



Pak PM admits air base strike by India



AGENCIES ■ Islamabad

For the first time, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif confirmed India's strike on the Nur Khan airbase during 'Operation Sindoor', revealing Army Chief Asim Munir informed him at 2:30 am on May 10. Pakistan PM Sharif has admitted to India's precision missile strike on the Nur Khan airbase in Rawalpindi and other sites, revealing that Army chief General Asim Munir personally called him at 2:30 am on the intervening night of May 9 and 10 to inform him about the attack during the 'Operation Sindoor'.

This is a rare acknowledgement that contradicts Pakistan's usual stance of denial when it comes to Indian military action. Pakistan PM was addressing a special 'Youm-e-Tashakur' event at the Pakistan Monument in Islamabad. "On the intervening night of May 9 and 10 around 2.30 am, Army Chief Asim Munir called me over a secure line, informing me that Hindustani ballistic missiles had hit Nur Khan Airbase and other areas. I can tell you that by swearing on the God that there

was confidence, self-confidence and patriotism in the General's voice," said Sharif, detailing India's attacks. "Our Air Force used homegrown technology to save our country, and they even used modern gadgets and technology on Chinese jets," he added.

On May 10, Pakistan had claimed that its three air bases were targeted by Indian missiles and drones. Pakistan military spokesperson Lt General Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry told a hurriedly called press conference in Islamabad at around 4 am that Nur Khan (Chaklala, Rawalpindi), Muriid (Chakwal) and Rafiqi (Shorkot in Jhang district) air bases of Pakistan Air Force were targeted.

Recent satellite images captured by Maxar Technologies revealed significant damage to multiple air bases in Pakistan. The images show damage to four Pakistani air bases: Nur Khan Air Base in Rawalpindi, PAF Base Mushaf in Sargodha, Bholari Air Base and PAF Base Shahbaz in Jacobabad. Satellite images taken on April 25, 2025 and May 10, 2025, show damage to air base facilities, indicating a possible strike or attack at the Nur Khan airbase.

Tharoor to brief US, Ravi Shankar to go Middle East

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Opposition leaders Shashi Tharoor and Kanimozhi will join members of the ruling alliance, including Ravi Shankar Prasad and Sanjay Jha, in leading seven all-party delegations to key partner countries to convey India's message of zero tolerance against terrorism following 'Operation Sindoor'.

The other MPs picked by the Government to present India's "national consensus" globally, including to UN Security Council members, in fighting terrorism are NCP-SP's Supriya Sule, BJP's Baijayant 'Jay' Panda and Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde.

A statement issued by the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry on Saturday said, "The all-party delegations will project India's national consensus and

resolute approach to combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations. "They would carry forth to the world the country's strong message of zero tolerance against terrorism."

The Government has made a careful selection of leaders who will head the delegations as they come from parties across the political divide and are considered articulate voices.

The leaders — four from the ruling National Democratic Alliance and three from the opposition INDIA bloc — include seasoned lawmakers with long stints in public life.

While the opposition has backed the government in its response to the horrific April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives, former Union Minister Tharoor has taken the lead in defending Indian strikes on terrorist sites in Pakistan



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor addressing the media in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala PTI

and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir and endorsing the ruling alliance's tough stand on the Indo-Pak conflict. He is expected to lead the Indian outreach to the US, the most powerful global voice.

The Ministry's statement said distinguished diplomats will be part of each del-

egation. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said, "In moments that matter most, Bharat stands united. Seven All-Party Delegations will soon visit key partner nations, carrying our shared message of zero-tolerance to terrorism."

Sharing the Ministry's statement, he said, "A powerful reflection of national unity above politics, beyond differences." The statement said the proposed visits of the seven all-party delegations come in the context of 'Operation Sindoor' and India's continued fight against cross-border terrorism.

Sources said the Prasad-led delegation is expected to visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Algeria, while Sul's team of MPs will be travelling to Oman, Kenya, South Africa and Egypt.

Continued on >> P2
Related report on Page >> P4

Storm, rain kill four, damage properties

VAISHNAVI MISHRA ■ New Delhi

At least four people reportedly died in separate building collapse incidents across Delhi after sudden heavy rainfall and strong winds swept through the national capital for the third consecutive day on Saturday, causing damage to infrastructure across Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).

According to Delhi Police, a wall collapsed at a construction site in the Arakashan Road area of Paharganj, Central Delhi, claiming the lives of three men. Harsha Vardhan, DCP Central Delhi, said, "A PCR call was received at about 6:20 pm regarding collapse of a wall at Arakashan Road, Paharganj. On the spot, it was found that construction was going where a basement was under construction. A wall fell down due to rainfall and three people have been declared dead named Prabhu (64), Niranjana (40) from Munger, Bihar and Roshan (35) from Azamgarh Uttar Pradesh.

Among them, Prabhu was the contractor who was doing the construction works at the basement. Niranjana and



Workers repairing damaged roof of the New Ashok Nagar RRTS station in New Delhi PTI

Roshan were his workers." "One other individual was injured and admitted to hospital. Rescue operations were continuing late into the evening," he added.

In a separate incident in Shahbad Dairy, Rohini, another building collapsed due to the impact of the storm.

Officials confirmed one person died in that incident. A portion of the roof at the New Ashok Nagar station of the recently inaugurated Namoo Bharat Rapid Rail Metro line was damaged by high-speed winds.

Continued on >> P2

State Assemblies meet 30 days a year: PRS

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

PRS Legislative Research, in its Annual Review of State Laws 2024, revealed that State Assemblies across India continue to meet for less than 30 days on average. In 2024, Assemblies sat for an average of 20 days, totalling approximately 100 hours of proceedings. The report noted that four states held sessions for fewer than 50 hours, while six states — including Kerala, Odisha, Maharashtra and Rajasthan — met for over 150 hours.

According to the report, Odisha recorded the highest number of sitting days at 42, followed by Kerala with 38 days and West Bengal with 36 days. In Manipur, where President's Rule was imposed in February 2025, the Assembly met for 14 days.

Other States with notably short sessions include Nagaland (six days), Sikkim (eight days) and Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab and Uttarakhand, which each met for just 10 days. Among larger states, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh convened for only 16 days each. The Constitution mandates that state legislatures meet at least once every six months.

The report said 11 States met this requirement through short sessions that lasted for one or two days. Seven States had Assembly elections in 2024. Of these, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha met for higher number of days compared to 2023. On the other hand, Jharkhand and Maharashtra had lesser sitting days compared to 2023.

"From 28 days in 2017, the average number of sitting days of Assemblies

came down to 16 during the pandemic affected 2020. Since then, it has remained close to 20 days a year. Some states have set a target for minimum number of annual sitting days either through legislation or through Rules of Procedure. But none of them met these targets in any year between 2017 and 2024," it said. Some states which have a relatively higher number of average annual sitting days include: (i) Kerala (44 days a year on average), (ii) Odisha (40), (iii) Karnataka (34) and (iv) West Bengal (34). The average duration of a sitting was five hours, with wide variation across states. While sittings in Goa and Rajasthan lasted for an average of seven hours, in Bihar, Jharkhand and Punjab average duration of sittings was about three hours. When Assemblies meet for few days in a year and for few hours on these days, they have limited time for discussion on laws and government finances.

"The Constitution mandates legislatures to meet at least once in six months. Eleven states met this requirement through short sessions that lasted for one or two days," according to the report. "When Assemblies meet for a few days in a year and for a few

hours on these days, they have limited time for discussion on laws and government finances," the PRS said in the report. According to PRS, an average, states passed 17 Bills in 2024. Of the more than 500 Bills passed by all states, Karnataka passed the highest number of Bills (49), followed by Tamil Nadu (45), Himachal Pradesh (32) and Maharashtra (32). While Delhi passed only one Bill, Rajasthan passed two Bills. Odisha and Puducherry passed three Bills each.

"In 2024, 51 per cent of all the Bills passed, were passed on the day they were introduced in the Assembly or the very next day (Figure 6). In 2023, 44 per cent of Bills had been passed within a day of introduction. Eight states — Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Puducherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal — passed all Bills on the day they were introduced, or the next day. Jharkhand, Mizoram, Puducherry and Punjab had also passed all Bills within a day in 2023 and 2022. In 16 states, all Bills were passed within five days of introduction. Since states have low sitting days, legislative activity tends to get concentrated in a few days. For example, of the 32 Bills passed by Himachal Pradesh, 17 were introduced on September 5, 2024 and passed the next day," according to a think tank.

Amid a debate over the absence of a deputy speaker in the Lok Sabha, data compiled by a think tank shows eight state assemblies not having anyone in the position, with Jharkhand not electing one for more than 20 years.

Continued on >> P2

Haryana-based YouTuber arrested for spying on India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Chandigarh

A Haryana-based YouTuber has been arrested on the charge of passing on sensitive information to Pakistani intelligence operatives.

Jyoti Malhotra, who runs a YouTube channel, Travel with JO and hails from Hisar in Haryana, was arrested from New Aggarsain Extension, they said.

She has been booked under the relevant sections of the Official Secrets Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, said police. She was sent to a five-day police remand after being produced before the court. Jyoti, whose YouTube channel and Instagram account have 3.77 lakh subscribers and 1.33 lakh followers respectively, allegedly was in contact with a Pakistani staffer working at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi. On May 13, India had expelled that Pakistani official for allegedly indulging in espionage.

Her YouTube channel account shows some videos regarding her visit to Pakistan — 'Indian Girl in Pakistan', 'Indian Girl Exploring Lahore', and 'Indian Girl at Kataraj Temple' and 'Indian Girl Rides Luxury Bus in Pakistan'. She has made a total of 487 videos so far.

She has described herself as a 'Nomadic Leo Girl', 'Wanderer Haryanvi + Punjabi' and 'pure khyaloni ki modern ladki' on her YouTube channel. In 2023, Jyoti came in contact with Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish at the Pakistan High Commission where she



went to seek a visa to visit the neighbouring nation, according to an FIR lodged at Civil Lines Police Station on May 16. Jyoti, who visited Pakistan twice, had met Danish's acquaintance Ali Ahwan who arranged her stay there, the FIR read.

Ahwan arranged Jyoti's meeting with Pakistani Security and Intelligence officials and met Shakir and Rana Shahbaz. She saved Shahbaz's mobile number as 'Jatt Randhawa' to avoid any suspicion.

She was in contact with these persons through WhatsApp, Telegram and Snapchat, and passed on sensitive information to them, according to the FIR, which was registered on the complaint of sub-inspector Bijender Singh.

She met Danish several times at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi and was found to be in touch with Pakistani Intelligence Operatives, it said.

Continued on >> P2

Juicy, glossy Turkish apple rots on Indian plates

VAISHNAVI MISHRA ■ New Delhi

In Delhi's bustling fruit bazaars, where the air is thick with the scent of ripe mangoes, crushed leaves and ambition, a quiet storm is brewing. The conflict isn't over land or language — it's over apples. Specifically, Turkish ones.

Once praised for their glossy skin and sweet crunch, Turkish apples are now at the centre of an unusual political protest unfolding across Delhi's biggest fruit markets — from the massive sprawl of Azadpur Mandi in the north to the upscale INA Market in the south. And it all began with a border — and a statement.

Earlier this year, when Turkiye publicly supported Pakistan during a fresh round of India-Pakistan tensions and even supplied drones to Islamabad, many Indians saw it as a betrayal. The response? Swift, symbolic and deeply personal: a boycott, starting with what was on their plate — or in their fruit basket.

"We've stopped placing any new orders from Turkiye," says Sunil, sales manager at Gemtree, a key importer at Azadpur,



Asia's largest fruit and vegetable market. "Yes, the remaining stock is still coming in, but we won't support any country that supports our enemy. We must stand with our nation." The Azadpur Market, built by the Delhi Development Authority in 1977, is not just a marketplace — it's the beating

heart of fruit trade across North India. Retailers from Punjab to Uttar Pradesh come here to fill their trucks with apples, bananas, oranges and more. For years, Turkish apples filled a crucial seasonal gap — arriving from March to June, just as Indian varieties begin to fade. But this year,

they're arriving with crossed arms and skeptical glances.

"Customers usually care about taste and price," says Shiv, a local fruit seller. "They ask if it's sweet, how crunchy it is — not which country it comes from. But now, even that is changing." Turkish apples sit in a mid-range price bracket: cheaper than premium imports from the US or New Zealand but costlier than Indian, Iranian, or Afghan varieties. But in the current climate, even affordability isn't enough. Some traders, however, are stuck in a moral and financial tug-of-war. "At heart, I support the boycott," says a salesperson at Exotic Crate Fruits in Azadpur.

"But what if I stop selling Turkish apples and the guy next to me doesn't? I'll lose customers. We're waiting for the government to decide officially." The conversation is even sharper at INA Market, known for its high-end produce and wealthy clientele. At Golden Fresh Fruit Corner, a vendor is clear, "We've completely stopped buying Turkish apples. It's been over a week. We don't need them."

Continued on >> P2

Divine rice invoked to trace files

GAJENDRA SINGH NEGI ■ Dehradun

Stunned by an order issued by an executive engineer in which he asked all the officers and employees to bring two fistfuls of rice from their homes to be offered in a particular temple to seek divine justice in a case of missing service book, the Public Works Department (PWD) of Uttarakhand has sought explanation from the executive engineer concerned in question. In his order, the PWD HoD Rajesh Chandra has directed the executive engineer of National Highways (NH) division, Lohaghat, Champawat, Ashutosh Kumar to submit his explanation within three days, on the strange order issued by him.

In an order dated May 15, 2025, Kumar had asked all the employees of his office to carry two fistfuls of rice from their homes and place them in a temple in order to solicit divine justice in the case involving the missing service book of additional assistant engineer Jai Prakash.

He stated that the service book is miss-

ing from the almira of the office assistant. Kumar had said that all the efforts to find the missing service book have failed due to which both the office assistant and the AAE Jai Prakash are suffering from mental stress. "In this situation, an idea of seeking divine justice cropped up. All are requested to bring two fistfuls of rice from their homes and deposit them in the office on May 17, 2025 so that the problem is solved," he stated in the order.

The order seeking divine intervention to find the missing service book became a talking point in the State administration and the general public. The copy of the order also got circulated on social media platforms with users lampooning the officer and the department for showing faith in the archaic practice instead of registering a complaint with the local police.

The superstitious officer however has now been asked to explain things by the HoD of State PWD. It is pertinent to mention here that practices considered superstitious officially are part of routine life, followed even by officials in Devbhoomi Uttarakhand.



Centre working to ensure 'poverty-free' villages: Shivraj



Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan feeding elephants during a visit to Kaziranga National Park in Assam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Guwahati

Asserting that the Centre is working to ensure 'poverty-free' villages, Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday appealed to the people to take full benefits of all social welfare schemes. Addressing an event in which 55,000 houses built across Assam under the PM Awas Yojana — Gramin (PMAY-G) were handed over to the beneficiaries, Chouhan underlined the need for empowering women.

He said the BJP-led government at the Centre was working to serve people rather than "grabbing power". He said the government is focusing on ensuring 'poverty-free' villages and the various welfare schemes will enable it. Praising Assam's progress in PMAY-G, Chouhan said that 3.76 lakh more houses will be built in the state under the scheme in the current financial year. He also launched the 'Lakhmi Mistri' scheme, aimed at equipping women with masonry skills to enhance employment opportunities. Chouhan also virtually inaugurated 21 knowledge centres built across the state under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF).

These centres have been set up with the objective of strengthening rural agricultural infrastructure and empowering farmers with timely access to resources and information. Speaking at the programme, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma expressed gratitude to the Centre and reiterated the state government's commitment to empowering farmers, women and rural communities through sustainable growth in agriculture and other livelihood opportunities. State Agriculture Minister Atul Bora and Rural Development Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass were also present at the function.

J and K Deputy CM visits family hit by Pakistan shelling, assures support

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Saturday visited a family which lost a member in Pakistani shelling here a week ago and assured full support of the government to all affected families. Accompanied by National Conference provincial president Rattan Lal Gupta, Choudhary visited Khari Chinorea area of Jammu to express condolences over the death of Zakir Hussain, who was killed in a mortar shell attack from across the border during the recent India-Pakistan military conflict.

Interacting with the next of kin of the deceased, the deputy chief minister said Omar Abdullah-led government stands in solidarity with every citizen who has been affected by the cross-border shelling. "Our administration is committed to provide every possible support to the affected families," he said, emphasizing that the government would ensure that proper compensation, relief, and rehabilitation are extended to victims. He assured the people that safety measures are being strengthened along the border to prevent further loss of life and property. Gupta expressed resentment against the Centre for maintaining a "criminal silence" over the plight of the people living along the International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC), who have been facing the brunt of Pakistani shelling. "The recent spate of hostilities has taken a heavy toll, especially in the border district of Poonch, where 13 civilians lost their lives and over 50 sustained serious injuries. These are not just statistics — they are shattered families, broken homes, and traumatised communities," he said. The NC leader lamented the absence of any

concrete response or relief announcement from the Central government, even after the passage of over a week. "The silence is deafening. What the border residents need now is not apathy, but empathy and immediate action," he said. Gupta urged officials from the revenue and rural development departments to promptly conduct damage assessments and ensure that no genuine case is left out. He stressed the need for swift, transparent compensation disbursement as per norms. The NC provincial president reiterated the demand for a comprehensive special package from the Centre for the shelling victims, along with concrete steps for the safety and long-term welfare of the border population. "The National Conference will continue to be the voice of the people and fight for justice and adequate relief at every relevant forum," he said.

Srinagar police books 23 associates of terror outfits, miscreants under PSA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Jammu

The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Saturday said it has booked 23 terror associates and miscreants under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) in Srinagar. The accused have been detained and lodged in district jails of Poonch, Udhampur and Kot Bhalwal Jammu, a police spokesperson said. "In a decisive action against subversive and criminal elements inimical to the security and public order of the nation, Srinagar police has booked 23 terror associates of proscribed terror outfits involved

in subversive activities and miscreants involved in public disturbance under the PSA," he said. The accused were booked after obtaining formal detention orders from the office of the district magistrate of Srinagar based on dossiers prepared against them by the Srinagar police. He said several criminal cases have been registered against these individuals. "They did not mend their ways even after getting bail from the courts. They were brazenly involved in the disturbance of public order, criminal and subversive activities against the nation," he said. The spokesperson said the Jammu

and Kashmir Police has been systematically targeting and dismantling such anti-national and anti-social infrastructure in Srinagar city through its relentless crackdown on such elements. "Police affirms its steadfast commitment to eliminating criminal activities prejudicial to the security and public order in this region with the full might of law," he said. The spokesperson cautioned those engaged in unlawful or disruptive activities detrimental to the security of the nation that the long arm of the law would catch them sooner than anticipated, and every offender will face justice.

Two bothers held for extortion bid in Punjabi Bagh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Two brothers in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh area allegedly attempted to extort money from their friend by sending him a threatening letter with two empty cartridges, police said on Saturday. Rohit Nagpal (35) and his brother Sagar (30) have been arrested in connection with the case, they said. According to the police, the brothers hatched the extortion plan to repay mounting debts after suffering heavy financial losses in their business. The main accused, Rohit, had reportedly taken a loan of ₹80 lakh which he was unable to repay, they added. "On May 13, Rohit Chauhan received a suspicious courier at his residence. Inside were photographs of his wife and child, two empty gun cartridges, and a letter demanding a hefty sum in US dollars. The letter warned that his family would be harmed if the money was not paid," Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Vichitra Veer said. Scared by the threat, the family approached the police and a case was immediately registered.

5,000 cow shelter planned in Delhi's Ghumanhera

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh announced plans to build a cow shelter and a school complex designed in the shape of the symbol 'Om' in North West Delhi's Ghumanhera village on Saturday. The cow shelter will be constructed at an estimated cost of 47 crore and spread over 20 acres, the shelter will be capable of housing up to 5,000 cows. The infrastructure will include modern systems such as automated fodder distribution, solar power integration, rainwater harvesting, and on-site veterinary services. It aims to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for the animals, while also encouraging sustainable practices. Addressing a large gathering of villagers, local leaders, and community representatives, Parvesh Sahib Singh said, "the project represents the government's dedication to preserving Indian traditions while promoting modern infrastructure. The cow shelter would not only serve as a safe haven for cows but also contribute to rural livelihoods. Units will be established

within the shelter for the production of organic manure and Panchgavya-based products, which can support eco-friendly farming and promote traditional Indian agricultural practices." Parvesh described the shelter as more than just an animal care facility. He said it would act as a hub for innovation in organic farming and rural entrepreneurship, blending technology with tradition. The use of solar energy and water conservation techniques will also ensure that the facility sets an example of environmentally friendly infrastructure. Alongside this announcement, Parvesh also performed the foundation laying ceremony for an upcoming school complex in Ghumanhera village and will be constructed in the architectural form of 'Om', a symbol deeply rooted in Indian spirituality. The Minister emphasised that the institution will focus on character building, cultural pride, and holistic development. He added that the Om-shaped design will serve as both a spiritual and educational landmark, symbolising harmony, consciousness, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Delhi police recovers 76 lost phones via CEIR portal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Delhi Police has recovered 76 lost mobile phones in a month-long drive using the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) portal, which helps trace and block lost or stolen devices, officials said on Saturday. The phones, either reported lost or mentioned in theft-related e-FIRs, were recovered through cyber surveillance and International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI)-based tracking, a police officer said. "We traced 76 mobile phones in the last one month and handed them over to their rightful owners. The operation was made possible through a combination of cyber-space surveillance and IMEI tracking," Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Devesh Kumar Mahla said. The recoveries were made by various police stations across the New Delhi district. The maximum number — 38 — were recovered by Kartavya Path police station, followed by 10 recoveries by Tughlak Road, seven by Tilak Marg, four

Ex-servicemen to safeguard vital infrastructure

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Jammu

The J and K Government has approved the proposal moved by the Sainik Welfare Board of Jammu and Kashmir for mobilising ex-servicemen (ESM) to safeguard vital infrastructure across the Union Territory. As per the approved plan, 4,000 Ex-Servicemen volunteers have been identified for this initiative. Among them, 435 individuals possess licensed personal weapons, significantly enhancing the capacity to respond effectively to localised security situations.

Storm, rain kill four, damage...

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Jammu

A spokesperson for Namoo Bharat said, "Due to an intense windstorm, a portion of the tin roof at the New Ashok Nagar Namoo Bharat Station sustained damage. As a precautionary measure, operations in New Ashok Nagar station were immediately stopped for the time being. No injuries have been reported in connection with the incident. A detailed investigation is underway, and necessary rectification measures are being initiated to prevent any recurrence." Services at the station remain suspended until further notice. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the 13-km Delhi section of the Namoo Bharat Rapid Rail corridor between Sahibabad and New Ashok Nagar earlier this year on January 5. The effects of the storm were felt across NCR. In Noida, a traffic signal pole fell near the DM Chowk. Various parts of Delhi, including Central Delhi, Maharani Bagh, Mayur Vihar, Ghaziabad and Noida, experienced light rainfall after an overcast morning. According to the police officials, the PCR received about 60 calls related to fallen trees and 11 reports of vehicle damage due to the storm. Water logging was reported from at least 18 locations, including Rohini, Narela, Karol Bagh, Civil Lines and Shahdara. Meanwhile, data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) showed that Safdarjung, the city's primary weather station, recorded 1.4 mm of rain between 2:30 pm and 5:30 pm. Other stations reported higher figures, including 7.2 mm at Aya Nagar, 5 mm at Ridge, 2.5 mm at Pusa, and 2 mm at Pitampura. Despite the rainfall, temperatures remained high. Delhi registered a maximum temperature of 42.3 degrees Celsius, nearly 2 degrees above the seasonal average. Aya Nagar recorded the highest at 44 degrees Celsius, followed by 43.3 degrees Celsius in Palam and Ridge 43.2 degrees Celsius in Ridge. The minimum temperature at Lodhi Road was 24.8 degrees Celsius, slightly below normal. Earlier in the week, visibility across Delhi-NCR had dropped sharply due to dust carried by strong westerly winds from North Pakistan, moving through Punjab and Haryana. The IMD said this phenomenon contributed to a spike in pollution levels. In response to the deteriorating air quality, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) reinstated Stage-I measures of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) across the entire NCR on Friday. According to the IMD, a southeastward-moving weather system over Rohtak is expected to bring more showers and winds reaching up to 50-60 km/h to southeast Delhi in the coming hours.

Tharoor to brief US, Ravi Shankar...

Continued from >> P1

The delegation led by Jha is likely to visit Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population. Each delegation with six to seven MPs may visit around four to five countries, the sources said. MPs from different parties, including Anurag Thakur, Aparajita Sarangi, Manish Tewari, Asaduddin Owaisi, Amar Singh, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Samik Bhattacharya, Brij Lal, Sarfaraz Ahmad, Priyanka Chaturvedi, Vikramjit Sawhney, Sasmit Patra and Bhuvaneshwar Kalita, will be part of these delegations. Former Union Minister and Congress leader Salman Khurshid, who is not an MP, has been included in the delegation. The government also tapped Trinamool Congress MP Sudip Bandyopadhyay to join the exercise but he declined due to health reasons. The expansive diplomatic drive is aimed at driving home in global capitals India's stand following the country's aggressive response to the Pahalgam attack amid Pakistan's efforts to skirt the issue of terror-

AAP councillors form new party

Continued from >> P1

The top leadership had almost no coordination with the municipal councillors, due to which the party had to sit in the Opposition in the assembly. Councillor Himani Jain said, "In the last 2.5 years, no work was done in the corporation. We were in power, yet we did nothing. We have formed a new party because our ideology is to work for the development of Delhi. We shall support the party which will work for the development of Delhi."

Juicy, glossy Turkish apple rots on Indian plates

Continued from >> P1

Rajesh, the owner of Rinku Vegetables — one of INA's largest fruit stores — offers both political and practical reasons. "As a responsible citizen, I fully support the boycott. Profit can never come before national interest," he says. "But honestly, Turkish apple quality has also gone down lately. That's another reason they're not in demand." Others, like Bhaskar, another seller at INA, speak with emotion. "I've lost all interest in Turkish apples. If some-

Haryana-based YouTuber arrested for spying on India

Continued from >> P1

Jyoti's arrest came days after Punjab Police arrested two persons, including a woman, from Malerkotla district for their alleged involvement in espionage activities linked to the Pakistani official posted at the High Commission. The accused Guzala and Yameen Mohamad, both residents of Malerkotla had been receiving payments through online transactions in exchange of classified information. On May 11, Punjab police said that Guzala had been arrested for leaking sensitive information regarding the Indian Army movements to a Pakistan-based handler. Guzala revealed that she was doing it in lieu of money and the accused Pakistani official sent her ₹30,000 in two transactions — ₹10,000 and ₹20,000 — through UPI (unified payment interface). On Friday, the Haryana police arrested a 25-year-old post-graduate student from Kaithal for allegedly having links with Pakistani intelligence operatives. The accused, Devender Singh, from Kaithal district's Guhla area, was arrested after an FIR was registered against him on Sunday for uploading photos on social media with weapons, police said. During the investigation, it was learnt that Singh, who had been pursuing a Master's degree in political science from a college in Punjab, had gone to Pakistan on pilgrimage in November last year.

State Assemblies meet 30 days a year: PRS

Continued from >> P1

Article 178 of the Constitution requires state assemblies to choose two members as speaker and deputy speaker as soon as possible, according to the report. Assemblies of eight states and Union territories did not have a deputy speaker as of April 2025, the think tank said in the report. The list includes Jharkhand, which has not elected a deputy speaker for more than 20 years. While the previous Uttar Pradesh Assembly elected a deputy speaker in its last session, the current assembly, which is three years into its term, has not yet elected one. "The Constitution assigns some key functions to the deputy speaker. He officiates as the speaker in case of a vacancy (due to death or resignation of the speaker). He also receives notice of

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their shoulders, vendors haggle in rapid-fire Hindi and the ground remains slick with muddy water and crushed fruit. In INA, LED-lit displays glisten with carefully arranged produce. But in both places, Turkish apples have become more than just a fruit — they've become a symbol. A symbol of protest, of identity, of how global politics can trickle down to something as simple — and as powerful — as what we choose to eat. Because sometimes, even a fruit isn't just a fruit, it becomes a political statement.

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their

shoulders, vendors haggle in rapid-fire Hindi and the ground remains slick with muddy water and crushed fruit.

In INA, LED-lit displays glisten with carefully arranged produce. But in both places, Turkish apples have become more than just a fruit — they've become a symbol. A symbol of protest, of identity, of how global politics can trickle down to something as simple — and as powerful — as what we choose to eat. Because sometimes, even a fruit isn't just a fruit, it becomes a political statement.

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their

Haryana-based YouTuber arrested for spying on India

Continued from >> P1

Jyoti's arrest came days after Punjab Police arrested two persons, including a woman, from Malerkotla district for their alleged involvement in espionage activities linked to the Pakistani official posted at the High Commission. The accused Guzala and Yameen Mohamad, both residents of Malerkotla had been receiving payments through online transactions in exchange of classified information. On Friday, the Haryana police arrested a 25-year-old post-graduate student from Kaithal for allegedly having links with Pakistani intelligence operatives. The accused, Devender Singh, from Kaithal district's Guhla area, was arrested after an FIR was registered against him on Sunday for uploading photos on social media with weapons, police said. During the investigation, it was learnt that Singh, who had been pursuing a Master's degree in political science from a college in Punjab, had gone to Pakistan on pilgrimage in November last year.

State Assemblies meet 30 days a year: PRS

Continued from >> P1

Article 178 of the Constitution requires state assemblies to choose two members as speaker and deputy speaker as soon as possible, according to the report. Assemblies of eight states and Union territories did not have a deputy speaker as of April 2025, the think tank said in the report. The list includes Jharkhand, which has not elected a deputy speaker for more than 20 years. While the previous Uttar Pradesh Assembly elected a deputy speaker in its last session, the current assembly, which is three years into its term, has not yet elected one. "The Constitution assigns some key functions to the deputy speaker. He officiates as the speaker in case of a vacancy (due to death or resignation of the speaker). He also receives notice of

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their

one stands against us, we won't tolerate it. It's that simple"

The impact of the boycott isn't just local. Travel trends have shifted, too. Websites like ixigo report a steep drop in bookings to Turkiye, with cancellations spiking by 250 per cent. Platforms have paused travel to Turkiye, Azerbaijan and China. Indian travellers are now setting their sights on alternatives like Greece, Thailand, Vietnam and Georgia. Back at Azadpur, the chaos never stops — porters weave through tight lanes with crates balanced on their

HEAVY RAIN LASHES PARTS OF DELHI-NCR



(Left to Right) An auto-rickshaw crushed under an uprooted tree near Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, a pedestrian looks for cover during rain and uprooted trees being removed from a road following strong winds in New Delhi

Chinese national arrested for stealing debit, credit cards on Hong Kong-New Delhi flight

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

A Chinese national, suspected to be a member of an organised global in-flight theft syndicate, has been arrested for allegedly stealing debit and credit cards from fellow passengers during a flight from Hong Kong to New Delhi, police said on Saturday.

The accused, 30-year-old Benlai Pan, was arrested upon arrival at Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport on May 14 following complaints from multiple passengers aboard Air India flight AI-315, they said in an official statement.

Pan was travelling with three other Chinese nationals — 51-year-old Meng Guangyang, 42-year-old Chang Mang, 45-year-old and Liu Jie — all of whom were detained and questioned, officials said.

According to authorities, the group is suspected to be operating together as part of an international in-flight theft racket.

"Air India's security team alerted the IGI Airport police about suspicious activities involving four Chinese nationals on the flight. One of the passengers, Prabhat Verma, who was seated at 12C, reported that a credit card had gone missing from

his bag," Additional Commissioner of Police (IGI) Usha Rangnani said in an official statement.

"Verma also pointed out suspicious behaviour by a passenger seated at 14C, who was ticketed for seat 23C," the statement said. The missing credit card was later recovered from beneath seat 14C, where Pan was found seated, she said.

Another passenger, Prashi, reported that her mother's debit card had also gone missing. A third passenger, Nafeez Fatima, provided a video showing Pan allegedly opening overhead bins and rummaging through cabin baggage during the flight, the officer said.

The airline staff conducted further checks and informed the authorities upon landing.

During interrogation, Pan confessed that they booked long-haul international transit flights to target sleeping passengers and access unattended cabin luggage.

The group spread themselves across the cabin to avoid suspicion and discarded stolen cards after attempting to use them, she added.

A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the IGI Airport police station, police said.

Mobile phones, wallets, and other belongings of the suspects have been seized for forensic examination. International coordination is underway to investigate their possible involvement in similar incidents globally, they further said. Police are now examining their travel data from the past year as part of the investigation.

An FIR has also been filed against Benlai under sections 378/2025, 303(2) of the BNS at PS IGI Airport. These BNS sections are related to offences like theft.

While Benlai Pan has been arrested, the roles of his three associates are under scrutiny. Immigration authorities across the country have been alerted, and liaison has been established with embassies and global law enforcement agencies, police added.

Last in-flight incident in India was reported a month ago when a 50-year-old woman, who was flying from Kochi to Mumbai on an Akasa Airlines flight, alleged that her gold necklace worth ₹1.2 lakh and ₹5,000 cash were stolen onboard. Rosamma Joseph, a nurse from Santacruz, said that the incident occurred on March 28, adding that she filed the police complaint on April 16, after the airlines failed to address her grievance.

Delhi's drain desiltation drive sees mixed progress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Even as several key drains in Delhi are nearly ready for the rains with over 90 per cent desiltation, the Najafgarh Drain, a critical 57-km stretch, remains underprepared, with only 43.95 per cent of the work finished.

According to official data till May 8, some of the drains where desilting has been completed or near completion in several drains, including Sonia Vihar, Civil Military, Kushak, Taimoor Nagar, Sunehri Pul and Tehkhanda.

In contrast, the Kailash Nagar and Delhi Gate/Power House have reported low desiltation rates of 38.95 and 42.60 per cent, respectively.

Desilting work has been carried out across 24 major drains spanning nearly 98 km, under the unified management of the Irrigation and Flood Control Department (I&FC), as per an order issued on April 29 this year.

Of these, 10 drains, totalling 13 km, have recorded over 90 per cent desilting, six drains (12.95 km) over 75 per cent and five drains (11.18 km) over 50 per cent.

Water logging during rain remains a challenge for the national capital, particularly at Minto Bridge, the Pul

Prahladpur underpass, the Ring Road opposite the WHO office and the Zakhira Flyover.

In 2023 alone, 308 waterlogging points were reported by Delhi Traffic Police, the highest in five years.

Besides undertaking desilting work, the government has decided to develop master plans for Najafgarh Basin, Barapullah Basin and Trans Yamuna Basin, with detailed project reports (DPRs) due by June 2025.

Since 1980, one of the core issues has been the absence of a stormwater/drainage master plan. While IIT Delhi was tasked in 2012 with drafting a new plan, its final report (submitted in 2018) was rejected in 2021.

Authorities have also undertaken the disconnection of stormwater-sewerage cross-connections, restoration of 257 out of 631 identified water bodies and removal of obstructions in Yamuna floodplains, including construction debris.

Officials said close coordination between departments like PWD, MCD, IF&CD, NDMC, DISCOMS and real-time monitoring through CCTV installations and mobile pumping facilities are being ensured at vulnerable points to mitigate flooding risks.

Government reshuffles 42 IAS, DANICS officers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Soon after the Ministry of Home Affairs order in which it moved 12 Delhi bureaucrats of UT cadre to other States and transferred the equal number of officers to the Capital, the Delhi Government effected a major bureaucratic reshuffle on Friday evening, transferring or giving additional charge to 42 IAS and DANICS officers. This is the first reshuffle since the Rekha Gupta government was formed in February.

Following the order of Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, the services department of Delhi Government issued an order giving additional charge of the environment and forest department of additional chief secretary (industries) Bipul Pathak, a 1992-batch IAS officer and the senior most bureaucrat in the city.

Pathak replaced Anil Kumar Singh who was moved to Jammu and Kashmir by MHA.

This is the first reshuffle since the Rekha Gupta government was formed in February.

Prashant Goyal a 1993 batch officer, who was the ACS-cum-commissioner of Transport will now be the additional chief secretary of Urban Development, said an order issued by Services Department.

Navin Kumar Chaudhary, a 1994 batch officer, who was the ACS of Irrigation and Flood Control and General Administration departments will be the new ACS of the Public Works Department.

A Anbarasu of 1996 batch and principal secretary of Home will be the new principal secretary of Services. Anbarasu was also holding the charge of Public Works Department.

Nikhil Kumar, a 2002 batch officer was given the charge of health and family welfare and information and publicity department. He was secretary in the Land and Building department.

Neeraj Semwal, a 2003 batch officer who is awaiting posting, will hold the charge of secretary revenue-cum-divisional commissioner, with additional responsibility of information and publicity department.

Survir Singh, a 2004 batch officer will be secretary (Power). He will also oversee the additional charge of secretary (Finance).

Niharika Rai, a 2008 batch officer, who was the secretary of finance will now be the secretary-cum-commissioner of Transport, while special secretary to the chief minister, Ravi Jha of 2011 batch, will be the excise commissioner of the Delhi government, said the order.

Rupesh Kumar Thakur, a 2006 batch officer will be CEO, Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board. Azim ul Haq who is currently posted as CEO Delhi Waqf Board, will also hold the the charge of Secretary (Planning).

AK Singh, a 2011 batch officer will be special secretary (urban development). He is currently posted as registrar of societies. Sandeep Mishra, a 2015 batch officer will be member secretary Delhi Pollution Control Board.



DDA opens membership for golf course in Dwarka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has opened membership for its golf course located in Sector 24 in Dwarka.

According to the playing rights brochure issued by the agency, persons from the non-government category can get membership for five years by paying an entry fee of ₹9 lakh, in addition to a monthly fee of ₹2,200.

A three-year membership in the same category comes with an entry fee of ₹6 lakh and a monthly fee of ₹2,200, it said.

The agency said that for Government employees, the entry fee has been fixed at Rs 3 lakh for five years and ₹2 lakh for three years, with a monthly fee of Rs 1500.

The 18-hole golf course spans 7,377-yards and features two-level, open-to-sky driving range that can accommodate up to 52 players at a time — 26 on each level. The facility also includes a clubhouse equipped with modern amenities.

The DDA is offering 2,000 memberships in total, of which 200 are reserved for government employees and the remaining include general applicants, members of foreign embassies and organisations.

"Spouse and dependent children from the ages of five to 21 can be added in the playing rights of individuals whose rights are approved. Dependents with playing rights would need to pay a monthly subscription, as applicable," an official document said.

As per the rules, dependents of members are entitled to play on the golf course, driving range and use the club facilities. Non-playing dependents are not required to pay monthly subscription and are not entitled to play on the golf course, though they can utilise the facilities of club house.

The entire process of application and payment of entry fees would be online. Applications for tenure playing rights are to be submitted online along with requisite documents.

PWD Minister announces plans to urbanise 48 Capital's villages to redefine rural lives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In a move set to redefine the rural lives, Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh, on Saturday, has unveiled a series of major announcements aimed at urbanising the Capital's villages and empowering its rural population.

The major part of this initiative is the long-anticipated Master Plan 2041, which the Minister confirmed is now in its final stages of approval and will soon be implemented across the city.

As part of this plan, around 48 villages in Delhi will be urbanised. These villages will get better roads, proper drainage, clean drinking water, street lights, schools, and healthcare centres. For many people in these areas, this will be the first time they will have access to such facilities.

Parvesh Sahib Singh said, "Our aim is not just to make policies but to make sure they are fully carried out on the ground. Master Plan 2041 will change the face of Delhi's villages and bring city-level services to rural people."

"The first property registration for people living in Lal Dora areas will be completely free." He added. This means families will not have to pay any fee to get their property officially registered. This step will help people get legal documents for their homes and land. It will also help bring transparency to property records and make it easier for families to prove ownership. Lal Dora is a term used for land and houses in old village areas where legal documents often do not exist or are unclear. Because of this, many people living in these areas



Delhi Water Minister Parvesh Verma interacting with farmers, who were on a hunger strike over rural demands at Daulatpur village in New Delhi

have faced property disputes and other legal problems for many years.

The announcement came during Singh's visit to Daulatpur village, where he met with farmers who were on strike to voice their concerns about various developmental issues. Demonstrating a hands-on leadership style, the Minister interacted directly with the protesters, listened to their demands and assured them of the government's commitment to resolving their grievances.

His timely intervention led to the peaceful conclusion of the strike and his efforts were met with appreciation from the local community.

The Minister also directed all con-

cerned departments and officials to ensure the implementation of Master Plan 2041 is carried out in a timely and people-centric manner. Emphasising accountability, he urged officials to work in close coordination with local communities to ensure that the benefits of urbanization reach every household.

The Master Plan 2041 is a long-term planning document that guides how Delhi will grow and develop over the next 15-20 years. It includes rules for land use, construction, transportation, environment, and public services.

For the first time, many rural areas are being included in this citywide planning process.

CM Gupta reviews Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta visited Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Mangolpuri on Saturday to assess the current condition of the facility, review development work and discuss future plans. The visit focused on addressing staff shortages, infrastructure gaps and the delayed construction of a new trauma block.

The Chief Minister said, "Strengthening the public healthcare system remains a priority for her government. Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, which serves as the main government hospital for the area, is currently under considerable pressure. The 300-bed hospital receives around 2,600 to 2,700 patients in the out-patient department each day and handles

over 30 deliveries daily." The hospital also has a Maternal and Child Health (MCH) unit with 150 beds, including 100 for obstetrics and gynaecology and 50 for paediatrics.

The Chief Minister visit focused on addressing staff shortages, infrastructure gaps and the delayed construction of a new trauma block

However, officials highlighted that the hospital continues to struggle with a shortage of beds and medical staff. Gupta assured that steps will be taken to improve patient care and ensure adequate resources are available.

CM Gupta also reviewed the progress

of a long-pending expansion project involving the construction of a new building that includes a 362-bed trauma block. The project has experienced repeated delays since its initiation several years ago. During the visit, the Chief Minister set a new deadline of August 1, 2025, for its completion.

She stated that any additional funding needed beyond the original allocation will be provided by the government to help finish the project on time.

"Once completed, the hospital's total bed capacity is expected to increase from 300 to 662. The new trauma block will include 42 intensive care unit (ICU) beds divided equally among medical, surgical, and orthopaedic care. Additional facilities such as parking and a mortuary are also part of the planned infrastructure

improvements," CM added.

The Chief Minister noted that while the hospital offers a range of specialty services — including internal medicine, surgery, paediatrics, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, ENT and emergency care — there are still gaps in service delivery, especially due to staff and equipment shortages. She instructed officials to address these concerns and improve the availability of medicines.

A new Medical Superintendent has recently been appointed to oversee operations at Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, following a decision to assign individual superintendents to each hospital for better management. Previously, one superintendent was tasked with managing multiple facilities, which officials said affected the quality of oversight.

NBCC concludes e-auction of Aspire Silicon City to AU Real Estate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Noida

A project was bagged by AU Real Estate following a digital auction conducted by NBCC (India) Ltd, with the transaction valued at ₹1,467.93 crore, NBCC informed about the same to National Stock Exchange of India.

"We're pleased to confirm the acquisition of selling rights for 446 units at Aspire Silicon City from NBCC," said Ashish Agarwal, Director, AU Real Estate. "This marks a significant milestone in our growth journey and strengthens our presence in the region."

Spread across approximately 8.5 Acres Silicon City Phase 4 is a premium development of NBCC wherein in line with market requirements they have changed

the planning and made larger sizes homes and not flats this time, the project comprises seven towers with approximately 600 units out of which NBCC has awarded 5 towers in this auction having 446 units.

Located in a developed residential sector, the project enjoys strong connectivity to the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway, Aqua Line metro stations (Sector 50 and 76), and arterial roads including the FNG Corridor.

Educational institutions, hospitals, and retail zones such as Sector 18 are all within close reach, positioning the development well for homebuyer interest.

The Aspire Silicon City project is being constructed by J Kumar Infraprojects, a prominent player in the infrastructure sector.

Tharoor's appointment raises rift within Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The naming of senior party leader and Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor by the Modi government to lead a multi-party delegation abroad to put across India's stand against Pakistan on terrorism has brought to the fore huge differences in Congress which has made it public that former Union Minister name was not suggested by the grand old party.

The ruling BJP, on the other hand, questioned the Congress' choice of leaders for the delegations, wondering if it did not nominate Tharoor because he outshone the party high command. In a social media post on Saturday, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju shared a government communication of names of leaders to head seven delegations to different countries that included Tharoor's name.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh quipped there is a difference between "being in the Congress and of the Congress". "The Congress is like the mighty Ganga, which has many tribu-

aries. Some of them dry up and some get polluted," Ramesh, the Congress general secretary in-charge communications said but ducked questions on if there would be any action against Tharoor. Congress had suggested four names to the government as Gaurav Gogoi, Anand Sharma, Naseer Hussain and Amarinder Singh Raja.

The government named Tharoor as a leader of one of the seven multi-party delegations to project India's national consensus and resolute approach to combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations and carry to the world the country's message of zero tolerance against terrorism.

Accepting the nomination to lead one of the delegations, Tharoor said in a social media post, "I am honoured by the invitation of the government of India to lead an all-party delegation to five key capitals, to present our nation's point of view on recent events."

"When national interest is involved, and my services are required, I will not be found wanting. Jai Hind!" he added.

Asked about Tharoor's inclusion as a representative of the Congress in the gov-



Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor

FILE PHOTO

ernment's list of leaders to lead the delegations abroad, Ramesh told reporters, "Congress mein hona aur Congress ka hona mein zameen-aasmaan ka antar hai (There is a difference between being in the Congress and of the Congress)."

In a democratic system, when individual MPs are sent as part of an official delegation, MPs must seek the concurrence of the party. If the government wants to send him as part of a delegation, the MP should be asking the party, he said.

"You (government) cannot include names of MPs (in delegations) without consulting the party," he said.

"All of us belong to the party but they (government) need to consult the LoPs."

According to normal practice and a good democratic system, when MPs are sent on official delegations, they should seek the concurrence of the party concerned, he further said.

Asked if there would be any further action on the matter, Ramesh said the government had asked for four names from the Congress and it had sent those four names. There will be no change of names from the Congress' side, he added.

"The ball is in the government's court now," he said, adding that no names were discussed during Union minister Kiren Rijiju's conversation with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi.

"In moments that matter most, Bharat stands united. Seven all-party delegations will soon visit key partner nations, carrying our shared message of zero-tolerance to terrorism. A powerful reflection of national unity above politics, beyond differences," Rijiju said in his post.

BJP on Saturday questioned the Congress' choice of leaders for diplomatic outreach delegations abroad for conveying India's message following Operation Sindoor, wondering if it did not nominate party MP Shashi Tharoor because he outshone the high command.

Reacting to Ramesh's statement, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said in a post on X, "No one can deny Shashi Tharoor's eloquence, his long experience as a United Nations official, and his deep insights on matters of foreign policy."

"So why has the Congress Party — and Rahul Gandhi in particular — chosen not to nominate him for the multi-party delegations being sent abroad to explain India's position on key issues?" he said.

"Is it insecurity? Jealousy? Or simply intolerance of anyone who outshines the 'high command'?" he added.

CPI(M) says it agreed to be part of all party delegations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Saturday said it has agreed to be part of the all-party delegations for the government's international outreach following Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor in national interest despite having "reservations", and again demanded a special session of Parliament.

"The Communist Party of India (Marxist) feels that it is unfortunate that the prime minister and his government refused to convene a special session of Parliament to discuss the Pahalgam terror attack and subsequent developments," CPI(M) said.

"We urge the government to immediately convene the Parliament session, apprise the people of India and also provide opportunities to seek clarifica-

tions, if any," the Left party said.

With CPI(M)'s Rajya Sabha floor leader John Brittas among the MPs who will be going to different nations as a part of the multi-party delegations to convey India's message post Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor, the CPI(M) said they have agreed to it in national interest.

"The government has called the leader of our party in the Rajya Sabha and informed him about the various delegations that it has decided to send to different countries as part of its diplomatic outreach. Despite our reservations mentioned above and while reiterating our above demands, in the larger national interest, we feel obliged to be part of such a delegation," CPI (M) said.

The Left party also said that calling "only the chief ministers of the BJP-NDA ruled states" to brief them about

'Operation Sindoor' is discriminatory, especially on an issue of national importance.

With CPI(M)'s Rajya Sabha floor leader John Brittas among the MPs who will be going to different nations as a part of the multi-party delegations to convey India's message post Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor

"We demand that the government call a meeting of all the chief ministers of the country, including those from the opposition, for such a briefing," the CPI(M) said.

"The government is first accountable

to the people of India and should be transparent in its actions. The campaign by ruling party leaders and even state ministers to communalise the situation must stop forthwith," they said.

The government on Saturday announced that seven all-party delegations will be sent to key partner countries, including members of the UN Security Council, later this month to convey India's message of zero tolerance against terrorism following the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor. A statement issued by the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry said, "The all-party delegations will project India's national consensus and resolute approach to combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations."

They would carry forth to the world the country's strong message of zero tolerance against terrorism."

Countdown for the launch of PSLV-C61 mission commences

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Srihrikota (Andhra Pradesh)

The 22-hour countdown for the launch of an earth imaging satellite on-board a PSLV rocket commenced here on Saturday, ISRO sources said.

The lift-off for the PSLV-C61 is scheduled to take place at 5.59 am from the first launch pad at this space port on May 18, which is also the 101st mission for the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency.

"The countdown is expected to start by early morning on Sunday. Total 22 hours countdown," sources said.

The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) in its 63rd mission, would carry the Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-09) which would be capable of capturing high-resolution images of the Earth's surface under all weather conditions.

The round-the-clock imaging by the satellite is vital for applications like agriculture, forestry monitoring, disaster management, urban planning and national security.

Weighing around 1,696.24 kg, the EOS-09 satellite would join the constellation of Earth Observation satellites, aimed at addressing the need for expanded real-time coverage across the country's vast territory.

The EOS-09 (RISAT-1B) is a follow-on to the RISAT-1 satellite which is equipped with similar configuration.

It complements and supplements data from the Resourcesat, Cartosat and RISAT-2B Series satellites.

The Earth Observation Satellite-09 is a repeat satellite of EOS-04 launched in 2022.

It has been designed with the mission objective to ensure remote sensing data for the user community engaged in operational applications and to improve the frequency of observation.

The PSLV-C61 rocket, after a 17 minute journey, is expected to place the EOS-09 satellite into the Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO).



Preparations underway for the launch of ISRO's PSLV-C61

Scientists, after the satellite gets separated in the desired orbit, would use the Orbit Change Thrusters (OCT) on the vehicle to reduce the altitude of the orbit, later.

The mission life of EOS-09 is 5 years, ISRO said.

According to scientists, a sufficient amount of the fuel has been reserved for de-orbiting the satellite after its effective mission life by lowering it to an orbit that ensures its decay within two years, towards ensuring a debris-free mission.

Rajya Sabha deputy chairman, Nagaland deputy CM to visit Vatican city



Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha Harivansh, along with Nagaland's Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton

PIONEER PHOTO

An official delegation of the Government of India comprising Harivansh, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha and Yanthungo Patton, Deputy Chief Minister, Nagaland will visit Vatican City to attend the Solemn Ceremony marking the inauguration of the pontificate of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, scheduled for 18 May 2025.

The participation of the Indian delegation in this important global ecclesiastical event reflects India's deep commitment to interfaith engagement, mutual respect among communities and diplomatic engagement with the Holy See.

Dhankar compares Operation Sindoor to Osama bin Laden's killing by US

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar on Saturday drew similarities between Operation Sindoor and the killing of Osama bin Laden by US forces in Pakistan. Describing attacks on nine terror sites in Pakistan as the "deepest-ever cross-border strike" by India, the vice president recalled the September 11, 2001 terror attacks in the United States.

Without naming bin Laden, he said that on May 2, 2011, a global terrorist who planned, supervised, and executed September 11 attacks inside the US was "dealt with" by the US forces "similarly". "Bharat has done it. And done it to the knowledge of the world," he said addressing an event of Jaipuria institutions here.

He said that a new "global benchmark" has been set. While maintaining the spirit of peace, the objective has been to strike at terrorism.

For the first time, precise strikes were carried out deep across the International



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar

PTI

Border on the strongholds of Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. He said the strikes were so precise that only terrorists were harmed.

Dhankar said that after the Pahalgam terror attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given a message to the global

community from Bihar. "Those were not empty words. The world has now realised," he said.

He also said that the Pahalgam terror attack, which left at least 26 people dead, was the deadliest attack on civilians since the Mumbai terror attack

Kapil Sibal hails Centre's diplomatic outreach move, recalls 26/11

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Saturday welcomed the Centre's decision to send diplomatic outreach delegations after Operation Sindoor and recalled how the UPA government had undertaken such an exercise after 26/11 attack to expose Pakistan as a "factory of terrorists" that benefits India even now.

His remarks came after the government announced that it will be sending seven all-party delegations to key partner countries to convey India's message of zero tolerance against terrorism following Operation Sindoor.

"I can remember that after 26/11, then prime minister Manmohan Singh decided that we should take a step which proves to the world that Pakistan is a terrorist state

and breeds terrorists. We collected the facts, did documentation, then different delegations went to different regions such as the US, Europe," he said at a press conference here.

"I headed the delegation that went to the African continent. We met parliamentarians, appraised them. We created an environment which benefits us even now. We said that Pakistan is a factory of terrorists. Even China condemned the terrorist attack," Sibal, who was a Union minister in the Manmohan Singh government, said.

He asserted that terrorist activities decreased during the Manmohan Singh regime.

Sibal said that after the Pahalgam attack, he had demanded a resolution to be passed and if that had happened, "we could have told the world what is the



Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal

FILE PHOTO

thinking of Parliament".

"I had also demanded sending all-party delegations. I made this demand on April 25 and then repeated it two days later at a press conference. I have been stressing on this," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not been listening to the Opposition in the last decade but "maybe he has heard us this time", Sibal said.

"I want to congratulate the government, it is a good thing," he said.

Sibal also said he had said earlier that by bringing an amendment in UAPA, "we should add a schedule where we can say terrorist state and under that put Pakistan, so that we can go to the world and tell that you are doing business with this terrorist".

Opposition leaders Shashi Tharoor and Kanimozhi will join members of the rul-

ing alliance, including Ravi Shankar Prasad and Sanjay Jha, in leading seven all-party delegations to key partner countries to convey India's message of zero tolerance against terrorism following Operation Sindoor.

The other MPs picked by the government to present India's "national consensus" globally, including to UN Security Council members, in fighting terrorism are NCP-SP's Supriya Sule, BJP's Baijayant 'Jay' Panda and Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde.

A statement issued by the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry on Saturday said, "The all-party delegations will project India's national consensus and resolute approach to combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations. They would carry forth to the world the country's strong message of zero tolerance against terrorism."

CBSE asks schools to set up 'sugar boards'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The CBSE has directed affiliated schools to establish "sugar boards" to monitor and reduce sugar intake of children, according to officials. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has noted that there has been a significant increase in Type 2 diabetes among children, a condition once primarily seen in adults, over the past decade.

"This alarming trend is largely attributed to high sugar intake, often due to the easy availability of sugary snacks, beverages and processed foods within school environments. The excessive consumption of sugar not only increases the risk of diabetes but also contributes to obesity, dental problems and other metabolic disorders, ultimately impacting chil-

dren's long-term health and academic performance," the CBSE said in a letter to school principals.

Studies indicate that sugar constitutes 13 per cent of daily calorie intake for children aged four to 10 years, and 15 per cent for those aged 11 to 18 years, substantially exceeding the recommended limit of five per cent.

"The proliferation of sugary snacks, beverages, and processed foods, often readily available in school environments, contributes significantly to this excessive intake," it said.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is a statutory body formed under Section (3) of the Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005 (No 4 of 2006), to ensure that rights of the children are protected especially those who

are most vulnerable and marginalised. The schools have been asked to establish "sugar boards" where information is displayed to educate students about the risks of excessive sugar intake.

"These boards should provide essential information, including the recommended daily sugar intake, the sugar content in commonly consumed foods (unhealthy meals such as junk food, cold drinks, etc.), health risks associated with high sugar consumption, and healthier dietary alternatives. This will educate students about informed food choices and promote long-term health benefits among students," it said.

Schools have also been asked to organise awareness seminars and workshops in this regard. "A brief report and few photographs may be uploaded by the schools before July 15," the board said.

Rahul attacks Centre on Operation Sindoor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday hit out at the government for "informing" Pakistan about targeting terror infrastructure as part of Operation Sindoor, saying it was a crime and asking who had authorised it.

The BJP on Saturday accused Rahul Gandhi of serving as a "propaganda tool" of Pakistan and spreading "fake news" after the Congress leader targeted the government, raising questions on External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's remarks on Operation Sindoor.

In a social media post, Rahul questioned External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar for publicly admitting that the government of India (GOI) had informed Pakistan of the action and

asked how many aircraft the Indian Air Force lost as a result.

In a social media post, Rahul questioned S Jaishankar for publicly admitting that the Government of India had informed Pakistan of the action and asked how many aircraft the IAF lost as a result

"Informing Pakistan at the start of our attack was a crime. EAM has publicly admitted that GOI did it. Who authorised it? How many aircraft did our air force lose as a result?" said the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha.

He also shared an undated video of Jaishankar saying India had informed

Pakistan of the action against terror infrastructure on its soil.

Jaishankar can be heard saying in the video, "At the start of the operation, we had sent a message to Pakistan, saying, 'We are striking at terrorist infrastructure and we are not striking at the military'."

"So the military has the option of standing out and not interfering in this process. They chose not to take that good advice," the minister can be heard saying in the clip.

The Press Information Bureau (PIB), however, has debunked claims that Jaishankar had said India informed Pakistan ahead of Operation Sindoor.

In a post on X, the PIB's Fact Check Unit said the minister had not made any such statement and that he was being misquoted.

J and K LG hikes ex-gratia relief for violence victims

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, has increased the ex-gratia relief under Security Related Expenditure (SRE) in respect of death/disability/injury of civilians and government employees due to violence or any other form of civil commotion.

This enhancement is over and above the Central Scheme for Assistance to civilian victims of terrorist violence under which ₹5 lakhs are paid for death and permanent disability.

According to a spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir government, in case of the death of a civilian, the ex-gratia has been increased from ₹1 Lakh to ₹2.5 lakh, which is two-and-a-half-fold increase (250 per cent enhancement).

In case of permanent disability due to violence or civil commotion, the ex-gratia has been enhanced from ₹75,000 to ₹1.5 lakh.

In case of death of ex-servicemen (Police), the ex-gratia has been increased by 200 per cent, from existing ₹2 Lakh to ₹4 Lakh.

In case of permanent disability for ex-police personnel, ex-gratia has been enhanced from ₹75,000 to ₹1.5 Lakh.

At present, in case of death of a Magistrate on duty, the existing ex-gratia is ₹2 Lakh.

This has been enhanced to ₹5 Lakh by the Lieutenant Governor. In case of per-



Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha PIONEER PHOTO

manent disability of Magistrate while on duty, the ex-gratia would be ₹1.5 Lakh.

Under the SRE scheme, the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has also approved the ex-gratia for village defence guards.

In case of death of VDGs, the ex-gratia has been enhanced from ₹1 Lakh to ₹2.5 lakh and in case of permanent disability, the ex-gratia would be ₹1.5 Lakh.

In case of death of a government employee while on duty due to violence, the ex-gratia has been increased by 500 per cent and it has been enhanced to ₹5 Lakh from the existing ₹1 Lakh.

In case of permanent disability, the ex-gratia has been increased from ₹75,000 to ₹1.5 Lakh.

The Lieutenant Governor paid tributes to the people who made the supreme sacrifice in service to the nation.

He said, India has been subjected to cross-border terrorism for many decades, but "Operation Sindoor" has drawn a new red line, marking a shift from deterrence to direct action.

Pakistan will have to pay a heavy price for any future misadventure. Our response will be visible and forceful.

UP sizzles in intense heat, Government step in with precautionary measures

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

As intense heat and severe heatwave conditions grip various parts of Uttar Pradesh, the state government has stepped in with precautionary measures to safeguard citizens.

Acting swiftly on Meteorological Department warnings predicting continued heatwave conditions in several districts, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the Relief and Health Departments to issue alerts and ensure public safety.

In line with the CM's instructions, the state Health Department has released official guidelines to raise public awareness about heatstroke prevention.

These include practical suggestions for avoiding exposure to extreme heat, staying hydrated, and recognising early symptoms of heat-related illnesses. Additionally, posters and pamphlets are being circulated across the state to educate people on safety precautions.

Partha Sarathi Sen Sharma, Principal Secretary of the Department of Medical, Health, and Family Welfare, said that CM Yogi Adityanath had instructed officials to issue necessary guidelines to protect people from the extreme heat and heatwaves in the state.

Following these instructions, the department has shared several important tips to help people stay safe from heatstroke. "When heading outdoors, cover your body properly and opt for light-col-



Man drinks water to quench his thirst during a hot summer day PIONEER PHOTO

Avoid consuming too much protein or stale food on an empty stomach. Never leave children or animals alone in parked vehicles in the sun. Also, reduce the intake of alcohol, tea, coffee, and carbonated drinks during this time."

The Health Department, following instructions from the Yogi government, has circulated posters detailing symptoms of heat-related illnesses. These symptoms include a body temperature above 40 degrees Celsius, red and dry skin, dizziness, muscle weakness, shortness of breath, headache, anxiety, nausea, or vomiting. If anyone shows these signs, they should be immediately moved to a shaded area, given cool water to drink, bathed with cold water if possible, and emergency medical help should be called right away.

Special guidelines have been issued for labourers and children. Workers at construction sites must be given regular breaks and access to cool, shaded areas. Heavy labor should be scheduled during the morning or evening hours to avoid peak heat. Children should be prevented from playing outside during midday heat, dressed in loose, light clothing, and encouraged to drink plenty of water. It is crucial never to leave children alone inside parked vehicles in hot weather.

CM Yogi has ordered the immediate implementation of the "Mitra System" to monitor workers' health, where colleagues watch out for each other and provide first aid if needed.

Uttar Pradesh government launches India's first Vistadome jungle Safari train

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

In a major push to promote ecotourism and attract nature lovers, the state government has introduced a first-of-its-kind Vistadome coach service connecting the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary to the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. This initiative marks Uttar Pradesh as the first state in the country to offer a jungle safari experience via a Vistadome train.

The new tourist train offers breathtaking panoramic views of the forest landscape, thanks to specially designed coaches equipped with large glass windows and transparent roofs. The initiative aims to offer travelers a thrilling wildlife experience while showcasing the natural beau-

ty of the state. Currently, the service operates on weekends — Saturday and Sunday — but plans are underway to expand it to daily operations, making it accessible to more visitors year-round.

Not only will this initiative give a new dimension to nature-based tourism, but it is also expected to generate local employment opportunities and boost the region's economy.

Tourism director Prakhar Mishra said that CM Yogi is working hard to make the state's forest areas famous nationally and internationally as "One Destination Three Forests."

As part of this initiative, Dudhwa National Park, Katarniaghat and Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary have been

integrated to provide tourists with an accessible and exciting experience through the operation of the Vistadome coach.

He explained that the Uttar Pradesh Eco Tourism Development Board has launched this service to offer tourists a unique nature trail and jungle safari experience throughout the year.

Currently, the service is available only on Saturdays and Sundays, but based on positive feedback, there are plans to extend it to all days of the week.

Through the Vistadome coach, tourists can travel 107 kilometres inside the forest and closely experience natural scenery, biodiversity and wildlife.

The journey lasts approximately 4 hours and 25 minutes. The train service is also

quite affordable, with a ticket priced at just ₹275 per tourist for the route from Katarniaghat to Dudhwa National Park. The Director also mentioned that the Board is preparing a package to transport tourists from the state capital, Lucknow, to Katarniaghat.

The government is considering providing subsidies on this package to make it more accessible to visitors.

He further shared details about the Bichia to Mailani Tourist Passenger Train (No. 52259), which offers a 107-kilometre journey filled with rich biodiversity. The train departs from Bichia station in Bahraich at 11:45 am and passes through several stations before reaching Mailani station in Lakhimpur Kheri at 4:10 pm.

The return service, Mailani to Bichia Tourist Passenger Train (No. 52260), leaves Mailani at 6:05 am and arrives at Bichia by 10:30 am. The train stops at nine stations in total: Bichia, Manjhar Purab, Khairatia Bandh Road, Tikunia, Belerayan, Dudhwa, Palia Kalan, Bhira Kheri and finally Mailani.

The Vistadome coach service not only passes through forests and wildlife sanctuaries, but also offers tourists close views of natural landscapes such as wetlands, grasslands, farmlands and woodlands. This service is expected to attract visitors even during the monsoon season.

This initiative will boost tourism and generate employment opportunities at the regional level. It will also empower the

local economy by involving homestay owners, resort operators and travel agents.

Currently, special curated tours are being organised weekly under the Youth Tourism Club for government school children.

Additionally, fame tours for social media influencers and travel bloggers are arranged to promote the Vistadome coach experience digitally. This effort not only raises awareness but also spreads the message of conserving the state's natural resources and biodiversity. The Vistadome coach service is becoming a milestone for eco-tourism in the state. It offers tourists an exciting travel experience while marking a significant step toward the goal of a 'Green Uttar Pradesh.'

Assam police crackdown on cybercrime racket, seven arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

Seven people were arrested as the Assam Police on Saturday claimed to have busted a racket that provided mobile phone connections to cybercriminals, including Pakistanis, for opening WhatsApp accounts to dupe people.

Addressing a press conference, DGP Harmeet Singh said 'Operation Ghost SIM' was launched based on information provided by military intelligence about a racket operating with bases in Assam, Rajasthan and Telangana.

"This information was further developed into actionable inputs by the Special Branch and Special Task Force of the Assam Police," he said.

The arrests were made since Friday afternoon in simultaneous raids in two districts of Assam, one district of Telangana and two districts of Rajasthan, he added.

Apart from helping cybercriminals in the country get new mobile connections, the racket provided criminals in Pakistan with WhatsApp accounts having Indian mobile numbers, Singh said.

Victims believed that they were receiving calls from Indian numbers, but in reality, those were made from Pakistan, he said.

Fifteen people are being questioned, and among them are those in whose names the SIM cards were issued, the DGP said.

A total of 948 SIM cards were seized, along with other electronic devices, he said.

Himanta urges Rahul to drop 'Assam MP' from Congress team



CM Himanta Biswa (left) and Congress Lok Sabha deputy leader Gaurav Gogoi (right) FILE PHOTO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday urged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to drop the state's MP from the list of four parliamentarians nominated by the grand old party for the delegations to be sent abroad to explain India's stance on terrorism from Pakistan.

Without naming Gaurav Gogoi, the Congress deputy leader in the Lok Sabha who is among the four MPs nominated by the party, the CM maintained that he should not be included in the all-party delegations "in the interest of national security".

Sarma has been making allegations against Gogoi over his alleged Pakistan links through his British wife Elizabeth Colburn, and has claimed that the Jorhat MP had stayed for 15 days in the neighbouring country without informing authorities.

The Congress leader had dismissed the allegations. "One of the MPs named in

the list (from Assam) has not denied his prolonged stay in Pakistan—reportedly for two weeks—and credible documents show that his wife was drawing salary from a Pakistan-based NGO while working in India," Sarma alleged on X.

He also said, "In the interest of national security and beyond partisan politics, I urge leader of opposition Sri Rahul Gandhi not to include this individual in such a sensitive and strategic assignment."

Sarma's comment was a response to Congress leader Jairam Ramesh's post on social media.

Ramesh said the Congress nominated former Union Cabinet minister Anand Sharma, its deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi, Rajya Sabha MP Syed Naseer Hussain, and Lok Sabha MP Raja Brar for the all-party delegations to be sent abroad to explain India's stance on terrorism from Pakistan.

The Congress on Saturday said it was asked by the government to submit the names of four MPs for the diplomatic outreach after Operation Sindoor.

Kanpur, Aligarh businessmen sever trade ties with Turkey amid diplomatic tensions

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Lucknow

In a strong response to Turkey's open support for Pakistan following the recent Pahalgam terror attack, business communities in Kanpur and Aligarh have announced the termination of all trade relations with the country. A significant portion of marble imports from Turkey have been cancelled, while educational institutions, including the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), have also cut academic ties.

Kanpur, which maintains an annual trade of approximately ₹1,300 crore with Turkey, is witnessing an 80 per cent cancellation of Turkish marble orders. The marble sector alone accounts for ₹00 crore of this business. According to the Kanpur Marble and Tiles Association, Turkish marble—ranging from ₹700 to ₹1,500 per square foot—has been in high demand due to its perceived status appeal. However, traders now say that Indian marble is a viable and superior alternative. "We have cancelled orders worth crores. People are showing restraint in

buying Turkish marble as a mark of protest," said Himanshu Pal, General Secretary of the Kanpur Marble and Tiles Association. Prashant Tiwari, a local trader, stated, "Turkish marble was a status symbol, but Indian marble is much better in terms of quality. This boycott is necessary." Another trader, Sanjay Kumar Jain, confirmed that he had cancelled a consignment worth ₹50 lakh. "Demand for Turkish goods has drastically dropped," he said. Harminder Singh, a hotelier developing properties in Ratanlal Nagar and Fazalganj, said he cancelled an order for Turkish tiles for both projects. "Anyone who supports those who attack our country cannot be trusted. We will not allow them to profit from our market," Singh said.

Vijay Gupta, another marble trader, acknowledged that while the Indian market may temporarily incur a 10 per cent loss, the damage to Turkish exports will be far greater. "There are dozens of marble varieties available within India. The void will be easily filled," he added. Beyond marble, Kanpur exports a wide

range of goods to Turkey including leather, agricultural products, electrical goods, meat, dairy, plastic and animal feed. According to Alok Srivastava, Assistant Director of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), this segment of trade is valued at ₹700 crore annually. "Kanpur's products are in high demand in Turkey. The cancellation will have economic consequences for both sides, but more so for Turkey," Srivastava noted.

In Aligarh—known for its lock and hardware industry—business leaders have taken a similar stand. Prominent hardware trader Virendra Goswami said, "We will no longer send any hardware to Turkey." Lock manufacturer Vishal Gupta echoed the sentiment, saying, "Turkey will be opposed at every level. No product will be sent there from Aligarh." The backlash has also reached the educational sphere. Aligarh Muslim University, one of India's premier institutions, has announced it will no longer maintain any academic partnerships or exchange programs with Turkish universities.

MP integrates Yoga into tourism drive

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

As wellness tourism gains momentum across India, Madhya Pradesh is quietly making its mark by integrating yoga into its travel experiences. With around 65 tourism units across the state — and one in Mumbai — the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is weaving yoga into its broader vision of holistic travel.

Currently, yoga classes are operational in nearly 15 of these units, with plans to expand based on demand. Tourism unit managers have been directed to introduce yoga sessions wherever feasible and to hire local yoga experts for the task.

"While promoting Madhya Pradesh Tourism, we also include yoga as a key component," said Principal Secretary of the Tourism Department, Sheo Shekhar Shukla told The Pioneer.

"Yoga reflects our cultural heritage and offers travelers a unique wellness experience," he added. From the tranquil ghats of Maheshwar to the serene landscapes of Pachmarhi and Amarkantak, the state's tourism offerings are increasingly embracing yoga as more than just a physical exercise — but as a gateway to inner peace and connection with nature.

The initiative aims to tap into the growing demand for mindful travel experiences. Wellness seekers — both domestic and international, are showing greater



interest in yoga retreats, meditation camps, and natural healing environments.

Tourism officials believe that by engaging local yoga professionals, the program not only enhances visitor experience but also supports community participation and employment.

"Yoga is becoming a way to experience the essence of Madhya Pradesh — its calm, its spirituality and its ancient wisdom," said one tourism unit manager in Indore.

With its rich cultural backdrop and natural beauty, Madhya Pradesh is position-

ing itself as a destination that nourishes both the traveler's body and soul. And with yoga taking root across its tourism network, the state is quietly stepping into the spotlight as a wellness destination worth watching.

Notably, over the past decade, the state has seen a surge in yoga centers, government-led initiatives and public interest, particularly following the global recognition of International Yoga Day.

Cities like Bhopal, Indore, and Gwalior now host mass yoga gatherings annually, drawing thousands of participants from diverse age groups.

Deobandi cleric in Saharanpur warns Muslim against tattoo trend, calls it 'Haram'

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Saharanpur

Expressing deep concern over the growing trend of tattooing among Muslim youth, prominent Deobandi cleric Maulana Qari Ishaq Gora has released a video message urging youngsters to refrain from what he described as a practice strictly prohibited in Islam.

Qari Gora, who serves as the patron of the Jamiat Dawatul Muslimeen, condemned the practice as a violation of Islamic Sharia and a distortion of the natural form created by Allah.

In his message, he said, "Getting a tattoo is haram in Islam. It amounts to altering the creation of Allah, which is clearly

forbidden in the Quran and Hadith." He lamented that in today's society, tattooing has become fashionable among both young men and women, with little regard for its religious implications.

"Sadly, no one considers this a sin anymore. Instead, it is being promoted as a status symbol. This is a dangerous shift in values," the cleric remarked.

Citing Islamic teachings, Qari Gora said the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had cursed those who inscribe designs on their bodies or seek to alter their physical appearance in ways that contravene the natural form given by God. "Such actions are not just culturally inappropriate; they are spiritually damaging," he

added. The cleric also issued a direct appeal to those who already have tattoos. "Those who have undergone tattooing should repent sincerely, seek Allah's forgiveness, and if possible, have them removed. For those considering it in the future, I urge them to abandon the thought and seek guidance through prayer." Concluding his message, Qari Gora offered a heartfelt prayer: "May Allah Ta'ala grant us the correct understanding of our faith and the strength to follow the righteous path."

His statement has sparked discussions within the local community, particularly among religious groups and families concerned about Western cultural influences on traditional Islamic values.

Republicans craft tax bill reflecting Trump's vision, 'MAGA' accounts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

Days before Republicans unveiled their sweeping tax cut plan, the chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee had one last person to consult. He went to the White House, where he and President Donald Trump went over the legislation "line by line."

"He was very happy with what we're delivering," said Rep Jason Smith, a Republican from Missouri.

Trump had every reason to be pleased. His imprint is all over the bill making its way through the House, starting with its title — the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act."

The legislation realises many of Trump's campaign promises, temporarily ending taxes on overtime and tips for many workers, creating a new \$10,000 tax break on auto loan interest for American-made cars, and even creating a new tax-free "MAGA account" — a nod to his "Make America Great Again" movement, but in this case, it means "Money Accounts for Growth and Advancement." This would contribute \$1,000 to children born in his second term. The Trump-inspired contours of the legislative package, months if not years in the making, reflect not only the president's considerable influence over the Republican Party, but also the hard political realities in the House, where Republicans have only the barest of majorities and often find it difficult to find consensus without Trump's involvement. Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., effectively owes his job to Trump and has



kept in constant contact with him during the negotiations, including during his overseas trip this week.

"He's excited about our forward progress," Johnson said. "You know, I keep him apprised of the developments, and he's had a busy time over there in the Middle East and it's been good — he's in good spirits and we're in good spirits."

The Republican bill runs a whopping 1,116 pages and includes more than \$5 trillion in tax cuts, costs that are partially offset by spending cuts elsewhere and other changes in the tax code. The legislation would make permanent the tax cuts from Trump's first term while reducing funding for programs involving food assistance,

college financing and environmental protection.

As talks over the bill have progressed, divisions have emerged among Republicans, particularly between fiscal hawks most concerned about federal deficits and others more focused on the impact of cuts back home.

That's where Trump usually comes in, playing the "closer" who turns no votes to yes. "President Trump has gone out of his way to ask us: Are there any members you want me to call? Anybody that you want me to talk to? And he calls them right then," said House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La. "He's been incredibly hands-on and incredibly helpful at getting the bill

to where it is." Trump's involvement seems certain to grow as Johnson labours to get the tax package through the House by a self-imposed Memorial Day deadline.

Conservatives slowed the process Friday, refusing to advance the tax package out of the House Budget Committee until it includes faster implementation of Medicaid changes and a more wholesale repeal of Biden-era green energy credits. They vowed to hold firm until their demands are met.

Trump took notice, applying pressure even before the gavel went down on the failed committee vote.

"We don't need GRANDSTANDERS" in the Republican Party," Trump wrote on social media. "STOP TALKING AND GET IT DONE!"

Negotiations were expected to stretch through the weekend, with the Budget Committee reconvening late Sunday night in hopes of a breakthrough. Rep Mike Rogers, R-Ala., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, predicted the tax package will ultimately get over the finish line once Trump — just returning from a tour of the Middle East — starts making calls to sceptical lawmakers. "You may have noticed he likes talking on the telephone," Rogers said. Added Rep Tim Burchett of Tennessee, "I think the only way we're going to get on track with it is with Trump."

The close coordination with Republican leaders now stands in sharp contrast to Trump's first term, when the party enacted a slew of personal and corporate tax breaks and spending increases.

Iran to continue nuclear talks despite US threats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Tehran

Iran's president said his country will continue talks with the United States over its rapidly advancing nuclear programme but will not withdraw from its rights because of US threats.

"We are negotiating, and we will negotiate, we are not after war but we do not fear any threat," President Masoud Pezeshkian said during a speech to navy officials broadcast by state television Saturday.

"It is not like that they think if they threaten us, we will give up our human right and definite right," Pezeshkian said. "We will not withdraw, we will not easily loose honourable military, scientific, nuclear in all fields."

The negotiations have reached the "expert" level, meaning the sides are trying to reach agreement on the details of a possible deal. But a major sticking point remains Iran's enrichment of uranium, which Tehran insists it must be allowed to do and the Trump administration increasingly insists the Islamic Republic must give up.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran's programme if a deal isn't reached. Iranian officials increasingly warn they could pursue a nuclear weapon with their stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels. Earlier on Friday, Trump said Iran received a proposal during the talks, though he did not elaborate. During his trip to the region this week, Trump at nearly every event insisted Iran could not be allowed to

obtain a nuclear bomb, something U.S. intelligence agencies assess Tehran is not actively pursuing, though its programme is on the cusp of being able to weaponise nuclear material. Mohammad Esلمي, the head of Iran's atomic organisation, stressed the peaceful nature of the programme, saying it is under "continuous" monitoring by the UN nuclear watchdog, state TV reported Saturday.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran's programme if a deal isn't reached

"No country is monitored by the agency like us," Esلمي said, adding that the agency inspected the country's nuclear facilities more than 450 times in 2024. "Something about 25 per cent of all the agency inspections" in the year. Meanwhile, Israel routinely has threatened to strike Iran's nuclear facilities if it feels threatened, further complicating tensions in the Mideast already spiked by the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

These growing regional frictions, coupled with ongoing indirect negotiations between Iran and the US, have drawn global concern. Analysts warn that any misstep or miscalculation could quickly escalate into broader conflict, pulling in neighboring countries and international powers, potentially destabilizing the entire region and affecting global geopolitical dynamics.

Russian drone strike in northeast Ukraine kills nine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kyiv

A Russian drone struck a passenger bus in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region on Saturday, killing nine people and injuring four others, Ukrainian officials said. The attack came just hours after Moscow and Kyiv held their first direct peace talks in years which failed to yield a ceasefire.

Ukraine's national police released photos showing the aftermath of the strike in Sumy's Bilopolillia city, around 10 kilometers from the front line and border with Russia.

The Associated Press could not independently verify details of the incident. There was no comment from Moscow.

"This is another war crime by Russia — a deliberate strike on civilian transport that posed no threat," the Sumy regional administration said in a post on the Telegram messaging app.

Russian and Ukrainian officials met in Turkey on Friday in an attempt to reach a temporary ceasefire, but the talks ended after less than two hours without a breakthrough. It was the first face-to-face dialogue between the two sides since the early weeks of Moscow's February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

And while both sides agreed on a large prisoner swap, they clearly remained far apart on key conditions for ending the fighting. One such condition for Ukraine, backed by its Western allies, is a tempo-

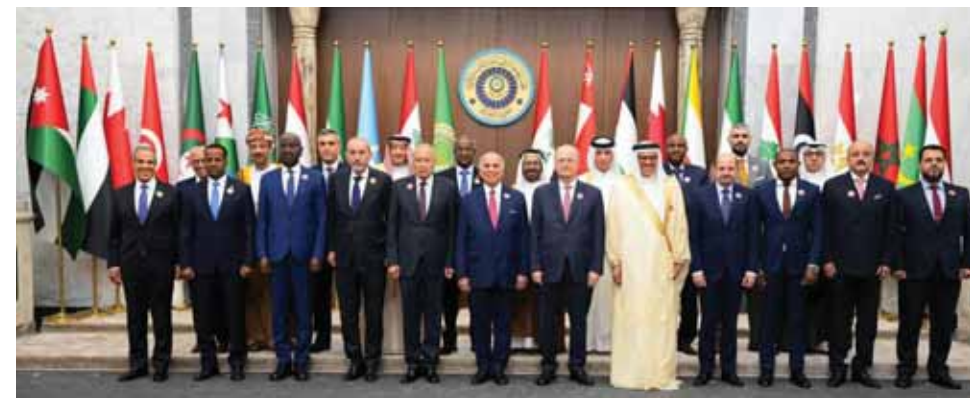
rary ceasefire as a first step toward a peaceful settlement. The Kremlin has pushed back against such a truce, which remains elusive. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he discussed the talks with US President Donald Trump and the leaders of France, Germany, the UK and Poland. In a post on X from a European leadership meeting in Albania, he urged "tough sanctions" against Moscow if it rejects "a full and unconditional ceasefire and an end to killings."

In Istanbul, Kyiv and Moscow agreed to exchange 1,000 prisoners of war each, according to the heads of both delegations, in what would be their biggest swap to date. Both sides also discussed a ceasefire and a potential meeting between their heads of state, according to chief Ukrainian delegate, Defence Minister Rustem Umerov.

Medinsky, an aide to President Vladimir Putin, said both sides agreed to provide each other with detailed ceasefire proposals, with Ukraine requesting the heads of state meeting, which Russia took under careful consideration.

The discussions highlighted the ongoing efforts for diplomacy amid the conflict and reflected the growing urgency to explore peaceful solutions and prevent further escalation of violence. Despite remaining tensions, both delegations expressed cautious optimism about the potential for further talks and progress toward easing hostilities, with hopes for a more stable and lasting resolution.

Arab league summit kicks off in Baghdad, Gaza prioritised



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Baghdad

Regional leaders were to meet in Baghdad on Saturday at the annual summit of the Arab League, with the war in Gaza expected to once again loom large.

In March, at an emergency summit in Cairo, Arab leaders endorsed a proposed plan for reconstruction of the Gaza Strip without displacing its roughly two million residents.

Saturday's summit comes two months after Israel ended a ceasefire reached with the Hamas militant group in January. In recent days, Israel has launched widespread attacks in Gaza and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed a further escalation of force to pursue his aim of destroying Hamas.

The Baghdad meeting was upstaged by US President Donald Trump's tour in the region earlier in the week. Trump's visit did not usher in a deal for a new ceasefire in Gaza as many had hoped, but he grabbed headlines by meeting with new

Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa — who had once fought against US forces in Iraq — and promising to remove US sanctions imposed on Syria.

Al-Sharaa was not attending the summit in Baghdad, where Syria's delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shibani. Iraqi Shiite militias and political factions are wary of al-Sharaa's past as a Sunni militant and had pushed back against his invitation to the summit.

Formerly known by the nom de guerre Abu Mohammed al-Golani, al-Sharaa joined the ranks of al-Qaida insurgents battling US forces in Iraq after the US-led invasion in 2003 to oust Saddam Hussein and still faces a warrant for his arrest on terrorism charges in Iraq.

During Syria's conflict that began in March 2011, several Iraqi Shiite militias fought alongside the forces of former Syrian President Bashar Assad, making al-Sharaa today a particularly sensitive figure for them.

Iraq, which has strong — and sometimes conflict-

ing — ties with both the United States and Iran, has sought to strike a difficult balance

between them and to position itself as a regional mediator.

CHANGE OF NAME

"It is for general information that I, Arif W/o Mridul Chandra Das residing at 2217, Sector-D, Pocket-2, Vasant Kunj, South-West, Delhi-110070 declare that the name of my minor daughter namely Adya aged 07 years, has been wrongly written as Trishya Pawaria Das in her educational documents. The actual name of my minor daughter is ADYA which may be amended accordingly."

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that my client Ram Kumar Dutta and Neha Dutta are in process to purchase the Property bearing House No. 27/1A, area measuring 45 sq.yds., out of Kharsa no. 382/13/2, situated in the area of village Gurgaon, (Colony in Shearnagar Khari, Jaisal and District Gurgaon, Haryana from Vinod Kumar, having acquired the said property by virtue of Sale Deed dated 24/10/2006, Doc. No. 6750 executed by Rajpal, Now Vinod Kumar intend to sell the said property to my client for which said property will be mortgaged with Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited against the said facility as availed by my clients. However they confirmed that below mentioned Document is not available with Seller i.e. Vinod Kumar pertaining to the property in question and for same FIR has already been lodged vide Application Number: 1322705/250085 (Original Sale Deed dated 07/12/2005 executed by Raghuraj Singh in favour of Raj Pal duly registered in the office of S.R. Gurgaon, as Doc no. 18312, Book No. 1, dated 07/12/2005)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Re: Residential Plot No. 31, measuring 165.60 sq. mtrs., in Block-A, Sector-33, Noida, (T.S.J) Dabri, District Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.), Hereinafter referred to as "said property". NOTICE is hereby given to general public that our client, Mr. Dharminder Singh (hereinafter called the "owner") is the sole and absolute owner of the said property vide Transfer Letter dated 17.10.2019 issued by NOIDA. The said owner has further informed that initially the said property owned by Mr. Chokhey Ram vide allotment letter/ lease deed dated 12.10.1988 executed by NOIDA, who has further transferred the said property to Mr. Mahendra Pal Singh vide Transfer Deed dated 09.09.1993. And after unfortunate death of Mr. Mahendra Pal Singh leaving behind the legal heirs namely Smt. Usha Singh, Smt. Kalpana Singh, Sh. Dharmender Singh and Sh. Gaurav Singh. And finally, property have been transferred to Mr. Dharminder Singh as above and he became the owner of the said property. The said owner has also informed that there is no charge or dispute or any litigation pending upon the said property. Any person including Banks, Financial Institutions, relatives having any claim, right, title or any interest of any nature whatsoever filed or upon the said property is hereby called upon to make the same known, in writing, with documentary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below within 07 days of publication of this notice and in the event of no response having been received to the notice, the title of the owner in respect of the said property shall be deemed to be clear of any charge or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent claim shall not bind our clients/owner, in any manner whatsoever. Shivkant Arora, Advocate For M/s Intellectual Law Offices A-74, Lower Ground Floor, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to public at large that my client, Gaurav Agrawal, S/o (Late) Sh. Rajendra Prasad Agrawal, R/o Hudaitsah Joda, Keonjhar, Orissa-758034 currently, in Malaysia, hereby surrender his elder brother, Rahul Kumar Agrawal, S/o (Late) Sh. Rajendra Prasad Agrawal, R/o Flat No. A-405, Harshit, Royal Regency, Mohaba Bazar, Rajpur, C.G.-492001, as litigation is pending between them and he is creating hindrance in peaceful living of my client. Now onwards, my client has no relationship, whatsoever, with him. He cannot represent my client before any authority or government organization or my client employers or relatives or any such person or organization. Further, my client will not be responsible for any act or conduct or promises or any other document executed by him from the date of publication of this notice. SUNIL KUMAR CHATURVEDI ADVOCATE - SUPREME COURT OF INDIA Office at: 206, Devika Tower, 6, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019. Mobile: 8742914100

Severe deadly midwest storms kill seven in Missouri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ St Louis

At least seven people died and authorities were searching for people who were trapped or hurt after severe storms including at least one possible tornado swept through Missouri.

The storms were part of a severe weather system Friday that caused severe damage in Missouri, spawned tornadoes in Wisconsin, left hundreds of thousands without power in the Great Lakes region and brought a punishing heat wave to Texas. The storms Friday afternoon tore roofs off buildings, blew out windows, ripped bricks off siding and yanked up trees and power lines. St Louis Mayor Cara Spencer confirmed five deaths in her city and said more than 5,000 homes were affected and about 100,000 customers remained without electricity on Friday night. "This is truly, truly devastating," Spencer said, adding that the city was in the process of declaring an emergency and an overnight curfew Friday had been put into place in the neighbourhoods with the most damage.

The number of people injured was not immediately known. Barnes-Jewish Hospital received 20 to 30 patients from the storm with some in serious condition and most expected to be discharged by Friday night, according to hospital spokesperson Laura High.

St Louis Children's Hospital received 13 patients with two of them expected to remain in the hospital into the weekend, she said. National Weather Service radar indicated a tornado touched down between 2:30 pm and 2:50 pm in Clayton, Missouri, in the St Louis



area. The apparent tornado touched down in the area of Forest Park, home to the St Louis Zoo and the site of the 1904 World's Fair and Olympic Games the same year.

At Centennial Christian Church, City of St Louis Fire Department Battalion Chief William Pollihan told The Associated Press that three people had to be rescued after part of the church crumbled. One of those people died.

Stacy Clark said his mother-in-law Patricia Penelton died in the church. He described her as a very active church volunteer who had many roles, including being part of the choir.

Jeffrey Simmons Sr, who lives across from the church, heard an alert on his phone and then the lights went out.

"And next thing you know, a lot of noise, heavy wind," he said. He and his brother went into the basement. Later, he realized it was worse than he thought. "Everything was

open, tree branches flying by and people running," he said. "A lot of people were caught outside."

Christy Childs, a Saint Louis Zoo spokesperson, said in a text that the zoo would remain closed Saturday because of downed trees and other damage. Childs said all animals were safe and that there were no reports of significant injuries to staff, guests or animals.

"We can't definitively say whether or not it was a tornado - it likely was," National Weather Service meteorologist Marshall Pfahler said. A tornado struck in Scott County, about 209 km south of St Louis, killing two people, injuring several others and destroying multiple homes, Sheriff Derick Wheatley wrote on social media.

"Our first responders acted swiftly, even while the tornado was still active, putting themselves in harm's way to provide immediate assistance and care to those injured," he said.

Appalachia and Midwest face danger

Weather forecasters warned severe storms with possible tornadoes, hail and even hurricane-force winds could hobble parts of Appalachia and the Midwest on Friday. The weather service warned of a rare tornado emergency around Marion, Illinois, on Friday evening, saying a tornado had been confirmed and was life-threatening. Reports of damage and injuries were not immediately available.

A dust storm warning was issued around the Chicago area Friday night. The weather service said a wall of dust extended along a 161-km line from southwest of Chicago to northern Indiana that severely reduced visibility.

The National Weather Service said residents in Kentucky, southern Indiana, southern Illinois, parts of Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas and Ohio should brace for intense storms that could include baseball-sized hail. The weather service's Storm Prediction Centre said "strong, potentially long-track tornadoes and very large hail" could be expected. And the threat for damaging winds in excess of 120 kph would increase into Friday evening as storms grew into larger clusters.

Ahead of Friday night's anticipated storm, Appalachian Power, which serves one million customers in West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee, said it requested 1,700 additional workers from neighbouring utilities along with sending its own crews from unaffected areas to assist with service restoration. Texas faced searing heat.

A heat advisory was issued for San Antonio and Austin, with temperatures at a blistering 95 F (35 C) to 105 (40.5 C). Parts of the southern East Coast, from Virginia to Florida, battled with heat in the 90s (32-37 C). The National Weather Service Office for Austin/San Antonio said Friday the humidity coming in over the weekend was expected to make temperatures feel hotter. "There are concerns of heat exhaustion for people that aren't taking proper precautions when they're outdoors," meteorologist Jason Runyen said, advising those affected to take breaks and stay hydrated. Overnight Thursday, severe storms accompanied by booming thunder, lightning displays and powerful winds swept through parts of Wisconsin, Illinois, northern Indiana, and Michigan, leaving scores of trees down and thousands of homes without power.

THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.
C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058
Phone: 611-2511042, 2511043, 2511044
E-mail: legal@kangrabank.com, legal1@kangrabank.com Website: www.kangrabank.com

APPENDIX IV (See rule 8(1))
POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized officer of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", Head office at: C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi - 110058, having its registered office at 1916, Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055, under The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, [54 of 2002] and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule [3] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Bank had issued a demand notice on dated 19-09-2024 calling upon the borrower & mortgagor Sh. Krishan Pal S/o. Sh. Bhanwar Singh R/o. E-379, Gali No.16, Khajoori Khas, Delhi-110094, calling upon the sureties namely: Sh. Jitender Bhasin R/o. E-280, 30FT Road, Block-E, Khajoori Khas, Delhi-110094, and Smt. Pinki Dhama R/o. E-379, Gali No.16, Khajoori Khas, Delhi-110094, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.24,17,124/- (Rupees Twenty Four Lakhs Seventeen Thousand One Hundred and Twenty Four Only), together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of the notice till the date of payment, with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice.

The above mentioned borrower, mortgagor & sureties having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, mortgagor, sureties and the public in general that the Bank has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred under sub-section (4) of section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with rule [8] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, on this 14th day of May 2025.

The borrower, mortgagor & sureties in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the mortgaged property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of "The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.", for an amount of Rs.24,17,124/- together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of notice till the date of realization together with all the costs incurred by the Bank in realizing the said amount.

The borrower, mortgagor & sureties attention is also being invited towards provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, in respect of time available, to redeem the below mentioned mortgaged property/Secured Asset.

DISCRPTION OF THE PROPERTY

The property under consideration is entire built-up property with roof rights, area measuring 62.50 Sq.Yds.	All part and parcel of the BUILT UP PROPERTY WITH TERRACE/ROOF RIGHTS BEARING PROPERTY NO. E-379 (OLD NO. 37-A), HAVING AN AREA MEASURING 62.50 YDS. OR 52.25 SQ. MTRS., OUT OF KHASRA NO.120111, SITUATED IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE MEERPUR TURK, IN THE ABADI OF E-BLOCK, GALLI NO. 16, KHAJOORI KHAS, ILLAGA SHAHDARA DELHI-110094. FALLING UNDER THE REGISTRATION OF SUB-REGISTRAR IV-Soelam Pur, Delhi.
---	---

Bounded as under-
EAST : Property of others.
WEST : Property of others.
NORTH : Property of others.
SOUTH : Road 20ft. Wide.

HARISH SHARMA)
AUTHORISED OFFICER
THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.
HEAD OFFICE AT: C-29, COMMUNITY CENTRE, PANKHA ROAD, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58.
DELHI: 14-05-2025

Neeraj breaches 90m mark, aims to throw farther now

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Doha

Relieved, happy but a touch disappointed too, Indian javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra said now that he is done breaching the 90m mark, he would be striving to go farther as his body is more or less free of the niggles that plagued him in the past few years.

The 27-year-old two-time Olympic-medallist sent his spear to 90.23m in the Diamond League season-opener here on Friday but finished second overall after Germany's Julian Weber took the top spot with a 91.06m effort in his final throw.

"I am very happy with the 90m mark but it's a little bit of a bittersweet experience actually. But never mind, I and my coach (the legendary Jan Zelezny) are still working on some aspects of my throw.

"We started working together only in February this year. I am still learning things," Chopra said after the event.

Zelezny, who holds the world record for the longest throw (98.48m), doesn't normally attend Diamond Leagues but the Czech came with Chopra last night because he felt "today is the day to achieve

90m." "I was always feeling something in my groin in the last few years. I did not give my best because of that. This year I feel much better, we will also work on some aspects and so I believe I can throw more than 90m in the upcoming events this year till the World Championships," Chopra said.

The Haryana-lad will enter the September 13 to 21 world championship in Tokyo as the defending gold-medallist in his event. The throw here would do a world of good to his confidence.

It was his third attempt of the night and one that made him only the third Asian and 25th overall to cross the coveted mark, that was eluding him for the last five years.

The Zelezny effect on him would be hard to ignore. He was roped in as Chopra's coach in November last year but they started working together only in February this year. "I am very happy that Jan Zelezny is my coach and we worked very hard in South Africa. We are still working on some aspects," he said.

Asked about his next goal, Chopra offered a cheeky response.

"My next goal remains 90m," he said.



On a more serious note, the affable superstar said he is confident of bettering what was a career-best effort last night. "I believe I am ready to throw farther. It's just the beginning of a long season,"

he said. Dwelling on what made the landmark throw possible on a windy night, Chopra said the conditions worked in his favour.

"When I was having warm-up throws my coach said, 'today is the day when I can throw 90m'. After my 90m throw also, he told me I can throw 2-3m farther," he said. "The wind helps for sure and the weather is a little warm and that helps. It's the first competition of the year, so everyone came with a fresher mindset after a long time and had the hunger inside for the throwing part (sic)," he added.

As always, Chopra exhibited exemplary grace despite his disappointment at missing the top spot. He applauded Weber for his performance and said they help each other push the boundaries.

"I also told Julian (Weber) that we can throw 90m. I am also happy for him. We have tried very hard for 90m for so many years, and so we are happy.

"It's like a good push between us and in the next competition we will push each other again and will throw farther," he said. But Chopra did rue the fact that he has finished second whenever he has breached the national record.

"It had happened earlier also. When I threw an NR with over 89m in Turku, I finished second (sic). In Stockholm DL, when I threw 89.94m, I was second again, so also here," Chopra said.

Weber happy for Neeraj

Weber, on his part, said he did not do anything extra but had a feeling that he can breach the 90m mark here.

It was Weber's first 90m-plus effort as well, and he became the 26th javelin thrower to breach the coveted mark. His effort was the world leading mark this season so far.

"I did not know how it happened. I had a very good massage thanks to my physiotherapist. It was fun today. Neeraj threw his first 90m plus and I went past the mark in my last throw and that was just perfect.

"I was very happy for him. We have been fighting for the 90m throw for a long time and we both achieved that today. So, it was very special for us."

Two-time world champion and Paris Olympics bronze-medallist Anderson Peters of Grenada was third with his opening throw of 84.65m.

IPL: Punjab Kings eye playoff spot against Rajasthan Royals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jaipur

Punjab Kings (PBKS) will look to renew their bid for a playoff berth with another commanding performance here on Sunday against Rajasthan Royals (RR), who have failed to rise above mediocrity despite possessing the resources this season.

As action returns to the Saiwam Singh stadium after a week-long enforced break, Shreyas Iyer's side will hope to move past the nightmare on May 8, when their match against Delhi Capitals in scenic Dharamsala had to be called off due to India-Pakistan border tensions, forcing the players to return to their dressing rooms in pitch darkness.

As PBKS take the field on Sunday, comfortably placed at third spot on the table with 15 points from 11 games, there would be some scepticism with regard to the changes in the lineup owing to the enforced break.

Though Australians Marcus Stoinis and Josh Inglis have agreed to rejoin the team, they would be missing PBKS' first game post IPL resumption, forcing the Punjab side to potentially rejigs their batting order.

The absence of the tall South African pacer Marco Jansen, who has been called back by Cricket South Africa, would hurt Shreyas' side the most as he had made quite an impact this season, scalping 11 wickets.

However, the fact that PBKS have a strong Indian core, including their skipper Shreyas, opener batter Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh and Nehal Wadhwa, the side has come out relatively unscathed from the exodus of foreign players following the Indo-Pakistan tensions.

On the bowling front too, PBKS have the services of frontline pacer Arshdeep Singh and in-form spinner Yuzvendra

Chahal, who has so far taken 14 wickets in 11 games with a best of 4/28 and an economy rate of below-10.

With New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson coming in place of the injured Lockie Ferguson, PBKS could well stitch together a well-balanced unit for the game against RR before Stoinis and Inglis join in from the next game onwards. PBKS will once again rely heavily on their batters, who were on the verge of decimating the Delhi Capitals bowlers in Dharamsala, racing to 122 for one in just 10.1 overs, before the game was abandoned. That display should give them enough confidence required against a down-and-out Royals.

The hosts have already been eliminated from the playoff race and currently languish in ninth place on the points table with just three wins from 12 matches.

The crestfallen Royals will hope to bow out on a high in front of their home fans, but for that, they will have to lift themselves from a slump, having lost four of their last five games.

Fourteen-year-old sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi's stunning 35-ball century was a rare moment of magic, but the Royals cannot rely on such individual brilliance every time.

The absence of regular captain Sanju Samson, who has missed most of the season due to injury, has left a massive void in their batting lineup.



Struggling DC take on table-toppers Gujarat Titans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Shaken by the abrupt suspension of their previous match due to the India-Pakistan conflict, a struggling Delhi Capitals (DC) will look to regroup and address bowling concerns when they face table-toppers Gujarat Titans (GT) in a reverse-leg IPL clash here on Sunday to keep their playoff hopes alive.

If three defeats and a no-result due to rain in their last five games weren't enough, DC's previous fixture was called off midway following air raid alerts in neighbouring Jammu and Pathankot, prompting a week-long suspension of the league.

Although the tournament has resumed, several overseas players have not returned to complete their commitments, forcing franchises to make major adjustments to their squads.

DC, currently just outside the top four with 13 points from 11 matches, suffered a major setback with premier pacer Mitchell Starc deciding not to return for the remainder of the season. The Australian left-arter is the team's leading wicket-taker with 14 scalps, and his absence is a significant blow to DC's already slim playoff hopes.

In a bit of relief, the Capitals managed to secure the services of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who obtained the 'No Objection Certificate' from his national board on Friday.

An experienced IPL campaigner with 38 wickets at an economy of 7.84 in as many matches, Mustafizur will be expected to spearhead a struggling pace



attack against a batting-heavy Gujarat Titans line-up.

The Axar Patel-led side has endured a disappointing run at home, managing just one win — that too via a Super Over — at the Arun Jaitley Stadium this season.

When the two teams last met on April 19, DC were blown away by Jos Buttler's 97 off 54 balls as GT chased down a 200-plus total with ease to win by seven wickets.

DC's problems have only deepened in recent outings. Their top and middle-order crumbled against Sunrisers Hyderabad in a rain-hit match, while their bowlers were hammered by Punjab Kings, who raced to 122 for one in just

10.1 overs before the game in Dharamsala was abandoned.

The pace attack, comprising Dushmantha Chameera and Mukesh Kumar, has struggled to deliver, making Mustafizur's role in providing early breakthroughs all the more crucial, especially against GT's in-form top order.

The batting unit has also been inconsistent. In their last completed outing, DC were reduced to 29 for five by SRH on May 5. They didn't get to bat in the Dharamsala match.

The return of veteran opener Faf du Plessis comes as a boost for DC, who will hope that the top order — including Abishek Porel and Karun Nair — can put their recent struggles behind and fire against GT.

DC had experimented with Nair as an opener, but the move backfired as he was dismissed for a duck against SRH. Du Plessis and Porel have also failed to convert starts into substantial scores.

KL Rahul, the team's leading run-scorer this season, will have a crucial role to play along with skipper Axar. If the duo can lay a solid foundation, the likes of Tristan Stubbs, Vipraj Nigam, and Ashutosh Sharma can provide the late flourish in the death overs.

GT, comfortably perched at the top of the table with 16 points from 11 games, have been a well-oiled unit this season.

Jos Buttler and South African pacer Kagiso Rabada have rejoined the squad, although the Englishman will not be available for GT's final league match against Chennai Super Kings due to national duty.

Shubman Gill, B Sai Sudharsan, and Buttler have formed a formidable top order, all crossing the 500-run mark this season. Their consistent scoring at high strike rates has meant GT's middle order has largely remained untested, barring Sherfane Rutherford.

DC will need to strike early to expose that middle order and halt GT's momentum.

GT's bowling unit has matched their batting brilliance. Prasadh Krishna leads the IPL wicket charts with 20 scalps, while Mohammed Siraj (15 wickets) and left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore (14) have also delivered consistently, making GT a tough nut to crack on both fronts.

Praggnanandhaa beats Maxime to win Superbet Classic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bucharest (Romania)

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa defeated Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France to win his first-ever tournament on the Grand Chess Tour by showcasing his supremacy in the Superbet Classic here.

The Indian, after drawing with the Armenian-American GM Levon Aronian in the final round, was assured of a tie for the first place.

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Alireza Firouzja also won to match Praggnanandhaa on 5.5 points. This led to a tiebreaker between the three, with five minutes and a two-second increment after every move.

In the first game with black pieces, Praggnanandhaa had to work hard in a slightly difficult position against

Firouzja but the end result was a draw. In the second game Firouzja drew with Vachier-Lagrave.

In the last game of the event, Praggnanandhaa crashed through the defences of Vachier-Lagrave to earn the top prize. The Indian scored 1.5 points in his blitz games, half a point more than Firouzja and one more than the other French Grandmaster.

It was a sweet comeback for Praggnanandhaa after last year's debacle when he lost all his games in the play-offs.

"I didn't do so well last time. I guess getting to rest a few hours before the tiebreak certainly helps," Praggnanandhaa said at the prize-giving ceremony.

After his relatively early draw with Aronian in the Classical game, the Indian had rested in his room for a few hours.

Praggnanandhaa also thanked his second for the tournament, GM Vaibhav Suri, and his permanent trainer Grandmaster RB Ramesh on the occasion. The Indian won a cash award of USD 77,667 (around Rs 66 lakh) for his efforts.

Results (Round 9): R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 5.5) drew with Levon Aronian (USA, 4); Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou, 4) lost to Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 5.5); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 5.5) beat Jan Krzysztof (Pol, 3); Wesley So (4) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 4.5); D Gukesh (Ind, 4) drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5).

Tiebreak result: Praggnanandhaa drew with Firouzja; Firouzja drew with Vachier-Lagrave; Praggnanandhaa beat Vachier-Lagrave.

Jhonattan Vegas stays ahead in PGA Championship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Charlotte (USA)

Scottie Scheffler wasn't paying attention to all the drama next to him in a star-power group or ahead of him on the leaderboard Friday at the PGA Championship.

Scheffler kept doing his best with the swing he had, responding to his lone bogey with a pair of birdies until he was within striking distance of 36-hole leader Jhonattan Vegas and became a large presence on leaderboard filled with so much inexperience in the majors.

"I like the position I'm in going into the weekend," Scheffler said after a 3-under 68 left him only three shots behind at Quail Hollow. Vegas had the lead for the first time in a major and didn't back down. He finished late Thursday with five birdies on his last six holes for a 64 and had what felt like only three hours of sleep. He was tired, but it didn't show until the end.

He missed a 3-foot putt on the 18th hole and took double bogey. He still shot 70, and his lead remained two shots going into the weekend. "Every chance you get to lead a major and play with the lead is never easy," Vegas said. "So I feel proud of a solid round today."

He was at 8-under 134, two ahead of Matthieu Pavon of France (65), former US Open champion Matt Fitzpatrick (68) and Si Woo Kim, the engaging South Korean who made an ace on the longest par 3 at Quail Hollow on his way to a 64. Kim hit 55-wood on the 252-yard sixth hole, making it the longest hole-in-one in major championship history.



The real stress was next to Scheffler. Xander Schauffele was in danger of becoming the first defending champion to miss the cut in the PGA Championship since Jimmy Walker in 2017. He was two shots over the cut line with seven holes to play when he made two birdies and handled the rugged three-hole closing stretch with pars to make the cut on the number.

That's his 64th in a row on the PGA Tour, the longest streak since Tiger Woods made 142 straight cuts from 1998 through 2005. "The cuts, it's still a thing," Schauffele said. "And I really wanted to make the weekend because I feel like I'm not playing this bad." Masters champion Rory McIlroy had four birdies through 10 holes and the gallery was starting to raise the level of noise. But then he began missing more fairways and making four bogeys, including the 18th hole for a 69 to make the cut on the number.

Turns out XM Sirius PGA Tour Radio reported McIlroy had his driver tested on Tuesday, it was deemed nonconforming and he had to use a backup. He ranks last in driving accuracy among the 74 players to make the cut.

McIlroy, who last month completed the career Grand Slam at the Masters, declined

to speak to the media for the second straight day.

Scheffler marched on, hitting his stride late in the round, just like Thursday. He wasn't even aware of McIlroy's early run.

"When you're out there competing, I'm mostly concerned about myself out there," Scheffler said. "I notice what's going on, but it's not like another sport. Like if we were playing basketball and he's hitting a bunch of 3s in my face, I'd probably have to adjust." The Grand Slam club most likely stays at six members the rest of the year — Jordan Spieth rallied with a 68 but missed the cut by one shot, leaving him a PGA Championship short of getting all the majors.

Phil Mickelson could still win the US Open for the Grand Slam at age 54. He certainly didn't look the part when he took four swipes at the ball to get out of a bunker on No. 12 and wound up with a quadruple-bogey eight. He made seven birdies in a round of 72.

Now it's about 36 holes to chase after the 27-pound Wanamaker Trophy, which might feel even heavier to so many players in the mix who are newcomers to major pressure. That starts with Vegas, whose career has been slowed by shoulder injuries in recent years. He got back on track by winning in Minnesota last year. Still, he has never finished in the top 20 in a major championship.

Pavon played in the final group of the US Open last year. Fitzpatrick won the toughest test in golf at Brookline three years ago and is pulling out of a bad stretch of play.

Gill, Pant look good for India captaincy: Shastri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Doha

Former India coach Ravi Shastri says ideal candidates to captain India in the Test format, given that they have age on their side and already have the experience of leading IPL sides.

Shastri also feels that Jasprit Bumrah would have been an obvious choice for the leadership role in the traditional format but for his fitness issues, the pacer should be protected from the additional burden. "See for me, Jasprit would have been the obvious choice after Australia. But I don't want Jasprit to be made captain and then you lose him as a bowler," Shastri said on the latest episode of the ICC Review with Bumrah's wife Sanjana Ganesan. The selectors will have to pick a new Test captain following the recent retirement of Rohit Sharma.

India's next assignment is a five-match series against England, starting June 20 at Leeds. Bumrah, 31, struggled with a back injury sustained in the final Border-Gavaskar Trophy match in Sydney. He was out of action for nearly three months — early January until April — and missed India's Champions Trophy winning campaign. Bumrah returned to play in the IPL after missing a few initial games and has since taken 13 wickets in eight games for Mumbai Indians.

"I think he (Bumrah) has to take his

body one game at a time. He's coming back now after a serious injury. He'll have played IPL cricket, which is four-over cricket. Now will come the test of bowling 10 overs, 15 overs (in Tests). And the last thing you want is some pressure on his mind being captain as well."

With Gill and Pant in their 20s, Shastri feels the board should look at the key factors like age and longevity to decide on the future India skipper.

Gill is leading Gujarat Titans while wicket-keeper and attacking batter Pant is captaining Lucknow Super Giants.

"You groom somebody and I would say Shubman's looked very good. Give him the opportunity. He's 25, 26 years of age, even give him time," Shastri said.

"There's Rishabh as well. I think these two are the obvious ones I'm looking at because of their age and they have a decade ahead of them. So, let them learn. They've got experience as captains, now, captaining their (IPL) franchise and that makes a difference," he added.

Shastri said that Gill's calm demeanour makes him a good choice to lead India. "The little I've seen of Shubman looks very interesting. Composed, calm, he has all the qualities," said Shastri about the number one-ranked batter in the ICC ODI Player Rankings.

He also quashed quashed concerns over Gill's form overseas, saying his class and calibre will come to the fore on foreign tours sooner or later.

VELVET RIVIERA NIGHTS

ATTIRE WITH GRACE

Diane Kruger brought delicate drama in a sheer, structured gown. Pom Klementieff turned heads in bold Schiaparelli, blending gold surrealism with fierce style.

GLOSSED IN POWER

Bella Hadid reasserted her red carpet supremacy in a liquid-black Saint Laurent gown with an asymmetrical cross-back, a thigh-high slit. Her accessories, Chopard's 118.68-carat emerald earrings and a heart-shaped diamond ring, glinted like pure slaystrom.

As the 78th Cannes Film Festival, the red carpet was conquered, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Who Stole the Spotlight and Who Simply Showed Up? What makes a red carpet moment unforgettable? Is it the silhouette? The story behind the look? Or that blink-and-you-miss-it magic when a star descends the Palais steps like they were born to walk on clouds?

At the 78th Cannes Film Festival, fashion walks in with purpose, head held high, eyes daring you to look away. The Riviera sun hasn't been the only thing blazing. From Bella Hadid's dangerously sleek Saint Laurent statement to Anya Taylor-Joy floating in a sea of Dior tulle, the Croisette turns into a battlefield for bold style moves. Beyond the Hollywood staples and supermodels. A 17-year-old from India delivers one of the most powerful fashion tributes of the festival. Nitanshi Goel walks in and made history. Jacqueline Fernandez brings boardroom polish and cinematic sparkle. Veteran actor Anupam Kher walked his first Cannes carpet with gravity and grace. Fashion leads the conversation. It has something to say and it's saying it loud.

FEATHERED ENCHANTRESS

Irina Shayk turned up the drama in a black feathered dress. Her choice of a dramatic lip only amplified her confidence, making her presence impossible to ignore.

MAGIC STILL BLOOMS

Alessandra Ambrosio graced the carpet in a statuesque green gown that moved like water. Light, wind, elegance, it all seemed to gather around her.

As the Festival continues to unfold, it's clear that the magic is as potent as ever. It's a place where cinematic dreams are launched and style legends are made. We'll be keeping our eyes peeled for more jaw-dropping moments that only Cannes can deliver. Stay tuned!!

MISSION: STYLE COMPLETE

And then there was Tom Cruise, arriving for the Mission: Impossible - Final Reckoning premiere to thunderous applause and a five-minute standing ovation. He cut a sharp figure in a deep blue tuxedo, crisp lines, subtle sheen and classic polish.

STARS OF STYLE

Anupam Kher's classic tuxedo matched his humble grace at Cannes, while Jacqueline's dazzled in romantic red gown.

LEGACY IN STYLE

Nitanshi Goel stunned Cannes in an ivory saree adorned with Bollywood legends, then dazzled in a striking gold-embroidered black gown.



Spirit-Led Style Moments

BY TEAM VIVA

When fashion becomes expression, when it transforms into a story, a sensory experience, and a celebration of creativity, it takes on a new meaning. Jyoti Sachdev Iyer, a designer known for her conceptual couture, presented her latest showcase **The Spirit Awakens** at the AlcoBev India event in New Delhi.

She has consistently pushed the boundaries of fashion by infusing it with cultural, architectural and artistic narratives from around the world. From her collaboration with the Australian Trade Commission to bring Aboriginal art to Indian textiles to her collections inspired by architectural marvels like Gaudí's La Sagrada Família, her vision spans continents and disciplines.

With **The Spirit Awakens**, she embarked on a multisensory journey. Each ensemble in the collection captured the essence of a particular spirit-translating its character into form, fabric and emotion. The show became a symphony of sartorial storytelling. From the music and mood to the bottle reveals and immersive set design, every element was carefully curated to resonate with the theme. The collection flowed like poetry, some bold & mysterious, each piece narrating a tale beyond the visual. It served as a reminder that fashion, when guided by imagination and depth, can be a profound medium of art and awakening. *The Spirit Awakens* marks another bold chapter in designer Jyoti's evolving journey that evoke and connect.



The Royals: Lavish, Glamorous – But Late to Ignite

Watch it for the visuals, performances, and sheer Bollywood-royal fantasy but don't expect narrative brilliance, says **ABHI SINGHAL**

First Impressions that started from "What the...": The opening scenes of *The Royals* are intriguing but perplexing. Milind Soman's appearance as a flamboyant Maharaja delivers a "what the..." moment that may leave viewers puzzled. However, just as the tone begins to feel offbeat, Nora Fatehi's dramatic and glamorous entry lifts the energy of the series.

Now streaming on Netflix, *The Royals* attempts to weave together the grandeur of royal India with the fast-paced flair of modern lifestyles. The result is a heady cocktail — often too modern for its own good — yet entertaining in a loud, high-gloss Bollywood kind of way. Led by Bhumi Pednekar, a powerful and poised corporate mogul, and Ishaan Khatter as Aviraaj Singh, a charismatic royal, the series balances high-stakes romance with palace politics and boardroom drama. Nora Fatehi's arrival in the final episodes adds the much-needed spark and tension to the storyline, enhancing its glamour quotient.

Sleepy Start That Heats Up Later

The series struggles with its initial pacing. The first two episodes are slow and overly focused on exposition, which risks disengaging viewers. At times, the early build-up feels dull and soporific, testing the audience's patience. Fortunately, the tempo shifts by episode three, when a steamy romance between Aviraaj and Sophia begins to take centre stage. Their passionate dynamic introduces emo-



tional intensity, jealousy, and the classic romantic triangle that helps the narrative pick up speed. Though the storyline remains flat, these elements inject drama and interest.

Cast: Mixed Bag with Moments of Shine

Ishaan Khatter delivers a standout performance as Aviraaj Singh, striking the right balance between royal charm and emotional depth. His on-screen presence is magnetic, and he pulls off the role of a conflicted prince with ease. Bhumi Pednekar, as Sophia, adds gravitas and emotional strength to her role. Her portrayal of a driven yet vulnerable businesswoman feels authentic, and her chemistry

with Ishaan provides the emotional core of the series.

Nora Fatehi, playing Aviraaj's ex-girlfriend and the alluring Ayesha Dhoni, enters the narrative with flair. Her song sequence and couple dance with Aviraaj shakes up the dynamics between the leads.

Other cast also includes Dino Morea, Zeenat Aman shining in her brief screen time, exuding dignity and wisdom, Sakshi Tanwar and Vihaan Samat.

Visuals & Costume Design as a Regal Spectacle

Where *The Royals* undeniably succeeds is in its visual storytelling. The cinematography is rich and meticulously composed, capturing every element of its grand sets, stately palaces, and luxurious interiors with flair. The production design transports viewers into a world of opulence, with every frame

echoing royal aesthetics. Costume design is another high point. Each character's wardrobe is thoughtfully curated — from Aviraaj's regal attire to Sophia's chic business outfits — staying true to their roles and enhancing the show's visual appeal.

Glamorous but Not Ground-breaking

The Royals is a series that leans heavily on style, star power, and visual spectacle to keep viewers engaged. For those seeking a glossy, escapist drama with palace intrigue and sizzling romance, *The Royals* makes for an enjoyable, if one-time, watch.



RATING

★★★

SUGGESTED BINGES



American Manhunt: Osama bin Laden
OTT - Netflix
Genre - Documentary



The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim
OTT - JioHotstar
Cast - Animation



Overcompensating
OTT - Amazon Prime Video
Cast - Wally Baram, Mary Beth Barone, Adam DiMarco



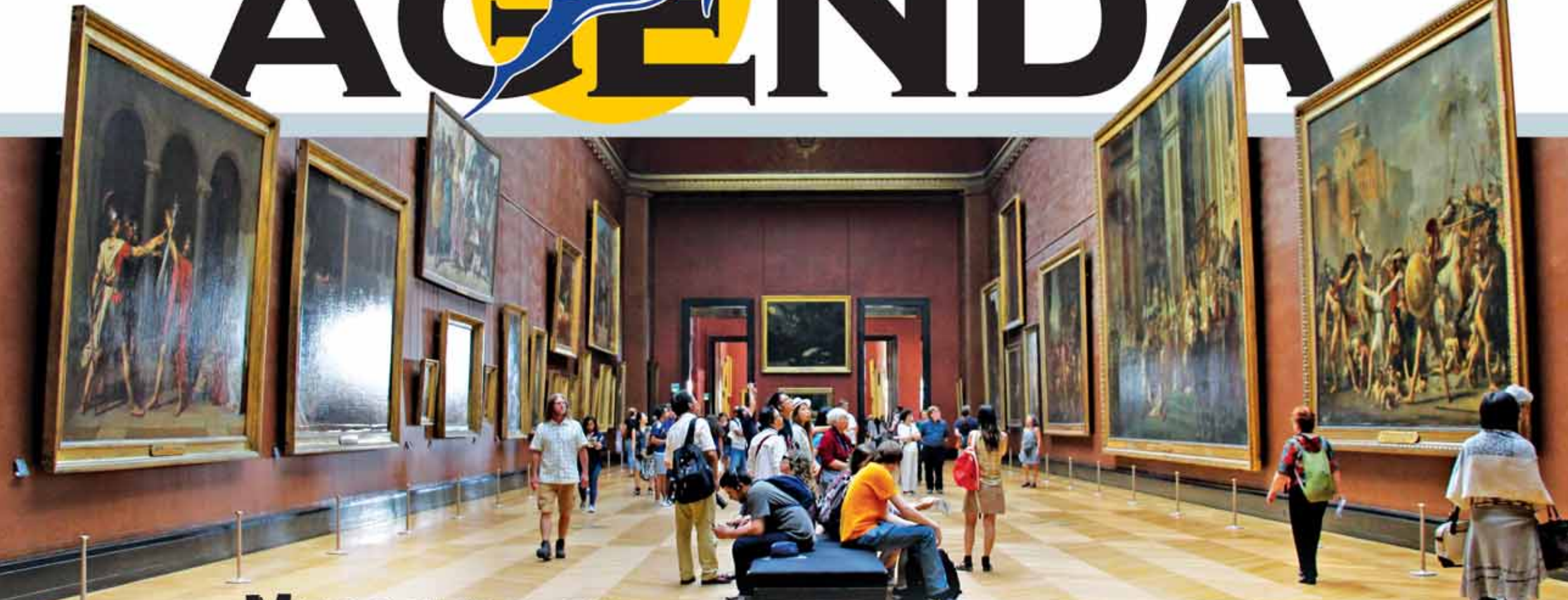
Bhool Chuk Maaf
OTT - Amazon Prime Video
Cast - Rajkumar Rao, Wamiqa Gabbi, Seema Pahwa, Sanjay Mishra



Hai Junoon - Dream, Dare, Dominate
OTT - JioHotstar
Cast - Jacqueline Fernandez, Neil Nitin Mukesh, Sumedh Mudgalkar

Get in touch at vivacity@dailypioneer.com

"Non-living things are not living, yet they live longer than the living"
— John Joclebs Bassey



Museums as Living Memories

UNUSUAL REALMS OF CURIOSITY

Being bizarre but brilliant, these museums showcase the world's quirkiest collections, writes ABHI SINGHAL

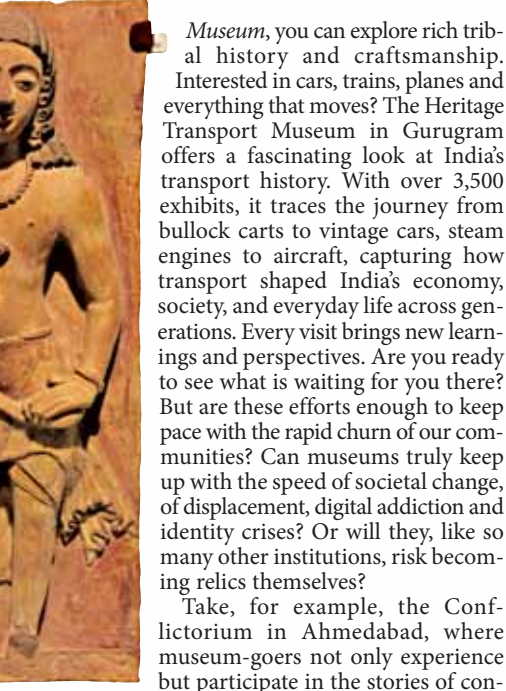
Museums are reimagining their role, on International Museum Day, let's discover how they're transforming, says SAKSHI PRIYA

In a world spinning ever faster on the axis of change social upheaval, climate shifts, digital revolutions, what anchors us to who we are? What helps us make sense of where we come from and where we might be heading? Today, on May 18th, as we mark **International Museum Day 2025**, we are urged to turn our gaze towards these quiet yet powerful institutions that have long stood as stewards of memory and culture. But now, more than ever, we must ask, are museums ready for the future?

This year's theme, *The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities*, resonates far beyond curators and academics. In cities swelling with migrants, in rural towns bracing against modernity and in communities redefining identities post-pandemic, how do museums remain relevant? More importantly, how can they lead the way? Gone are the days when museums were grand halls filled with artefacts and whispering tourists. Today's museums are becoming dynamic spaces of dialogue and participation. From immersive exhibitions powered by artificial intelligence to community, led storytelling projects that reclaim silenced voices, the transformation is underway. But is it enough?

At the heart of this evolution lies a central question: **who is the museum for?** The answer, increasingly, is everyone. From a grandmother tracing ancestral histories to a teenager experiencing augmented reality displays, the museum of tomorrow must speak in many voices and adapt to many lenses. They must welcome the curious wanderer, the student with questions, and the elders with stories. The 27th ICOM General Conference in Dubai aligns with this theme, providing a global platform to discuss how museums can safeguard intangible heritage, amplify youth engagement, and innovate technologically. But this conversation cannot remain within high-level panels. It must flow into classrooms, homes, and public squares. When a community feels that a museum reflects them, their pain, joy and resilience, that is when real transformation begins. Across India, museums are already rewriting their roles.

The Partition Museum in Amritsar channels collective memory into empathy. *The Indian Music Experience Museum* in Bengaluru uses soundscapes to connect generations. *The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya* in Mumbai is pushing the boundaries of heritage and arts education. *The Salar Jung Museum* in Hyderabad brings the world's cultures under one roof with its extensive collection. Have you visited these places? Have you explored the stories they hold? Museums are not about passive observation, they are educational spaces where you can engage with the past, present, and future. Imagine stepping into a room at the *Indian Museum* in Kolkata, home to more than 200,000 artefacts, from rare manuscripts to ancient sculptures. Or in the *Odisha State Tribal*



Camera in Gurugram, where visitors dive into the art of photography through hands-on interaction with rare equipment. The future of museums is interactive, dynamic, and inclusive. Shouldn't you explore them and see what's unfolding? Perhaps the most urgent call today is to let young people into these spaces, not as visitors, but as creators. What stories do they want to tell? What histories matter to them? Let us imagine a world where museums are not buildings but breathing organisms that evolve with us.



FACTSHEET

Location: New Delhi, India
Established: 1992
According to the Time magazine, the museum is ranked one of the weirdest among the "10 museums around the world that are anything but mundane."

SULABH INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF TOILETS

Established by Dr Bindeshwar Pathak in New Delhi, the museum showcases the global history of sanitation and toilet technology. With exhibits dating from 2500 BCE to the present, the museum highlights hygiene practices, toilet innovations, and social attitudes toward sanitation. Through humour and history, it promotes awareness about the importance of public health, cleanliness, and the urgent need for improved sanitation across the world.

MUSEUM OF BAD ART

MOBA is the world's only museum dedicated to collecting and celebrating bad art. MOBA showcases works that have gone hilariously wrong but were created with earnest intent. Its collection features pieces salvaged from skips, car boot sales and donations. It encourages laughter and reflection, offering a unique perspective.



FACTSHEET

Founded: 1993
Location: Initially in Dedham, Massachusetts
Mission: To celebrate bad art in all its forms
Tagline: "Art too bad to be ignored"
Display: 700+ works of unintentional bad art

MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

The Museum of Broken Relationships is a deeply emotional and unconventional museum. It showcases personal objects left behind after breakups, accompanied by stories from around the world. Each exhibit reflects heartbreak, healing, and the human condition. It offers a moving, often cathartic experience for visitors to connect through shared emotional journeys and the universal set of experience for love and loss in relationships.



FACTSHEET

Founded: 2006
Location: Zagreb, Croatia (permanent); global touring exhibitions
Collection: Personal items and stories from failed relationships

KENT'S DOG COLLAR MUSEUM

The Dog Collar Museum is the world's only museum dedicated entirely to historic canine neckwear. Showcasing over 130 collars dating from the 15th century to the present day, the collection offers a fascinating glimpse into the evolving relationship between humans and dogs. From medieval iron collars used for protection to ornate, jewelled designs, the museum highlights changes in fashion, function and status. It's a quirky yet insightful celebration of man's best friend.



FACTSHEET

Founded: Collection began in 1977
Location: Leeds Castle, Kent, England
Oldest Item: 15th-century iron collar
Notable Items: Spiked collars for protection, decorative leather and velvet collars



LOUVRE MUSEUM PARIS



LOUVRE MUSEUM PARIS



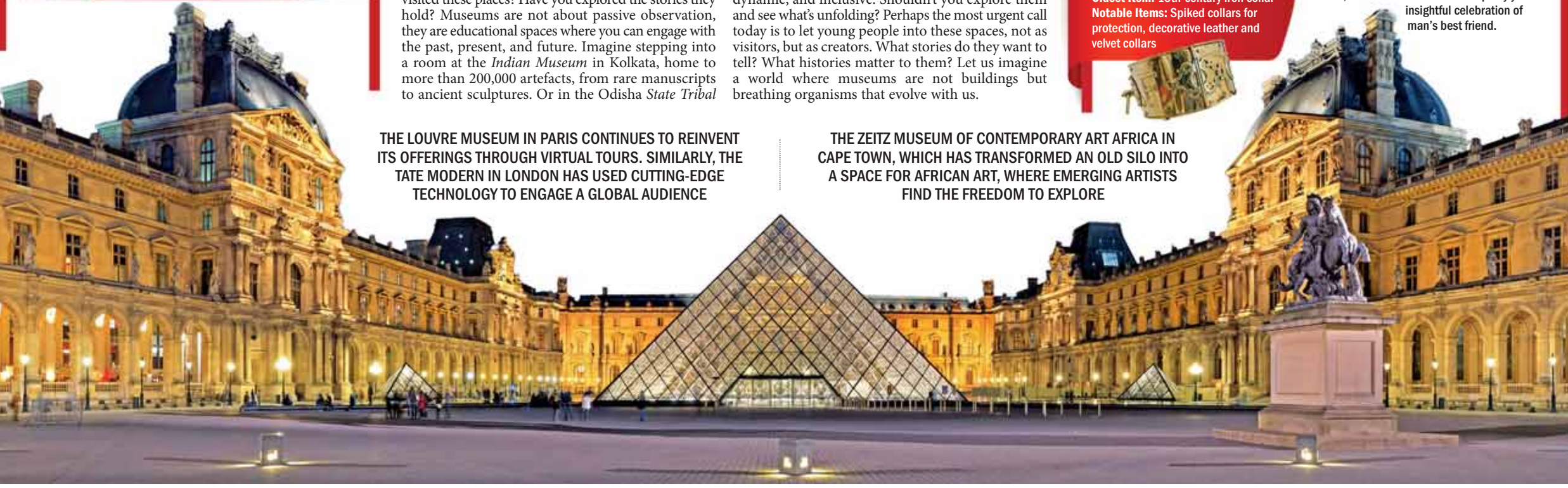
ZEITZ MUSEUM AFRICA



IIME MUSEUM BENGALURU

THE LOUVRE MUSEUM IN PARIS CONTINUES TO REINVENT ITS OFFERINGS THROUGH VIRTUAL TOURS. SIMILARLY, THE TATE MODERN IN LONDON HAS USED CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY TO ENGAGE A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

THE ZEITZ MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AFRICA IN CAPE TOWN, WHICH HAS TRANSFORMED AN OLD SILO INTO A SPACE FOR AFRICAN ART, WHERE EMERGING ARTISTS FIND THE FREEDOM TO EXPLORE



"WE ALL EAT, AND IT WOULD BE A SAD WASTE OF OPPORTUNITY TO EAT BADLY"
— ANNA THOMAS

South

Spices

add flavour to Delhi

Giving a twist to Southern Indian flavours, Avartana is the capital's latest culinary treasure, writes ABHI SINGHAL

Today's food has evolved a lot with techniques and fusions but it is always amazing to have authentic flavours from ingredients from the place where they are grown. Avartana has made its way to ITC Maurya, New Delhi and it exemplifies an exclusive blend of traditional and progressive renditions of Southern Indian cuisines, which are rooted to the gravitas of the unique tastes, aromas and flavours of southern Indian spices.

At Avartana, guests can indulge in curated degustation menus comprising 7, 9, 11 or 13 courses, thoughtfully named Maya, Bela, Jiaa and Anika, respectively. An additional 13-course menu, Tara, is also available for those seeking a distinctive sea food culinary experience.

Each menu is offered in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian versions, allowing diners to choose according to their preference. The courses are portioned carefully to ensure balance and enjoyment, while the 13-course menu offers a

more extensive experience, the servings are intentionally smaller than those in the 7-course option. A must try at the Avartana, that offers a luxurious foray into elevated vegetarian cuisine with its degustation menu is titled 'Bela Beautiful'.

The journey begins with a Tomato and Millet Rice Crisp, an earthy, umami-laced bite that sets the tone with a bit of a sour and tart taste. The Crispy Chilli Potato paired with a buttermilk sphere delivers heat and tang in equal measure. Then, you are moved to a Cauliflower Crunch arrives, balanced by the freshness of pomegranate and mint. The Pumpkin Dumpling, nestled in a silky butter emulsion with fried beans, brings a touch of richness. To cleanse the palate, a refreshing Cucumber and Apple Sorbet offers a clean interlude before the main courses to take you to a completely admirable taste.

The Asparagus and Coconut Stew is delicately spiced, brought to life by turmeric and paired with airy idiyappam. The Spiced Aubergine follows, layered with the deep warmth of Byadagi chili emulsion and crispy sago pearls, highlighting regional notes with finesse.

The grand finale before the surprise is the Fennel Panacotta, shaped as an egg in a nest,

is topped with ethereal angel hair caramel, a dessert that is as visually striking as it is indulgent and shocks you as it is all edible. It is amazingly plated and presented for the diners to savour and enjoy with looks and taste.

Apart from this what came as a surprise from the Chef was Jasmine Paysam, in the shape of stones resting upon the real jasmine flowers giving a taste and aroma like no other. As soon as the Jasmine Paysam enters your mouth, it transports you to a completely different world of desserts that you must (must) try.

FACT SHEET:

Address: Avartana, ITC Maurya, New Delhi

Timings: 7 to 11 pm (dinner)

Price for two: Different prices for different degustation menus (ranging from ₹3000 - ₹5,500)

Eat and Enjoy

Beat the heat with these two refreshing summer delights, writes TEAM AGENDA

**MANGO LASSI POPSICLES****INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 cup ripe mango pulp
- 1 cup thick yoghurt (curd)
- 2 tbsp honey or sugar (adjust to taste)
- ¼ tsp cardamom powder

METHOD:

- Blend mango pulp, yoghurt, honey, and cardamom powder until smooth.
- Pour the mixture into popsicle moulds.
- Freeze for 6-8 hours or until set.
- To serve, run warm water over the moulds for a few seconds and gently remove the popsicles.

TIP: You can layer the pops with a swirl of plain yoghurt for a pretty, marbled look.

**WATERMELON FETA SALAD WITH MINT****INGREDIENTS:**

- 2 cups watermelon (cubed)
- ½ cup feta cheese (crumbled)
- A handful of fresh mint leaves (chopped)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD:

- In a large bowl, combine the watermelon cubes and crumbled feta.
- Add chopped mint leaves.
- Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice over the salad.
- Season with salt and pepper, then gently toss.
- Serve chilled for a refreshing treat.

TIP: Add a few cucumber slices or pomegranate seeds for extra crunch and flavour.

BELA BEAUTIFUL

Each course in the Bela Beautiful tasting menu exemplifies harmony — between tradition and innovation, spice and subtlety. This is a meticulously choreographed performance of vegetarian artistry which you don't see at places you regularly dine in. With Bela Beautiful and other degustation menus you have tasty and finger options in the vegetarian side too.

SPICED PRELUDE

The journey begins with a Tomato and Millet Rice Crisp, an earthy, umami-laced bite that sets the tone with a bit of a sour and tart taste. The Tomato and Millet Rice Crisp delivers a satisfying crunch that awakens the palate. The tang of ripe tomato meets the nutty undertones of millet, creating a harmony of texture and flavour when you are directed to mix and eat. A whisper of southern spice lingers, setting the stage for the courses ahead. It serves as a clever and earthy introduction.

CURATED MENUS

Having a thoughtfully crafted menu is often a discerning diner needs to feel truly catered to. The joy of choice, after all, lies in finding a journey that matches your appetite and curiosity. At Avartana, this philosophy takes elegant shape where guests can indulge in curated degustation menus comprising 7, 9, 11 or 13 courses, thoughtfully named Maya, Mystical, Bela Beautiful, Jiaa Soulful and Anika Graceful, respectively. An additional 13-course sea food menu, Tara Sparkle, is also available.

BALANCED INDULGENCE

Each menu at Avartana is available in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian formats, offering guests the flexibility to choose according to their taste, dietary preferences. The courses are mindfully portioned to maintain a sense of balance across the meal. While the 13-course menu offers a more elaborate culinary journey, the serving sizes are intentionally smaller than those in the 7-course menu. This approach allows diners to experience a wider array of flavours.

CULINARY ELEGANCE

Avartana leaves its guests with more than just the memory of exceptional food — it offers a sensory journey steeped in heritage and reimagined with finesse. At ITC Maurya, Avartana proves that true culinary innovation does not abandon tradition — it elevates it. Whether you are a seasoned connoisseur or lover of the South Indian ingredients or a curious diner exploring new frontiers, this is one gastronomic journey is indeed worth savouring for your taste buds.

Built on Recipes and Remembrance

Walk into Ikk Panjab, and time seems to pause, allowing flavours to speak louder, says ABHI SINGHAL

Ikk Panjab, in the heart of Connaught Place's iconic circle, a hush falls over you — not one of silence, but of stillness. The chaos and city's clamour recedes as you're enveloped by a space that feels like home. Walk through the door makes you feel like you have been transported into a home — specifically that of a retired Army colonel, lovingly imagined with thoughtful detail. The living room-style layout features a full-height library wall, vintage collectibles, and charming artefacts that reflect a life well lived and widely travelled.

With the prologue ambience, it's the menu that is the novel and every dish a chapter from the past. The reimagined menu at Ikk Panjab is a culinary time machine, showcasing treasures from pre-partition Punjab's historic towns and royal kitchens. You'll discover dishes not often found on Delhi's dining tables — like the smoky Sajji, a Balochi-style delicacy; the robust Gosht Beliram, once prepared in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court and the rustic Atta Chicken from Kotkapura. Each of these bites whisper great tales of a rich and diverse land and their food.

You can go for the speciality like Matthi Chole from the kitchen of the hosts grandmother, dish that is savoured with flakey matthi, topped with spicy chole, kachumber and assorted chutneys and gives you a crisp taste. Around the same taste but a whole lot better is the Palak Patta Chaat that are crisp spinach leaves pakodas topped with sweetened



curd and chutneys just like a desi Indian would want. Of course, no journey through Punjab's cuisine is complete without its comforting classics. Ikk Panjab offers soulful renditions of Sarson da Saag with Makki di Roti, Aloo-Vadiyaan, Amritsari Macchi, and an inventive take on Delhi's Butter Chicken — presented here as a street-style samosa, an ode to the playful spirit of Punjabi street fare.

I am always too full for the desserts but let me inform you that you can't miss them here. You have options like Aam-Papad Churan, Nani's Phirni, Dadi's Gajrela, Tarn-Taran Di Jaleba Raddi and the Moong Dal Halwa. The

Moong Dal Halwa is a must have with the most appropriate amounts of sweetness and balance. Ikk Panjab has just launched a new outlet in Chandigarh for the people to savour the best Punjabi cuisine and a place that feels like home.

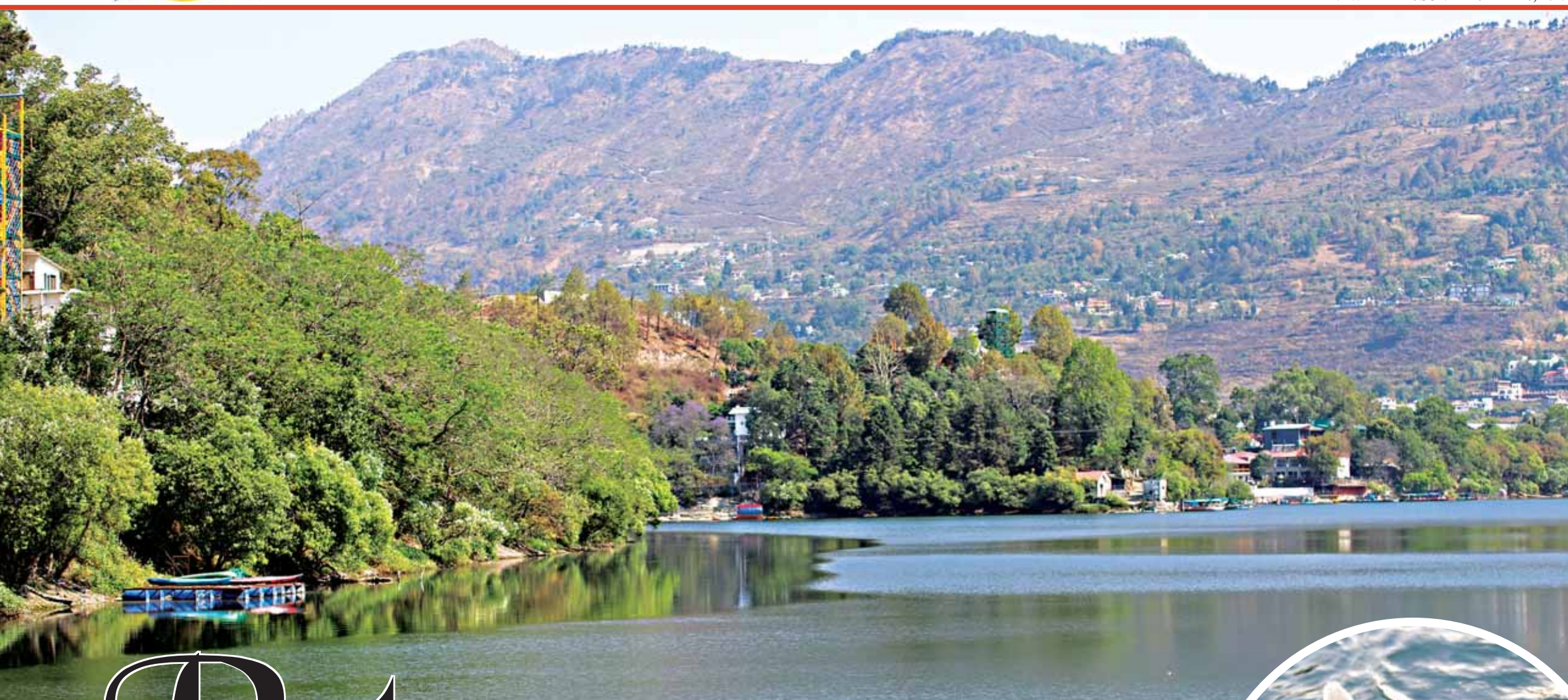
FACT SHEET:

Address: K-13, Outer circle, Ground floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi

Timings: 12pm to 3pm and 7pm to 11:30pm

Price for two: ₹2500





A Return to Nature

Forest bathing and stargazing in Uttarakhand's Naukuchiatal is immersive experience and connects you to nature. It is the place which not only rejuvenates but also makes you aware about your existence in the universe, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

Naukuchiatal or the lake with nine corners is as serene as it is inviting. The locals have it that those who can see all nine corners of Naukuchiatal find salvation or *moksha*. Don't know how true is that but a trip to Naukuchiatal is indeed rejuvenating and connects you directly to nature. It is here that nature speaks with you sometimes in chirping of birds or rustling of leaves or just silence in the woods.

Tucked away in the tranquil hills of Uttarakhand lies the serene village of Naukuchiatal, a lesser-known gem that's slowly emerging as a sanctuary for mindful travel, nature-based healing, and eco-conscious retreats. While the region has long been known for its lake-literally translating to "the lake with nine corners"—a new kind of experience is drawing modern wanderers: forest bathing and stargazing. As life becomes increasingly urban and digitally saturated, travelers are looking for digital detox and deep reconnection with the Earth.

Forest bathing is increasingly becoming a must-do activity. There are evening activities too.

Come evening, when the crisp mountain air cools and lights

dim, stargazing becomes the second act of this immersive natural experience. Far from city pollution and light interference, the night sky over Naukuchiatal is a sprawling canvas of constellations and cosmic stillness. It's meditative, humbling, and unforgettable.

Stargazing is new craze and fast catching up. Together, these practices are reshaping travel—not just as leisure, but as ecotherapy. They offer visitors more than just fun or relaxation; they provide grounding, introspection, and a deeper awareness of our place in the ecosystem.

Naukuchia House: Living by the Lake

At the heart of this slow-travel movement is the Naukuchia House, a boutique property that beautifully complements the natural wonders of the region. Perched right by the lake, the house offers panoramic views of the water framed by forested hills. It's not just a place to stay—it's an experience in itself.

With a commitment to elegance and sustainability, Naukuchia House is a haven for those seeking both luxury and meaning. The architecture blends traditional Kumaoni aesthetics with modern sensibilities, while the interiors are curated for warmth, comfort, and connection—both with fellow travelers and with nature.

Dining here is a sensory journey. The in-house restaurant presents a fine dining experience that is rooted in local ingredients, seasonal produce, and thoughtful plating. Whether it's a slow-cooked Himalayan stew, freshly baked sourdough, or herbal teas infused with local flora, each dish tells a story of place and purity.

Why It Matters

Beyond personal rejuvenation, engaging in forest bathing and stargazing has broader environmental benefits.

These practices foster eco-consciousness, reminding us of nature's fragility and the importance of conservation. Properties like Naukuchia House are not only offering comfort and calm but also actively promoting sustainable travel, responsible tourism, and community engagement. Naukuchiatal invites you to pause. To breathe deeply among trees. To watch stars without a screen. And to dine by a lake where silence is the loudest sound. Here, nature doesn't just surround you—it speaks to you.

FOREST BATHING: CLEANSE YOUR SOUL

Originally rooted in the Japanese practice of *Shinrin-yoku*, forest bathing is not just a walk in the woods—it's an intentional, meditative immersion in the sights, smells, and sounds of the forest. Organised by Naukuchia House, it is an experience worth having. It's a soulful return to nature. Walk through thick pine groves. It is your chance to hug the trees and use all five senses to immerse in forest and discover calm within you!

STARGAZING: EXPLORE THE SKIES

The night sky is like a giant puzzle. Hidden among the thousands of stars you can find dozens of constellations. Naukuchiatal is relatively free from light pollution that makes stargazing enjoyable. There are sky apps that can be downloaded to map the sky. With a good star map, there's no limit to what you can find! Keep a notebook with you to sketch what you see in the sky and to keep a record of your sightings



A SOULFUL ESCAPADE

BY DIVYA BHATIA

A trip to **Jim Corbett National Park** is always a memorable adventure — but when you add the gentle rhythm of birdwatching and the serene grace of yoga sessions amidst the wild, it transforms into a truly timeless trip. The foothills of the Himalayas, where the air is crisp and the jungle hums with ancient life, Jim Corbett National Park is more than a wildlife sanctuary — it's a living, breathing canvas of raw nature and silent wonder. And when you pair it with an immersive stay at the luxurious Aahana Resort, the experience transcends into something truly unforgettable.

Into the Wild: The Jeep Safari Adventure

The heart of any visit to Jim Corbett lies in the jeep safari — an exhilarating ride that takes you deep into tiger territory. As the vehicle hums through winding forest paths and sun-dappled clearings, every rustle in the bushes becomes a potential sighting. Elephants, deer, wild boars, leopards — and of course, the majestic Bengal tiger — inhabit these woods. The thrill of spotting a pugmark on the trail or locking eyes with a spotted deer in the underbrush is both primal and humbling. It's not just a safari; it's a rediscovery of awe.

Birdwatcher's Paradise

For those who find joy in the flutter of wings and the melodic calls of the wild, Jim Corbett is a birdwatcher's paradise. With over 600 species recorded in the region, mornings begin with the sooth-



Meditation in the Lap of Nature

What sets this journey apart is the spiritual stillness that Aahana Resort weaves into the wilderness. Nestled on the fringe of the reserve, surrounded by dense sal trees and chirping cicadas, Aahana is not just a place to stay — it's a place to reconnect. Morning yoga sessions on open lawns or elevated wooden decks allow you to stretch into the day as the sun rises over the forest. Under the guidance of experienced instructors, your breath begins to mirror the rhythm of nature. Meditation sessions in the forest deepen the connection, offering moments of pure stillness — a gentle pause from the hurried pace of life. With bird-song as your soundtrack and filtered sunlight as your

guide, it's an experience that grounds you while lifting your spirit. Staying at Aahana Aahana takes the Jim Corbett experience to the next level. There's a certain kind of stillness that greets you the moment you arrive at Aahana — The Corbett Wilderness, tucked along the edge of Jim Corbett National Park. The rustling sal trees, the melodic calls of hill birds, the gentle rustle of deer moving through the underbrush — nature's own orchestra welcomes you before you've even checked in. Aahana is a deeply personal story, lovingly written over years. What you see today is not a resort that was constructed, it was cultivated. "Aahaa" means 'the first ray of the rising sun,' Avni Tripathi, Director at Aahana begins, her voice softening as she speaks. "It was inspired by how the sunlight first kissed the earth on this land.

Back then, it was barren. We planted every tree by hand — it was our act of devotion." It's symbolic of the vision, the rebirth, and the warmth that this place radiates. Today, the resort boasts 70 thoughtfully appointed accommodations, from luxurious suites to indulgent new private pool villas. The family villas, with four bedrooms under one roof, are designed

for multigenerational travel — offering a rare blend of shared space and solitude. At Dhikala, the resort's signature restaurant, every meal felt less like dining out and more like being welcomed into the family's kitchen — warm, rooted, and thoughtfully crafted. Mornings began with a spread that celebrated wellness and heritage, featuring age-old Kumaoni recipes and dishes made from vegetables freshly harvested from Aahana's own organic gardens. The breakfast offerings catered to every palate, blending traditional nutrition with modern preferences. Lunch is soulful Kumaoni dal and chana that truly stood out — simple, yet deeply flavourful.

Aahana is intimate, and alive. It's the kind of place that invites you not just to pause, but to listen — to the forest, to your breath, and to the quiet joy of being exactly where you are. Aahana doesn't shout for attention. It gently, and gracefully, earns your affection.





ARIES March 21-April 19

This is the week to clear personal debts and any financial obligations. You could be in a position to offer emotional or financial help to someone close to you, perhaps during a family gathering like a wedding. Supporting charities may also come into focus. During the middle of the week, some of you could chase after pleasure through entertainment and excessive food consumption but set no clear goals for themselves. Reminder: remain undistracted and focused on what needs your attention. You'll be the most sought after if you want to be a decision maker who attracts abundance, prosperity, and great health. To make that happen, a goal-based approach, combined with staying authentic, is absolutely essential.

Lucky number 13 | **Lucky colour** Beige
Lucky day Friday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

You tend to have a commanding influence, often making things happen however you want them to. Your energy tends to fill the room and can get things moving swiftly. Too much energy can sometimes foster distance or conflicts, especially with peers or people around you. You may actively find yourself in disputes or differing sentiments being voiced in your direction. Efforts are best directed to the more constructive issues at hand instead. Support in the form of the Divine is now available, leading to blessings regarding health, success or even authority. You are doing great, but you can enhance your accomplishments by ensuring balance in your surroundings. Take note that allowing your dominance to spiral out of control may endanger the status you have personally worked hard to achieve.

Lucky number 11 | **Lucky colour** Rust
Lucky day Monday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you may sustain a minor injury that requires medical attention during a specific timeframe, resulting in a healing phase. Although you will need nurturing, you are lucky to have a devoted partner who admires and cherishes you. Your partner can help you heal as they assist you and provide devotion through spiritual avenues. Vows may prove helpful at this period as they, along with mantra chanting, assist you in attaining serenity of the mind in the balanced sphere, which is necessary for you to retain faith. You will be inclined to indulge and articulate it. At this stage, nurturing powerful family associations will trigger you to contemplate fragments of cells. You can adhere to affection and detach from mediocre moralities.

Lucky number 17 | **Lucky colour** Gray
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week, you might notice that you're cherishing the impact and power that come with the role you occupy. This is the influence of your words, posture, and how you interact with fellow workers. Your leadership and organizational skills are in the forefront, and thus, you are earning respect at your workplace. You relate with people in a heartfelt manner which enables you to appreciate their needs. Nonetheless, tread carefully because there may be people that are unhappy with your style and approach, trying to sabotage you or outsmart you. Because of such competition, any contract or meeting may not achieve the anticipated outcomes. By the end of the week, it seems you might be stressed because you're doing a lot by yourself.

Lucky number 27 | **Lucky colour** Aqua
Lucky day Sunday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week brings success in different areas of one's life and monetary and emotional gains. Other income streams add to one's feeling of security while helping them enjoy material success. Happiness includes family life and entertainment, luxuries, and fulfilling desires. These all bring joy and contentment. Around the middle of the week, one can receive messages about emotional fulfillment through love texts, engagements, or growing relations with existing partners. With all this joy, one may also have to deal with a lack of affection, confusion, restlessness, and unsettling you. Towards the end of the week, one will look for peace, try to alter their views, and go with the current change. Striving to hold onto irrelevant customs is no longer helpful; letting go will allow you to embrace fresh ideas.

Lucky number 30 | **Lucky colour** Fuchsia
Lucky day Thursday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

It may seem like this week will be overly emotional, as you may start to feel more 'sentimental' because the situations you face do not align with your desires. You may feel compelled to give others help and care, while emotional unrest may leave you feeling agitated, resulting in inner chaos. Paying attention to health may add to the stress, especially for women with hormonal imbalances or thyroid problems. Meanwhile, financial responsibilities require caution, and stricter budgeting will serve you well, as spending less will work in your favour. From midweek on, maintaining balance will help the most, as persevering through challenges requires a steady approach. Focus on healthy habits, both in diet and lifestyle. By the end of the week, expect to experience positive shifts in your career.

Lucky number 29 | **Lucky colour** Yellow
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Reap the rewards of your hard work this week, but tread carefully as some challenges may arise. Expect a phase filled with rampant rivalry and harsh criticism, full of vocal confrontation. Around the middle of the week, a more toxic opponent who lacks morals and principles may show up, as their aura is devoid of life and drains all positivity. While facing unethical conducts to act immorally can be alluring, staying true to your morals is the best option. Thereafter, truthfulness reluctantly blessed you with happiness, where ease would let you bask in its glory, though not before you celebrated the positivity you never thought you could achieve. Your recognition shall soar as your reputation climbs to staggering heights, filling you with euphoric positivity.

Lucky number 19 | **Lucky colour** Mahogany
Lucky day Wednesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

There's a lot of almost miraculous goodwill coming your way next week in the form of enjoyment and achievement. You're now at the stage of being appreciated, where your internal progress translates to external benefits because of your effort and genuine commitment. The cosmos aligns with your endeavours. You shine with your effortless sense of poise and deep-seated virtues of equity and kindness, which are the hallmarks of effective leadership. Your insight and the healing dimension of your personality that influences people far beyond the immediate environment of home and work make you a unique asset. Towards the end of the week, however, watch for possible financial or health issues that might crop up. Be sure to adopt measures that would safeguard your health and overall safety.

Lucky number 15 | **Lucky colour** Ivory
Lucky day Friday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Your critical decision-making skills will be tested early this week, requiring you to detach yourself emotionally. The consequences of your decisions will matter significantly to you or someone important in your life. Conflict at your workplace is possible, particularly in competitive situations. Try to stay out of conflicts and take a more accommodating stance. Toward mid-week, a superior's negative evaluation may leave some of you feeling depleted, frustrated, and vitally low. Meditative, yogic, and spiritual practices can help ground you and empower you with rejuvenated self-confidence and mental clarity in these mentally trying times. Toward the end of the week, you will feel your internal mental state shifting toward an increasing sense of serenity and positivity. Get ready for some good news — perhaps about romance or marriage.

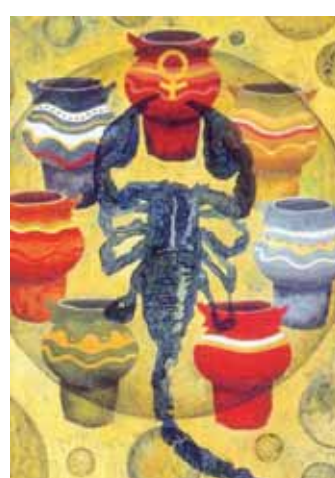
Lucky number 20 | **Lucky colour** Moss Green
Lucky day Wednesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

The month starts with some quite fast-paced events; feelings will not be welcome in this context. A new project at the office may open a new door, but it will demand Decisive action and skilful execution, where Agile soft skills and clear logic are needed. Focused rationality and step-by-step structured actions will ensure achievement. You can expect some movement in your finances. Feel free to extend charity-type help where you can provide services free of cost. Powerful negative emotions can cloud objective judgment. Towards the week's closing, you can look forward to a strategic alliance and partnership contract, which you will receive firmly and well in advance. Expect deepening emotional investments, and for people looking for relationships, they will start uncovering a newfound desire to pair up.

Lucky number 22 | **Lucky colour** Plum
Lucky day Saturday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

With your strained work schedules, deadlines can be pretty demanding, and it is evident that you are committed to giving your best. However, it is essential to note that both academic and professional work is beginning to drain your energy levels. You need to disconnect and recharge yourself. Failing to rest adequately runs the risk of developing mental and emotional burnout, which can make one feel cranky. Focus on your wellbeing, particularly around the middle of the week, when most women suffer some form of cycle-related disturbance. Take proactive steps to deal with burnout, including but not limited to medical examinations and even allowing yourself some idle time. Be mindful of power struggles in professional environments and with bosses or senior colleagues.

Lucky number 25 | **Lucky colour** Bronze
Lucky day Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week comes with a wave of youthful vitality and considerable potential for development. Not having well-established goals along with focus may stop your efforts from producing the desired outcomes. Focus your creative energies on more meaningful pursuits after properly setting goals. From your family, neglecting health issues can result in having to devote more time and energy towards caregiving, which can prove to be costly in the long run. Midweek may bring some challenges in emotional relationships and financial matters, causing some distressing emotions. Your inner fire and mental fortitude will be crucial in facing and overcoming these hurdles. Towards the end of the week, opportunities and blessings might be coming your way, which from your perspective might be ignored as you are caught up in your own life.

Lucky number 12 | **Lucky colour** Ice Blue
Lucky day Monday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

THOUGHTFUL INSIGHTS



Dr. Tanu Jain

Whether in moments of quiet charity at a traffic light or in the grand choices that define our paths, karma watches, records, and returns — all with unerring precision

The Unseen Threads: How Karma Weaves Our Destiny

It was a quiet Saturday morning as I travelled from my office to Central Delhi. The streets were just waking up, and the city felt softer, almost vulnerable, in that early hour. Our car halted at a red light, and out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a beggar standing by the roadside, his hand outstretched. Without thinking, I instinctively began rummaging through my bag, searching for some loose change. The light was about to turn green, and in that moment of quiet panic — hurrying to give him something before we sped off — I handed over the coins I could quickly grab. As we moved ahead, something deep inside me shifted. I sat back and stared out of the window, but my mind was no longer on my destination. I couldn't stop thinking: Life is so heartbreakingly different for each of us. We pass by these moments every day — moments that force us to confront the stark inequalities of life. Why was I in the comfort of a car while that man stood on the street, hands empty, and eyes weary? What separated our destinies? Couldn't I have been born in his place?

The answer that echoed within me was a single, heavy word: karma. I remember a family member who had met with a severe accident. When I visited him, bruised and broken, he smiled faintly and said, "Beta, karma hai. Achha hai thode mein kat gaye." His words stayed with me — such raw acceptance of suffering, as though he knew that karma was the unseen ledger keeping score. We all ask the same



heart-wrenching questions: Why do terrible things happen to good people? Why does fortune so often favour those who act without conscience? Why does life sometimes feel so random? Why does it seem as if God — or fate — is toying with us? No word addresses these questions with as much depth and clarity as karma. Yet sadly, karma has been oversimplified to a cliché or shrouded in mysticism. But to truly understand it is to gain insight into the very fabric of existence.

Karma is precise, mathematical, and even clinical in its operation. Every thought, every action, every intention plants a seed — seeds that grow and bear fruit, often when we least expect them to. Karma is not about punishment or reward in the way we

casually think. It is about balance, correction, and learning it is a pulse of human life. It governs our joys, our pains, our rebirths, and our eventual liberation. For those who seek not just quick answers but a deeper, transformative understanding, karma offers a window into the very mechanism of the soul's journey. In this story, Brahma — the creator himself — falls prey to ego and deceit. In a cosmic test of humility and truth, he falsely claims victory over Lord Shiva, thinking no one would dare question his word. But Shiva, the eternal upholder of dharma, exposes Brahma's deceit by severing his fifth head. Even so, despite acting righteously, Shiva himself incurs the sin of Brahmahatya (slaying a Brahmin), and is cursed to wander as a Kapali, carrying the

skull of Brahma as a reminder of his deed. His karmic burden only lifts when he enters Kashi, the sacred city where all karma dissolves. This tale teaches us something staggering: no being — no matter how exalted — is beyond the reach of karma. The laws of karma are so precise and impartial that even divine beings must bow before them.

As the Bhagavad Gita (4.17) so wisely tells us: "Gahana karmano gatih"

(The path of karma is unfathomable.) Another poignant aspect of this story is the contrast between Brahma's deceit and Vishnu's humility. This stark difference reminds us of a timeless lesson from the Mahabharata:

"Satyam eva param dharma"

(Truth alone is the highest dharma.)

The universe reverberates with truth. Even small lies can have vast, ripple effects, and the path of truth — though often harder — is the only one that leads to real spiritual growth. The culmination of Shiva's journey — his karmic absolution in Kashi — is rich with symbolism. Kashi is not merely a geographic location but a state of supreme spiritual consciousness.

We see the powerful hand of karma in so many ancient stories — lessons that still resonate deeply today. Take King Dasharatha, whose heart-wrenching fate was sealed when he accidentally killed Shraavan Kumar's parents' only son; years later, he himself died in unbearable sorrow, separated from his beloved son, Rama. Even Lord Rama, despite being the embodiment of righteous-

ness, endured exile, battles, and personal heartbreak, showing us that no one, not even the divine, escapes karma's balancing act. I often think of these stories when I face personal trials — like watching a loved one suffer unexpectedly or encountering hurdles that seem unfair. At such times, I remember that karma is at work, silently weaving its justice, often across lifetimes. I realize that our own struggles — though painful — are not without meaning. They are part of a larger tapestry, teaching us humility, patience, and acceptance, reminding us that every act, every word, and every thought carries weight.

The story of Shiva, Rama and Brahma is a mirror — inviting us to reflect on our own karmic patterns, to act with integrity, and to walk the path of liberation. It is a mirror held up to each of us, reflecting the timeless truths of existence. Karma is not some distant cosmic law; it is an intimate force, intricately woven into the very fabric of our daily lives. Whether in moments of quiet charity at a traffic light or in the grand choices that define our paths, karma watches, records, and returns — all with unerring precision. Ultimately, the journey of karma is not about punishment or reward but about awakening — to the truth of who we are and the freedom that lies in living with conscious intent.

— The author's views are personal. (The author is a civil servant at the Ministry of Defence and a spiritual speaker)