneurial energy, and rapidly advancing AI to tackle its most complex, systemic challenges? India finds itself in a unique position. Building Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) ~ from the Aadhaar identity system to the ubiquitous UPI payments network and emerging data-sharing frameworks ~ has created unprecedented digital rails. Layered onto this is a vast, young population rapidly embracing digital tools, and a vibrant startup ecosystem teeming with technical talent and ambition. AI represents a technology shift as profound, perhaps, as fire or electricity. An enabler that can accelerate progress across nearly every field, its power demands a bold approach to innovation, pushing boundaries while ensuring safety and equitable benefit. We see this globally with breakthroughs like AlphaFold, which has revolutionised protein structure prediction, dramatically speeding up medical research and drug discovery. In India, this potential is translating into tangible impact, particularly in healthcare. AI algorithms developed by companies like Google and its partner, Verily Life Sciences, help screen for diabetic retinopathy using simple retina scans. Startups like Niramai are pioneering radiation-free, AI-based breast cancer screening, while others like Qure.ai assist doctors in interpreting medical scans, thereby improving diagnostic accuracy. Agriculture, the livelihood for a vast majority of India's population, is another fertile ground: Startups like CropIn deploy AI solutions to provide farmers with actionable insights ~ predicting yields, detecting diseases early, and optimising resource use based on weather and satellite imagery. Farmonaut offers similar capabilities, leveraging satellite data and AI for personalised farm advice. More than efficiency gains, they are improving livelihoods and enhancing food security. AI is also proving vital in managing environmental challenges. Forecasting tools like Flood Hub provide crucial early warnings across large parts of India. Efforts to map air quality street-by-street using mobile sensors, like those undertaken in Bengaluru, provide high-resolution data, essential for understanding pollution sources and informing public health strategies. But can the startup ecosystem, even supercharged by AI, truly solve India's most daunting systemic problems ~ the air quality crisis in its cities, urban traffic gridlock, water scarcity, or the complex logistics of a continent-sized economy? The ecosystem is evolving. Audacious entrepreneurs are already moving beyond urban convenience solutions, and tackling formidable challenges in areas such as space launch vehicles (Skyroot, Agnikul), vital satellite constellations (Pixxel, Dhruva Space, Digantara), advanced robotics (Addverb, CynLR), futuristic mobility solutions (Sarla, ePlane, Blu-J, Ather), and foundational technologies like gene editing (CrisprBits), semiconductors (Mindgrove), and quantum computing (Qnu Labs). Skyroot's Vikram-S launch, which opened up private space endeavours, and strides in defence tech (ideaForge, EyeRov), signal this shift. Investment is following, with Nasscom reporting a 78 per cent year-on-year funding jump for India's ~4,000 deep-tech startups, reaching \$1.6 billion in 2024, and projections suggesting deep tech could add \$1 trillion to India's GDP by FY30. However, scaling these promising deep-tech ventures to truly tackle the systemic crises presents immense hurdles beyond clever algorithms. It requires navigating complex policy landscapes ~ integrating AI insights into urban planning, tackling deeply enmeshed challenges like industrial emissions and agricultural burning alongside technological monitoring ~ and addressing critical ecosystem gaps. These include the need for substantial patient capital willing to weather longer development cycles, bridging the deep-tech talent gap through focused education reform and overcoming challenges. The path forward, therefore, demands a concerted symphony of action. For policymakers, the challenge is cultivating fertile ground ~ implementing supportive frameworks like the National Deep Tech Startup Policy, ensuring access to high-quality datasets and compute power, championing foundational research, reforming education for specialised talent, and critically fostering an environment that encourages bold bets and provides longer-term "hand-holding" for deep-tech ventures. Industry players, including technology providers, must supply foundational elements ~ responsibly developed AI models, accessible cloud infrastructure, open datasets where possible, and platforms simplifying complexity.

The Home Ministry had set a time limit of 3 months

After the recent decision of the Supreme Court on the petition of the Tamil Nadu government, an important constitutional debate has started. This debate is no longer limited to the time limit of the bill by the President or the Governors. The way the President has sought advice from the Supreme Court on 14 points. After that new things are coming to the fore. The order given by the Supreme Court bench. The Union Home Ministry has issued a circular many years ago. In which the Union Home Ministry had sent instructions to all the governors. They were directed to take a final decision on the bill within a time period of three months. The Supreme Court has cited the time limit of the administrative instructions of the Central Government in its decision. This limit was set by the Union Home Ministry in the year 2016. According to this guideline, the President and the Governors had to take decisions on the bills coming from the states within a maximum of three months. The bills were pending for a long time with the governors of many states and even in the President's office. Be it agreement, disagreement or returning the bill to the government for reconsideration. This arrangement was ensured by the Home Ministry so that the bills passed by the state assemblies could not be kept pending indefinitely. This was given to maintain the balance of administrative reform and federal structure. The irony is that the Supreme Court, citing this guideline made by the Central Government, has given a decision setting a time limit on the decisions of the President and the Governors. The Supreme Court had given instructions to the Governors several times before this as well. Which was not followed by the Governors. After the decision of the Supreme Court, the discomfort of the government started showing. In Delhi, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra, Kerala, Punjab, wherever there were governments of opposition parties, the governors there were holding back the bills passed by the assembly of the elected governments for many months and years. The work of breaking the opposition parties by taking action under Operation Lotus and ED was being done through the governors. After this decision of the Supreme Court, it will not be possible for the Central Government and BJP to create such pressure. Due to which great restlessness is being seen among the Central Government and BJP leaders. This restlessness can be understood in this way, the central government has shot itself in the foot by asking direct questions to the Supreme Court through the President. This is a rare incident in the democratic history of India. This situation highlights the dual character of the government. On one hand, the Center itself makes rules. On the other hand, it tries to avoid those rules. For its political benefit, the Central Government draws the desired result of the rules made by itself. This tendency of the Central Government puts a question mark on the transparency of governance and the federal structure of the Constitution. The Central Government suppresses the rights of the states under Articles 200 and 201 of the Constitution. The dispute has been created by the Central Government. After that, the Chief Ministers of the opposition parties of 8 states have also opened a front. Due to which the Constitution is going to suffer a great loss. The Central Government should have introspected on the decision of the Supreme Court. Why does the Central Government not want to respect its own policies? If constitutional institutions and constitutional posts become a means to fulfill political and personal interests, then how can democracy be protected? This time the Supreme Court has given a clear message.

Another stalemate?

After more than three years of brutal conflict, the promise of peace in Ukraine still hangs precariously in the balance. Diplomatic efforts are once again underway, this time in Istanbul, where representatives from Ukraine, Russia, the United States, and Turkey have met. Yet the absence of senior leadership ~ most notably the Russian and American presidents ~ raises serious doubts about the credibility and potential outcomes of these negotiations. It has become increasingly clear that the road to peace in Ukraine runs not merely through diplomatic channels, but through the direct involvement of top leaders who command both the authority and political capital to make decisive moves. In this context, any negotiations lacking the presence of figures like Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump ~ who have each shaped their nations' foreign policy landscapes in profound ways ~ are likely to achieve little more than symbolic value. The problem is not simply about protocol or diplomatic stature; it is about the mismatch between the gravity of the crisis and the level of engagement it is receiving. Ukraine continues to bleed, with ongoing military offensives and shifting frontlines. Russia, meanwhile, remains entrenched, controlling around 20 per cent of Ukrainian territory. These are not conditions ripe for incremental diplomacy. They demand bold, top-level political intervention. Ukraine's president, for his part, has expressed a willingness to meet his Russian counterpart directly. But Moscow's delegation, led by lower-ranking officials, sends a message of disengagement, if not outright disdain. This decision has also been interpreted as a slight against Turkey's mediation efforts and the broader international community's desire for a credible peace process.

The United States remains a pivotal actor. While officially represented at the talks, the absence of its top leadership underscores a troubling ambivalence. Whether one agrees with Mr Trump's political style or not, his assertion that peace will require a personal meeting betw ~ een him and Mr Putin reflects a hard truth: peace often demands more than diplomacy ~ it demands direct confrontation of hard realities by those who hold real power. The optics of the Istanbul talks matter. When a war has cost tens of thousands of lives and displaced millions, sending mid-level negotiators signals detachment. Peace cannot be brokered by those without the mandate to concede or commit. Diplomacy without consequence merely prolongs the illusion of progress. Symbolic meetings and staged summits will not end the war. What is needed is genuine negotiation underpinned by political courage, strategic compromise, and mutual recognition of human suffering. The Istanbul talks, in their current form, risk becoming yet another footnote in a long series of failed efforts if key actors continue to treat peace as a procedural matter rather than a moral imperative. Until the main architects sit face to face and reckon with the weight of their decisions, peace will remain elusive. In diplomacy, timing and presence are everything. And right now, the world is still waiting for both.

Sun is setting on ties with Ankara

Ramvilas Sharma

India has always extended a hand of friendship across continents, across faiths, across ideologies. From standing by the Ottoman Empire during the Khilafat movement to cooperating with modern Turkey in trade, technology, education and cultural exchanges, India believed in longterm goodwill. But today, it finds itself betrayed by a country it once supported during its most critical moment in history. Turkey, under the authoritarian leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdo an, has chosen to side with Pakistan not just diplomatically, but militarily, feeding New Delhi's enemies with deadly drones and rhetoric, revealing Ankara's dangerous ambitions to become the ideological capital of a pan-Islamist world order ~ even at the cost of peace in South Asia. The most recent Indo-Pak tensions, especially after Pakistan's proxy aggressions in Kashmir and elsewhere, have seen Turkey abandon any pretence of neutrality. Turkish-made drones, notably the Bayraktar TB2 ~ manufactured by Baykar Technologies, whose CEO Selçuk Bayraktar is none other than Erdo an's son-in-law ~ are now in Pakistan's hands. These drones are not for humanitarian use or border surveillance. They are war machines, tested in Libya, Syria, and Armenia, and now weaponized against Indian interests. It is no coincidence that the Pakistani

military, flush with Chinese and now Turkish support, is emboldened in its provocative acts across the LoC. India is no longer watching silently. Turkish firms operating in India are now facing a quiet but firm rollback. The government is reportedly targeting those firms that have indirect connections with the Turkish ruling family. One such firm, closely linked to the Baykar CEO, had ongoing collaborations with Indian industries. But post the revelations about Ankara's defence dealings with Islamabad, New Delhi is beginning to sever ties. This is not just about foreign policy; this is about national security. The diplomatic frost has started touching academia as well. Several Indian universities, including Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University, have now either cancelled or stalled their memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with Turkish educational institutions. What began as cultural and academic exchanges have now turned into cautionary tales of misplaced trust. It is becoming increasingly clear that Turkish academia, like many other arms of the state, is influenced ~ if not controlled ~ by the ideological machinery of Erdo an's administration. India cannot afford to keep its windows open to propaganda disguised as intellectual cooperation. This betrayal

stings more because of the historical goodwill India extended to Turkey. During the 1920s, when the Ottoman Caliphate was being dismantled by Western colonial powers, Indian Muslims ~ and Indian leaders ~ came forward in solidarity. The Khilafat Movement was sup-



ported not just by Indian Muslims, but also by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. Indian freedom fighters, fighting their own war against the British Raj, paused to lend moral and political support to a foreign empire, simply on the basis of civilizational and religious empathy. And yet, a century later, the Turkish state pays back with hostility, aligning itself not with the world's largest democracy, but with a failed terror-sponsoring regime in Islamabad. The hypocrisy is complete

when one looks at Erdo an's own domestic policies. Once hailed as a reformer, Erdo an has now dismantled Turkish secularism, jailing dissidents, muzzling the media, and openly promoting an Islamist agenda. The conversion of the Hagia Sophia, a UNESCO world heritage site, from a mu-

seum back into a mosque was not merely a religious act ~ it was a political message to the world. It marked the triumph of a neo-Ottoman, pan-Islamist narrative over Turkey's secular past. Erdo an is no longer content being the president of Turkey; he aspires to be the caliph of the Islamic world. And for that, he sees India ~ a pluralistic, secular, majority-Hindu nation ~ as an ideological rival. Turkey has repeatedly raised the Kashmir issue in the United Nations and other global forums, parroting Pakistan's false narratives.

It has criticized India's internal matters, including the abrogation of Article 370 and the Citizenship Amendment Act, conveniently ignoring its own suppression of Kurdish identity, Armenian history, and democratic freedoms. Turkey's silence on China's atrocities against Uighur Muslims further exposes the selective outrage of its leadership. It has become clear that Erdo an's Turkey is not defending Muslims; it is defending authoritarian alliances and petrodollar loyalties. The Indian business community is also waking up. Traders in several states have begun quietly boycotting Turkish goods ~ from dry fruits and confectionery to Turkish apples and marble. India does not need Turkish imports when it has friendlier and more reliable partners elsewhere. When Indian soldiers face Turkish drones in Kashmir, how can Indian citizens in good conscience buy Turkish dates for Ramadan? This is not a call for jingoism, but for economic nationalism. A sovereign nation must ensure that its economy does not empower those who want to destabilize it. India is neither against Islam nor against Muslims. It remains home to the second-largest Muslim population in the world. But India cannot and will not tolerate foreign governments using religion as a tool of geopolitics against it.

Turkey's ambitions to become the new head of the Islamic Ummah come with the price tag of instability and ideological confrontation. Erdo an has found common cause with Pakistan, Qatar, and certain radical outfits, hoping to revive a caliphate that the modern world has long buried. Turkey's betrayal is not just strategic, it is civilizational. It is a deliberate choice to side with India's enemies and undermine a century-old bond. India must now recalibrate its foreign policy with clarity and strength. We have friends in West Asia ~ the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt ~ who have shown greater pragmatism and respect. India must deepen ties with them while sending a clear message to Ankara: betrayal has consequences. In the years to come, Indian policymakers, industrialists, students, and common citizens must remember that partnerships must be rooted in mutual respect and shared values. Turkey under Erdo an has lost both. And until it regains them, India must look elsewhere. The road from Khilafat to today's crisis is a painful reminder that not all historic bonds endure ~ especially when one side uses them as tools of manipulation. For now, the sun is setting on India-Turkey ties. Whether it rises again will depend on when, or if, Turkey chooses principles over politics.



‘Dried out prune’? ‘Corrupt’ and ‘incompetent’? It’s getting nasty between Springsteen and Trump

NEW DELHI: They have some similarities, Bruce Springsteen and Donald Trump — guys in their 70s with homes in New Jersey and big constituencies among white American men middle-aged and older. And both, in very different respects, are the boss. That’s about where it ends. The veteran rock star, long a political opponent of the president, stood up as one of Trump’s most prominent cultural critics last week with a verbal takedown from a British stage. As is his nature, Trump is fighting back — hard. He calls Springsteen a “dried out prune of a rocker” and is even bringing Beyoncé into the fray. On Monday, the president suggested Springsteen and Beyoncé should be investigated to see if appearances they made on behalf of his Democratic

opponent, Kamala Harris, last fall represented an illegal campaign donation. Opening a tour in Manchester, England, Springsteen told his audience last Thursday that “the America I love, the America I’ve written about that has been a beacon of hope and liberty for 250 years is currently in the hands of a corrupt, incompetent and treasonous administration.” He added, “Tonight we ask all who believe in democracy and the best of our American experiment to rise with us, raise your voices against authoritarianism and let freedom ring.” Springsteen later made reference to an “unfit president and a rogue government” who have “no concern or idea for what it means to be deeply American.” The next morning, Trump called Springsteen highly overrated.

“Never liked him, never liked his music or his Radical Left Politics and, importantly, he’s not a talented guy — just a pushy, obnoxious JERK,” he wrote on social media. “This dried out prune of a rocker (his skin is all atrophied) ought to KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT until he gets back in the Country,” he said. The next night, also in Manchester, Springsteen repeated his criticisms. “It’s no surprise what Springsteen’s political leanings are and have been for many decades,” said veteran music writer Alan Light, author of the upcoming “Don’t Stop: Why We (Still) Love Fleetwood Mac’s Rumours.” “He’s somebody who has been outspoken in his music and his actions.” The Boss’ statements this week showed he wasn’t afraid to speak

out “at a time when so many people and institutions are just kind of rolling over,” Light said.



It’s not the first time Springsteen has spoken out against Trump — or a Republican president. When former President Ronald Reagan referenced Springsteen’s

“message of hope” at a campaign stop during the height of the rocker’s “Born in the USA” popularity, Springsteen wondered if Reagan had listened to his music and its references to those left behind in the 1980s economy. He also has had an occasionally bumpy relationship with onetime Republican presidential candidate and former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a fan of his music. Springsteen has campaigned for Trump’s opponents, including Harris last fall. In 2020, he said that “a good portion of our fine country, to my eye, has been thoroughly hypnotized, brainwashed by a con man from Queens.” He knows the outer-borough reference still stung a man who built his own tower in Manhattan and ascended to the presidency.

Trump often stays at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey. Springsteen grew up in New Jersey — you may have heard — and lives in Colts Neck, New Jersey, now. Trump doesn’t hesitate to go after the biggest musical names that speak out against him, like Beyoncé and Taylor Swift. But the political risk may be less; their younger, more female audiences are less likely to intersect with Trump’s core constituency. During his career, Springsteen has challenged his audience politically beyond presidential endorsements. The 1995 album “The Ghost of Tom Joad” bluntly documented the lives of struggling immigrants — Mexican and Vietnamese among them. And his 2001 song “American Skin (41 Shots),”

criticized the shooting by New York City police officers of an unarmed Guinean immigrant named Amadou Diallo, angering some of the blue-collar segments of his fan base. Clearly, Springsteen has conservative fans and some who wish he’d steer clear of politics, Light said. Still, “40 years later, it’s hard to imagine what they think would happen” with Trump, he said. While Trump made a point to reference Springsteen’s criticism in an overseas show, he and the E Street Band haven’t performed in the United States since before the 2024 election. His tour last year hit heavily on themes of mortality, less of politics. He has several European tour dates scheduled this year into July and hasn’t announced any new American shows.

UK suspends free trade talks with Israel and announces sanctions over West Bank settlers

NEW DELHI: The British government says it is suspending free trade negotiations with Israel and has leveled new sanctions targeting West Bank settlements as it criticizes Israel’s military actions in Gaza. Tuesday’s actions came a day after the UK, France and Canada condemned Israel’s handling of the war in Gaza and its actions in the occupied West Bank. Foreign Secretary David Lammy said the UKs existing trade agreement is in effect but the government can’t continue discussions with an Israeli government pursuing what he called egregious policies in the West

Bank and Gaza. Lammy said the persistent cycle of violence by extremist Israeli settlers in the West Bank demanded action. “The Israeli government has a responsibility to intervene and halt these aggressive actions,” Lammy said. “Their consistent failure to act is putting Palestinian communities and the two-state solution in peril.” The announcement came after British Prime Minister Keir Starmer ramped up his criticism of Israel on Tuesday, saying the level of suffering by children in Gaza was “utterly intolerable” and repeated his call for a

ceasefire. “I want to put on record today that we’re horrified by the escalation from Israel,” Starmer told the



UK’s Parliament. His brief remarks followed a scathing joint condemnation he issued Monday with French President Emmanuel Macron

and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney that marked one of the most significant criticisms by close allies of

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not cease its renewed military offensive and significantly lift restrictions on humanitarian aid. Netanyahu said the statement was “a huge prize” for Hamas. Starmer repeated the trio’s demand for a ceasefire, saying it was the only way to free the hostages Hamas still holds. He also called for increased shipments of humanitarian aid into Gaza, saying the basic quantity allowed by Israel is “utterly inadequate.” “We must coordinate our response, because this war has gone on for far too long,” Starmer

said. “We cannot allow the people of Gaza to starve.” International pressure has been building on Israel following a nearly three-month blockade of supplies into Gaza that led to famine warnings. Even the United States, a staunch ally of Israel, has voiced concerns over the growing hunger crisis. While Israel allowed trucks with baby food and desperately needed supplies to begin rolling into Gaza on Monday, UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher described the volume of aid a “drop in the ocean of what is urgently needed.”

Gazan twins in Cannes warn 'nothing left' of homeland



FRANCE (Agency): Twin Gazan filmmakers Arab and Tarzan Nasser said they never thought the title of their new film "Once Upon A Time in Gaza" would have such heartbreaking resonance. "Right now, there is nothing left of Gaza," Tarzan said when it premiered on Monday at the Cannes Film Festival. Since militants from the Palestinian group Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza has devastated large swathes of Palestinian territory, killing tens of thousands of people. Israel has vowed to "take control of all" the besieged territory of more than two million inhabitants, where United Nations agencies have warned of famine following Israel's implementation of a two-month total blockade. Aid began to trickle into the Gaza Strip on Monday, following widespread condemnation of the siege. The Nasser brothers, who left Gaza in 2012, said their new film, set in 2007 when Hamas Islamists seized control of the strip, explains the lead-up to the current catastrophic war. Once Upon A Time in Gaza, which screened in the festival's Un Certain Regard section, follows friends Yahia and Osama as they try to make a little extra cash by selling drugs hidden in falafel sandwiches. Using a manual meat grinder that does not rely on rare electricity, student Yahia blends fava beans and fresh herbs to make the patty-shaped fritters in the back of Osama's small, run-down eatery, while dreaming of being able to leave the Israeli-blockaded coastal strip. Meanwhile, charismatic hustler Osama visits pharmacy after pharmacy to amass as many pills as he can with stolen prescriptions, pursued by a corrupt cop. Israel first imposed a blockade on Gaza in

June 2006 after militants there captured one of its soldiers and reinforced it in September 2007, several months after Hamas took power. "The blockade was gradually tightened until reaching the genocide we see today," Tarzan said. "Until today, they are counting the calories that enter," he added. An Israeli NGO said in 2012 that documents showed Israeli authorities had calculated that 2,279 calories per person per day was deemed sufficient to prevent malnutrition in Gaza. The defence ministry, however, claimed it had "never counted calories" when allowing aid in. Despite this, Gazans have always shown a love of life and been incredibly resilient, the directors said. "My father is still in northern Gaza," Tarzan said, adding that the family's two homes had been destroyed. "But before then, every time a missile hit, damaging a wall or window, he'd fix it up the next day," he said. In films, "the last thing I want to do is talk about Israel and what it's doing," he added. "Human beings are more important — who they are, how they're living, and adapting to this really tough reality." In their previous films, the Nasser twins followed an elderly fisherman enamoured with his neighbour in the market in Gaza Mon Amour and filmed women trapped at a hairdresser's in Degrad (2015). Like Once Upon A Time in Gaza, both films were shot in Jordan. As the siege takes its toll in Once Upon A Time in Gaza, a desolate Yahia is recruited to star in a Hamas propaganda film. In Gaza, "we don't have special effects but we do have live bullets," the producer says in one scene. Once Upon A Time in Gaza has received positive reviews, with Screen Daily stating that the "taut, succinct film should win widespread attention." Arab said that long before Gazan tap water became salty and US President Donald Trump sparked controversy by saying he wanted to turn their land into the "Riviera of the Middle East," the coastal strip was a happy place.

Zelensky says Russia 'trying to buy time' to 'continue war'

KYIV (Agency): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday accused Russia of not seriously engaging in peace talks and of wanting to continue its three-year invasion, despite a US push for a ceasefire. US President Donald Trump held calls with both Zelensky and Russian leader Vladimir Putin on the war on Monday, and Russian and Ukrainian officials met in Istanbul on Friday for the first direct talks on the conflict in more than three years. But the Istanbul talks failed to yield a truce, and Zelensky accused Putin of sending "empty heads" to the negotiating table. "It is obvious that Russia is trying to buy time in order to continue its war and occupation," Zelensky said in a post on social media. Trump framed his two-hour conversation with Putin on Monday as a breakthrough, as the Republican seeks an elusive deal to end the war that he had promised on the campaign trail to solve in 24 hours. But Putin again rebuffed the call for a full,



immediate and unconditional ceasefire, instead saying only that he was ready to work with Ukraine on a memorandum outlining a possible roadmap and different positions on ending the war. Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 and has since destroyed swathes of the country's east, killed tens of thousands and now controls around one-fifth of its territory. Ukraine and Europe are trying to put pressure on Trump to hit Moscow with a new package of massive

sanctions after he refused to travel to Turkey for face-to-face talks with Zelensky. "Ukraine is ready for any negotiation format that delivers results. And if Russia continues to put forward unrealistic conditions and undermine progress, there must be tough consequences," Zelensky said. Kyiv accused Moscow's negotiators of making unrealistic demands at the Istanbul talks, including sweeping territorial claims that Ukraine has repeatedly rejected.

Israeli politician slammed for saying country should not 'kill babies for a hobby'

JERUSALEM (Agency): Israeli government and opposition leaders condemned on Tuesday a left-wing politician, Yair Golan, after he said in a radio interview that "a sane country... does not kill babies for a hobby". "Israel is on the path to becoming a pariah state among the nations — like the South Africa of old — if it does not return to behaving like a sane country," said Golan, chairman of Israel's Democrats party. "A sane country does not wage war



not set goals involving the expulsion of populations," he told Israel's Kan public radio.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Golan, a former major general in the military, of "wild incitement" against Israeli troops and of

"echoing the most despicable anti-Semitic blood libels against the (Israeli army) and the State of Israel." Golan also drew condemnation from members of the opposition, with opposition leader Yair Lapid writing in a post on X: "Our fighters are heroes and are defending our lives. The statement that they kill children as a hobby is incorrect and is a gift to our enemies". Education Minister Yoav Kisch called for an investigation for incitement into Golan, whose party is a coalition of several

left-wing factions. "Golan is not a member of Knesset and does not have immunity. I expect the Legal Advisor to the Prime Minister to immediately open an investigation against him for incitement," Kisch wrote in a post on X. Golan is a vocal opponent of Netanyahu's government and its policies. In November 2024, he accused Netanyahu of putting his own political interests before the country's following his decision to dismiss former minister of defence Yoav Gallant.

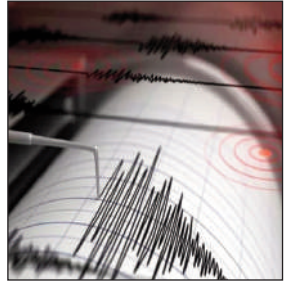
Thousands protest after a suspected drone strike kills four children in Pakistan



PESHAWAR (Agency): A suspected drone strike killed four children and wounded five others in Pakistan’s restive northwest, prompting thousands of residents to stage a protest by placing the children’s bodies on a main road to demand justice, local elders said on Tuesday. It was unclear who was behind Monday’s attack in Mir Ali, which has been a stronghold of Pakistani Taliban, and there was no comment from the army about the incident. “We are not blaming anyone, but we want justice, and the government should tell us who killed our children,” local tribal elder Mufti Baitullah said. He warned that the protest, currently staged at one regional roadblock, could expand if authorities fail to answer. “We will not bury the bodies until we are told who is responsible for killing our innocent children,” he said, as people chanted “we want justice.” The civilian casualties came amid ongoing military operations against the Pakistani Taliban, which have a strong presence in Mir Ali, a city in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, are a separate insurgent group from the Afghan Taliban, and they often target troops in the region. Nayak Muhammad Dawar, a provincial minister, condemned the attack in a statement Tuesday. He said investigations were ongoing. Mir Ali and nearby districts located near Afghanistan were long a base for the Pakistani Taliban and other militant groups. The TTTP have stepped up attacks in the region in recent months.

4.7 magnitude earthquake hits western Nepal

KATHMANDU (Agency): A 4.7 magnitude earthquake hit western Nepal’s Kaski district on Tuesday afternoon. The earthquake with its epicentre at Sinuwa area in Kaski district, about 250 kilometres from Kathmandu, was recorded at 1.59 pm, according to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre. Tremors were also felt in neighbouring districts, including Tanahu, Parvat and Baglung.



There was no immediate report of any damage due to the earthquake. Earlier on May 14, a 4.6 magnitude earthquake hit the Chheshkam area in the Solukumbu district of eastern Nepal.

A photograph showing three people (two men and one woman) sitting at a table in a restaurant. They are looking at a very tall burger that is being served on the table. The woman in the center is wearing a blue patterned shirt and has her hands clasped. The man on the left is wearing a grey shirt, and the man on the right is wearing a white shirt. The background features a brick wall and a green wall.

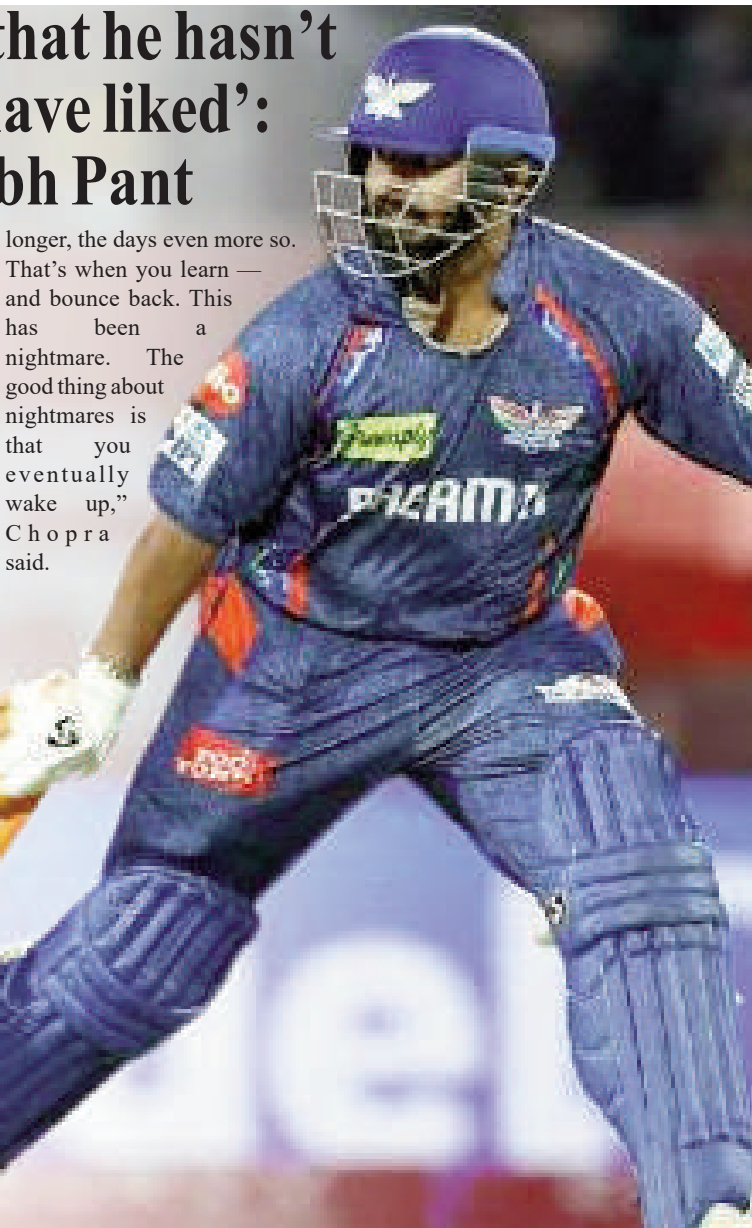
few months later from an accidental overdose. When Shepard described Ledger as “this heart here that’s just leaking out of everywhere”, Williams added, “Yeah, an incredible sensitivity.” *E!* News quoted her as saying, “We had a baby, but I suppose maybe the good thing about being young is that you don’t have so much life experience that you can contextualise things.

‘He would be first one to say that he hasn’t had a season that he would have liked’: Mitchell Marsh on Rishabh Pant

New Delhi (Agency): Record IPL signing and Lucknow Super Giants captain Rishabh Pant has had a season to forget with LSG getting knocked out from the playoffs contention by Sunrisers Hyderabad on Monday. Pant, who has scored 134 runs in 12 games, never seemed to find his footing this season, striking at 100 with an average of 12.27. “He would be the first one to say that he hasn’t had a season that he would have liked, but I know for myself personally that that’s the way cricket goes sometimes,” his teammate Mitchell Marsh, who has tallied 443 runs so far with five half-centuries told reporters after the match vs SRH. “We know that he’s a fantastic player, highly skilled and highly talented, so he will be back, but yeah, hopefully the last two games,” he added. On asked about the positives of the season, the Australian said that the team would focus on that after their two remaining matches. “I think the time for reflection is probably after the season and for me personally just focus on trying to contribute to winning the next two games for our team and for our franchise. Like I said, the IPL is a

beast of a tournament and the margins are really small. We lost a couple of close games throughout the season that now have come back to bite us, but yeah, it’s all about finishing off the season as strong as we possibly can now,” he said. Meanwhile, former India cricketer Aakash Chopra also believes that Pant will need to reassess his approach in T20 cricket after enduring a “nightmare” IPL season. “Success might teach you a few things. Failures, however, truly change your mindset — and often for good. He isn’t a regular in the Indian T20 side, so this season was crucial. A chance to make a mark, to build a strong unit,” Chopra, a former India opener, told ‘JioHotstar’. “It hasn’t gone that way. His own form has been inconsistent — another lesson in itself. Does he stick to this approach in T20s or adapt? “When you’re in a bad patch, it feels like nothing works. The n i g h t s s e c e m

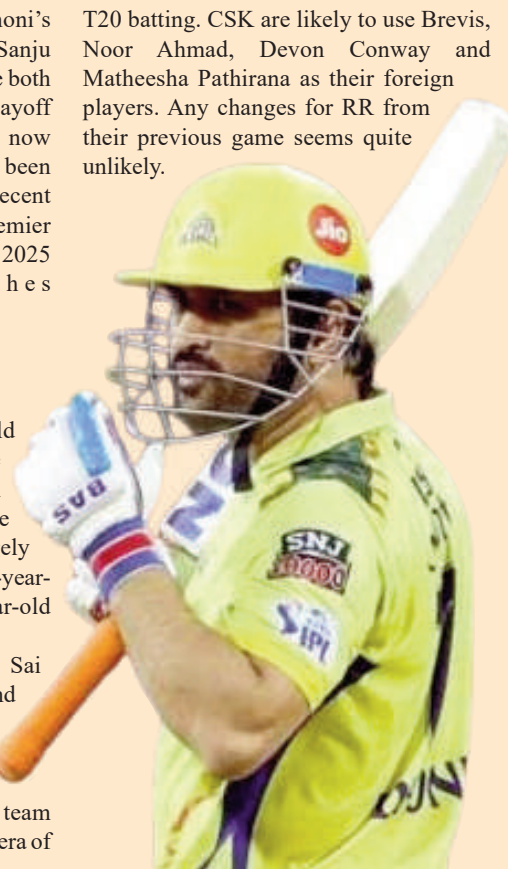
longer, the days even more so. That’s when you learn — and bounce back. This has been a nightmare. The good thing about nightmares is that you eventually wake up,” Chopra said.



CSK vs RR Predicted Playing 11, IPL Match Today: Players list, impact subs, full squad for Chennai Super Kings vs Rajasthan Royals match

New Delhi (Agency): MS Dhoni’s Chennai Super Kings and Sanju Samson’s Rajasthan Royals are both well out of contention for a playoff spot for quite some time now and both sides have been playing their recent Indian Premier League 2025 matches

with an eye on next season. CSK have had some joy with young batters Ayush Mhatre and Dewald Brevis making a lot of the opportunities that they have been presented with. However, RR have arguably had the better time of it, largely due to the form of their openers – 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi and 23-year-old Yashasvi Jaiswal. GT openers Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan made merry on this pitch and one can’t really put it beyond Suryavanshi and Jaiswal to do something similar. CSK, on the other hand, have looked like a team struggling to keep up with the current era of



FOCUS SHIFTS TO REBUILDING CSK face RR in battle of laggards

NEW DELHI: The contest between laggards Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals holds no significance in the context of the play-offs, but both teams will aim to accelerate their rebuilding process with the MS Dhoni-led side looking to transform itself. Tuesday’s match is last of the 2025 edition for the Royals, who have nothing to savour except finding exceptional talent in Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who forced the cricket world to take note of his unexpected coruscating show.

The bad bowling picks at the auction has hurt the Jaipur-based side the most apart from a non-impressive show by the middle order. If they are at No. 9 in the table out of the 10 teams, mostly it has been because of a mediocre show by their bowlers and over dependence on top-order batters.

Letting go of Jos Buttler from the squad and not-so-impressive show from Jofra Archer left the Royals with plenty to contend with. The absence of a premier Indian bowler who could put the opposition under the pump has been their biggest bane.

If Mumbai Indians were able to revive their fortunes, it was because they had Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult. If Gujarat Titans are a force to reckon with, it is because



CSK’s MS Dhoni bats at nets

Mohammad Siraj and Prasidh Krishna have done their job, sharing over 30 wickets between them — even on punishing flat Indian tracks. Royals never had that cushion or luxury. They did cherish a few fiery starts, like the one on Sunday against Punjab Kings when they scored 70-plus runs in the first five overs, but still found a way to lose the contest. This has been their story this season. They can only play for pride and end on a high, avoid the wooden spoon by winning Tuesday match against a side that has already gone into transformation process. The formula of packing the side with and relying on tried-and-tested players has proven outdated, severely hampering CSK’s performance this season. CSK have expected too much from Rahul Tripathy and Deepak Hooda. AGENCIES

No Aisa Cup for India? BCCI yet to decide on it

NEW DELHI: The BCCI on Monday termed as “speculative and imaginary” the report which claimed that it has decided to pull out of men’s Asia Cup and women’s Emerging Teams Asia Cup.

A media report, quoting sources, said that BCCI won’t let Indian teams compete in the two Asian Cricket Council (ACC) events at a time when the cricket body is being headed by a Pakistani and just days back the two neighbouring nations were involved in a military conflict. Pakistan’s interior minister Mohsin Naqvi, who is also PCB chairman, holds the position of president in the ACC.

Defending champions India are the hosts for the men’s Asia Cup, to be played in the T20 format, in September. “Since this morning, it has come to our notice about some news items about BCCI’s decision not to participate in the Asia Cup and Women’s Emerging Teams Asia Cup, both ACC events. Such news is devoid of any truth, the BCCI has not even discussed or taken any steps regarding the events, leave alone writing anything to the ACC,” BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said. AGENCIES

After Chopra’s 90m feat, Narang says he is ‘free to push his limits’

NEW DELHI: The 90-metre “mental barrier” broken, superstar Neeraj Chopra will now strive to push the limits further to attempt tasks that were previously considered out of reach, reckons Olympics medalist shooter Gagan Narang. Chopra entered the elusive club when he threw the spear at a distance of 90.23 metres at the Doha Diamond League on Friday. “The monkey is off his back and he is now free to push his limits,” Narang said. “At one limit, that glass ceiling, that mental barrier which probably played on his mind for some time is now broken,” Narang said, as the double Olympic medalist Chopra prepares for major events like the upcoming World Championships, in which he will look to defend the title he won two years ago. Chopra, however, finished second to Germany’s Julian Weber, who threw 91.06 metres, in Doha. Narang hailed the achievement as “absolutely phenomenal” and “monumental” for Indian athletics, emphasising its broader significance. “It’s not just about the distance, right? It’s about redefining what’s possible for Indian sport, especially on the global

Fleming a fan of experience

NEW DELHI: “Shaken” they may be after a horrendous season but Chennai Super Kings will not compromise on experience going forward, coach Stephen Fleming hinted on Monday, saying that experience wins tournaments. Asked if performance of Ayush Mhatre, Urvil Patel and Noor Ahmed has convinced the team management to bank on youth, Fleming gave them due credit. “My point has always been a mixture of youth and experience. I am a fan of experience, it wins tournaments. But the youth and talent is something you can’t ignore.” AGENCIES



Neeraj Chopra finally reached it the Doha Diamond League recently

“At one limit, that glass ceiling, that mental barrier which probably played on his mind for some time is now broken

Gagan Narang, former Olympics medalist

stage. “This is the first competition of the season for him. And there are many more compe-

Scheffler pulls away to win PGA Championship for third Major title

CHARLOTTE: Scottie Scheffler had every reason to worry the PGA Championship was slipping away.

A five-shot lead on the front nine was gone in four holes. Every shot seemed to go left and he didn’t know why. Jon Rahm was peeling off birdies and on the verge of tracking him down Sunday at Quail Hollow.

And that’s when Scheffler showed why he has been golf’s No. 1 player for two straight years, why he has compiled more PGA Tour titles quicker than anyone this side of Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus since 1950.

And why he now has the Wanamaker Trophy to go along with two Masters titles.

Scheffler turned a tense Sunday into another runaway by not missing a shot when the

Scheff’s special



Scottie Scheffler carded an even-par 71 for a total of 11-under

pressure was at its peak, giving himself another pleasant walk to the 18th green with another Major title secure in the hands of golf’s best.

“This back nine will be one that I remember for a long time,” Scheffler said. “It was a grind out there. I think at one point on the front

De Bruyne may not start in Man City farewell home game, says Guardiola

MANCHESTER : Manchester City great Kevin De Bruyne will make his Etihad Stadium farewell on Tuesday, though Pep Guardiola is not promising a start for the Belgium playmaker with Champions League qualification on the line.

The 33-year-old De Bruyne, who is leaving City at the end of the season after 10 years at the club, played the full match

in the 1-0 loss to Crystal Palace in the FA Cup final on Saturday.

With the Premier League home match against Bournemouth coming three days later, Guardiola has to balance sentiment with an assessment on De Bruyne’s fitness levels when it comes to whether he plays the midfielder in City’s final home game of the season. Indeed, speaking at a news

conference Monday, Guardiola wasn’t even prepared to confirm De Bruyne — one of City’s greatest ever players — would feature at least as a substitute.

“Kevin will get what he gets and deserve what he deserves — that is the best compliment for his incredible trajectory and what he has done with the incredible other legends in this club,” Guardiola said. AGENCIES

Sindhu, Prannoy to arrest slide at Malaysia Masters?

KUALA LUMPUR: Star Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and H S Prannoy will look to script a turnaround in fortunes when they lead the country’s campaign at the \$475,000 Malaysia Masters Super 500 beginning here on Tuesday.

Both Sindhu and Prannoy have endured a tough phase of late, struggling with form and fitness. The duo lost their respective matches against Indonesia and Denmark in the Sudirman Cup last month — their last competitive outing.

With a two-week break under their belt, the experienced shuttlers will now be eager to rediscover their rhythm at the Axiata Arena.

Sindhu, currently ranked world No. 16, will open her campaign against Japan’s Natsumi Nidaira, ranked 20th in the world.

Prannoy, who has slipped to world No. 35, faces a tough opener against fifth seed Kenta Nishimoto of Japan.

In women’s singles, 2024 Hylo Open runner-up Malvika Bansod will take on Chiu Pin-Chian of Chinese Taipei, while Unnati Hooda — a semifinalist at the Taipei Open Super 300 — will face compatriot Lin Hsiang Ti.



World No. 16 Sindhu will open her campaign against Japan’s Natsuki Nidaira

drawn eighth seed Putri Kusuma Wardani of Indonesia.

In men’s singles, Sathish Karunakaran will take on top seed Anders Antonsen of Denmark.

World junior championships bronze medalist Ayush Shetty, who reached the Taipei Open semifinals, will face Canada’s Brian Yang, while Priyanshu Rajawat opens against Singapore’s Jia Heng Jason Teh. AGENCIES

15

It was also his 15th career PGA Tour win, marking the shortest span between wins 1 and 15 by anyone not named Tiger Woods or Jack Nicklaus

I maybe had a four- or five-shot lead, and making the turn, I think I was tied for the lead. “So to step up when I needed to the most, I’ll remember that for a while.”

SAYS GT’S ASHISH KAPOOR

‘Thinking cricketer’ Gill uses brain over brawn



Shubman Gill is a potential successor to Rohit Sharma int Tests

NEW DELHI: Shubman Gill is a “thinking cricketer” but it is difficult to predict whether he would be able to replicate his T20 captaincy success in the Test format if handed the reins of the Indian team, feels Gujarat Titans assistant coach Ashish Kapoor.

Gill, who led GT to the IPL playoffs this season, is being seen as a potential successor to Rohit Sharma in the traditional format following the latter’s recent retirement.

“If you see Shubman as a batsman, or basically as a cricketer, whether he’s a good thinker or not, I think he’s a good thinker of his own game,” Kapoor said at the post-match press conference on Sunday night. “I’ve seen him since the Under-16 days. In fact, I’ve done two camps with him at the NCA. Even back then, he used his brain a lot more than many others his age. And that’s a key quality for a captain — to not just think for yourself but for the ten other players as well, and plan how to win matches.”

India are set to play five Tests in England starting June 20 in Leeds, with the announcement of the new Test captain expected this week.

Asked how Gill may fare as a red-ball captain if given

There was nothing fancy about it, just fairways and greens and holing the putts that eluded Rahm in his first time in serious contention at a Major since he won the 2023 Masters and left at the end of the year for LIV Golf.

Rahm’s hopes ended when he failed to convert birdie chances on the two easiest holes on the back nine at Quail Hollow, and then finished bogey-double bogey-double bogey. By then the tournament was effective over. It only cost Rahm money.

“Just a lot of happiness,” Scheffler said later of his reaction to the second straight victory. “I think, you know, just maybe thankful as well. It was a long week. I felt like this was as hard as I battled for a tournament in my career. This was a pretty challenging week.” AGENCIES

“If you see Shubman as a batsman, or basically as a cricketer, whether he’s a good thinker or not, I think he’s a good thinker of his own game

Ashish Kapoor, GT’s assistant coach

the opportunity, Kapoor said it is difficult to judge leadership capabilities based on limited experience.

“I’m not an astrologer. We’re watching him lead in T20 cricket, but when Dhoni was named captain for the World Cup (in 2007), he hadn’t captained anywhere. Nobody knew back then that he’d go on to become one of the world’s best captains,” said the former India spinner. “If you had asked someone at that time — even Dhoni himself — what they thought of his captaincy, there would’ve been no answer. You have to observe a player over a period of time before making any judgment.” AGENCIES

BRIEF NEWS

**Woman killed in UK:
Husband still on the run, last spotted at Gurgaon bank in March**

Delhi (Agency): Months after a 24-year-old Delhi woman was murdered — her body found in the boot of a car — in East London, her husband, the main accused in the case, was purportedly spotted in Gurgaon, sources said. The Delhi Police had earlier issued a Look Out Circular (LOC) against the husband, after he was suspected to have arrived in the national capital, and declared him a Proclaimed Offender (PO) on May 1. On March 4, sources confirmed, the accused was purportedly seen withdrawing money from a bank in Gurgaon. An officer, privy to the investigation, said he was wearing a mask at the bank. “He withdrew Rs 4.3 lakh from the bank branch via a cheque and left. CCTV footage from the bank showed he was alone. Before this, he had withdrawn Rs 21,000 from another bank on the same day. But we don’t have footage, so we cannot confirm if he had gone himself or sent someone in his stead,” a source said. As per the latest status report filed by the SHO of the Palam Village police station in the Delhi High Court, where the matter is currently being heard, details of two banks from where the accused withdrew money were mentioned. These details were collected by the police on April 4. The High Court, in an earlier hearing, had asked the police to file an updated status report outlining the steps they have taken to arrest the accused.

HC reserves order in plea challenging expulsion of DPS Dwarka students

Delhi (Agency): The Delhi High Court on Monday reserved its order in an application filed by parents of over 30 students of Delhi Public School (DPS), Dwarka, challenging the students’ expulsion last week over alleged non-payment of fees, even as the school denied allegations of profiteering. The school, through its counsel, told the court of Justice Sachin Datta that since 2015-16, the school has faced a deficit while paying salaries and meeting expenditure. “How do I operate with a growth deficit of Rs 31 crore over 10 years? Today, there is an outstanding of Rs 1.75 crore... Rs 42 lakh is due from these 31 students.” “This whole perception that this is profiteering... These are not the franchise issues... these are all very eminent people who run the DPS Society. To think that these people want profit...,” the counsel added. The school submitted that it had issued notices to the students that their fees were due. It added that 31 students were expelled over non-payment of fees, and not 32 — as was asserted by the parents — with one of the students taking a transfer. With arguments concluded, the court reserved the application for verdict. On May 16, the HC had orally remarked that it is inclined to stay DPS Dwarka’s order expelling 32 students over non-payment of fees.

Transferred from Andhra to MP High Court to harass; Justice Ramana said- *'They will also have to suffer'*

Bhopal (Agency): Justice DV Ramana on Tuesday created a sensation by saying that he was transferred from Andhra Pradesh High Court to Madhya Pradesh High Court in the year 2023 with the intention of harassing him. In his farewell speech held before his retirement in June, Justice Ramana said that he was transferred without any reason, and his appeal against it was not even considered by the Supreme Court Collegium. He also revealed that he wanted to get transferred to Karnataka so that he could take care of his insured wife. Justice Ramana, who is

retiring on June 2, said that the current Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai can consider his case, but now it is too late for that. According to the report of 'Bar and Bench', while giving information about this, he said, 'When I was asked about the options regarding transfer, I had chosen the state of Karnataka, so that my wife could get better treatment at NIMHANS Bangalore, but the Hon'ble Supreme Court did not consider it. I took charge of the Hon'ble High Court of Madhya Pradesh on 1 November 2023, after which I once again sent an

application to the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 19 July

wife is suffering from PNES, a disease of severe brain



2024 and 28 August 2024 on the basis of my wife's serious illness, but it was neither considered nor rejected. My

impairment since the Covid epidemic.' He further said, 'After this I sent another representation,

but once again that application was neither rejected nor considered. I did not get any reply.' He said, 'Judges like me expect positive human consideration. I am disappointed and very sad.' Speaking further after this, he said, 'Anyway, my transfer order seems to have been issued with wrong intention and to harass me. I was transferred from my home state for obvious reasons. I am happy that his ego got satisfaction. Now he is retired. God neither forgives nor forgets. He too will have to suffer in other ways.' However, Justice

Ramana also said that he has received immense love, support and cooperation from the judges and bar members of Jabalpur and Indore. He said, 'I expected my transfer to shock me, but it did not happen. I did the opposite. I have contributed for a long time in both the states - Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. I got the opportunity to serve in the land of Amaravati, Krishna and Godavari and Narmada. I have really done justice. I am blessed for these opportunities.' Let us tell you that Justice Ramana was appointed as a judge of the Andhra Pradesh

High Court in the year 2022. Earlier, he was a judicial officer since 2007. He was transferred to the Madhya Pradesh High Court in 2023 on the recommendation of the Supreme Court Collegium comprising then CJI DY Chandrachud and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai and Surya Kant. The Collegium had rejected Ramana's request to transfer him to Karnataka, saying, 'We have considered the requests made by Justice D. Venkata Ramana. The Collegium does not find any merit in the requests made by him.'

Why should a person who gives drones to Pakistan be given a tender in India? Congress's sharp attack on MP government amid Turkey protests

Bhopal (Agency): Anti-Turkey sentiments are at peak in the country these days due to supporting Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, which was launched against terrorists after the Pahalgam attack, and people across the country are boycotting Turkey, saying that they will break trade relations with it and not go there for a visit. Amidst this protest campaign, Leader of Opposition in Madhya Pradesh Assembly Umang Singhar has made a big allegation against the Madhya Pradesh government. Singhar says that the company which has been given the contract for the metro project in Indore and Bhopal cities of the state is the same company whose drones were given by Turkey to Pakistan, and then the neighboring country attacked us with those drones. Making an allegation on social media about this, Umang Singhar wrote, 'Why should a person who gives

weapons to Pakistan be given a tender in India? The fair collection tender for Bhopal and Indore Metro project in March 2024 has been given

were products of ASISGuard, which killed many innocent Indian citizens. In such a situation, the question arises that how



to Turkish company "ASIS Elektronik" (ASIS Electronic). This is the same group whose branch "ASISGuard" has been manufacturing drones in Turkey since 2019 and has been supplying drones to Pakistan for the last several years.' He further wrote, 'In particular, the Pakistani "Songar" drones used in the recent drone attacks on India

was the tender for the metro project in Madhya Pradesh given to a company that has been supplying military technology to Pakistan for years? Is this not a threat to national security?' At the same time, in another video shared on his social media account, Umang Singhar says, 'Mohan Yadav's government has given the contract after thinking, what was the

thinking behind giving it is a different matter. It is your government, if your government has taken any decision, then Kailash ji and the Chief Minister should immediately take a decision to cancel it. What is the use of rhetoric. What is important is when and how soon Bhopal and Indore should get the metro, this is important, there should be a discussion on this.' Raising questions on the cabinet meeting held at Rajwada in Indore on Tuesday, Singhar wrote, 'Holding a cabinet meeting in a crowded commercial area like Rajwada and sealing the entire area and shutting down shops for it, is this the way to take decisions in the public interest? Where thousands of people earn their livelihood every day, the government shut down everything for a meeting. What kind of government is this that is holding meetings by shutting down the livelihood of the people? Is the BJP giving priority only to its event management?'

Delhi Assembly just passed a single Bill in all of 2024: Report



Delhi (Agency): The Delhi Assembly passed only a single Bill in 2024 — the least number of Bills passed by any state or union territory Assembly in India. This finding is from a report released on Monday by non-profit organisation PRS Legislative Research on the functioning of state legislatures. Delhi only passed one Bill — The Delhi Goods and Services Tax (Third Amendment) Act, 2024 — while states, on average, passed 17 Bills throughout the year. This GST Bill was also passed on the same day it was introduced in the Assembly, making Delhi one of the eight states that passed all Bills on the same day they were introduced into the Assembly. The seven other states were Bihar,

Jharkhand, Mizoram, Puducherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. In 2024, 62 out of the 70 legislators in the Delhi Assembly were from the AAP, and the remaining eight were from the BJP. The report, titled Annual Review of State Laws 2024, also points out that last year, the national capital's Assembly session, along with Tamil Nadu's, lasted the longest without the session being prorogued. Proroguing refers to ending a session of the Assembly. Delhi's Assembly session continued from February to December last year. The Delhi Assembly met for 25 days in 2024, higher than the national average of 20. Odisha met for the highest number of days (42), followed by Kerala (38).

Gross misuse of SC/ST Act: SC grants bail to lawyer booked for casteist slurs

Delhi (Agency): Calling it a case of “gross misuse” of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the Supreme Court Tuesday granted bail to a Jharkhand lawyer who was accused by his woman client of hurling casteist slurs. “This is gross misuse of the SC/ST Act,” CJI B R Gavai said, presiding over a two-judge bench also comprising Justice A G Masih. The SC had granted lawyer Virendra Singh anticipatory bail in July 2024 noting that “prima facie, we find that no specific role is attributed to the present petitioner in the FIR and there is also a previous litigation pending between the parties”. On Tuesday, the counsel for the complainant woman opposed Singh’s appeal challenging the Jharkhand HC’s December 13, 2023 order dismissing his anticipatory bail plea and sought more time to file a counter affidavit. But the SC bench said that on April 17 this year the state was already given the last opportunity of four weeks to file its counter affidavit. The bench also noted that Singh had joined the investigation. “... Taking into consideration the fact that pursuant to the interim orders passed by this Court dated 12.07.2024, the petitioner has joined the investigation and cooperated with the investigating agency, we are inclined to make the order dated 12.07.2024 passed by this Court absolute.”



Appearing for Singh, Advocate Chayan Sarkar argued that the case is nothing but a fallout between the lawyer and her client, and the fact that the complainant has also filed two more FIRs also shows this is vendetta. He contended that the woman had lodged a case against Singh and his son when the advocate asked her to pay his fees. Later, Singh was also booked under the SC/ST Act on allegations that he and some other lawyers hurled casteist slurs on the woman and assaulted her on the premises of a Jamshedpur court in February 2022. The woman’s counsel had submitted before the HC that the incident had

occurred in full public glare and would therefore constitute an offence under the Act. Dismissing his plea for anticipatory bail, the HC had said, “it is seen that in the FIR also the presence of the appellant is made out and that the appellant was working in tandem with other accused persons...” Sarkar said that the HC delved into the statements of the complainant and other witnesses, which were nothing but reiteration of the contents of the FIR, but failed to consider that there were no direct allegations against the petitioner. The allegations were principally against some elected members of the district bar association of Jamshedpur.

Bhopal rape case

NCW investigation indicates forced conversion and involvement of criminal network

Bhopal (Agency): A fact-finding committee of the National Commission for Women (NCW) claims that the alleged rape and intimidation of girls in a Bhopal college indicates pressure for conversion and the possible involvement of an organized criminal network. The committee has also suggested a statewide investigation into the matter. The case is related to a group of college students who allegedly raped several girl students after drugging them. Not only this, the accused made a video of this act and used the video to threaten the victims so that the victims would introduce more girls to them. The NCW investigation committee headed by retired IPS officer Nirmal Kaur, comprising advocate Nirmala Nayak and Under Secretary Ashutosh Pandey, visited Bhopal from May 3 to 5. During this time, they met the victims, their families, police officials and representatives of educational institutions. The committee also inspected the sites where the victims were allegedly drugged and sexually assaulted. According to the investigation report, the accused lured the girls with expensive gifts and vehicles and made them consume drugs.



The accused took objectionable photographs to intimidate the victims. In some cases, they allegedly pressured the girls to convert to Islam. The committee said that despite severe emotional trauma and social pressure, the victims showed remarkable courage by filing FIRs. The report also said that although the economic background of the accused was normal, their luxurious lifestyle indicated a possible connection with drug trafficking and organised crime. The committee recommended that a thorough and state-wide investigation be conducted into these aspects to find out whether external funding or ideological influence was involved.

Fake govt recruitment racket busted, 2 arrested

Delhi (Agency): With the arrest of two persons, Delhi Police on Monday claimed to have busted a fake government recruitment racket, in which the accused allegedly duped people by encouraging them to register on fraudulent websites that carried photographs of ministers and senior government officials. The main accused, Rashid Choudhury, allegedly ran a cyber scam by using the name ‘National Rural Development and Recreation Mission (NRDRM)’ to falsely present it as a government body under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), police said. Both Choudhury and his accomplice, Ikbāl Hussain (27), were arrested on Sunday. The matter came to light when the MoRD filed a police complaint in March alleging that two sites under the name NRDRM were carrying fraudulent recruitment advertisements and falsely projecting itself as being a part of the ministry. The site would demand payment from the victims on the pretext of registering them for the recruitment process, said police.